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TOURISM:

ALL ROADS LEAD TO **MALTA**

As Africa Takes
Strong Presence
At WTTC Global
Summit

IN FOCUS

**Maame Efua
Houadjeto**
CEO, Ghana Tourism
Authority

Positioning
Ghana Tourism
For Sustainable
Growth And
Investment

**UN Tourism
vs WTTC:
How
Reliable
Are Global
Tourism
Statistics?**

Explore
MALTA

**Nigerians Groan As Uber Gap Remains
Unfilled: African Travel Commission
Calls for Better Ride-Hailing Services**

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VALLETTA, MALTA, 7-9
OCTOBER 2026**

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...nesting international standards with African hospitality

Cont'd from page 17

...Reliable Are Global Tourism Statistics?

numbers were observed, which were estimated and what assumptions sit behind them.

There is consequently no sound basis for simply declaring one organisation's statistics "accurate" and the other's "inaccurate".

For measuring international tourist-arrival volumes, UN Tourism remains an important reference because it aggregates official tourism statistics across destinations using internationally recognised statistical concepts.

For understanding economic impact, however, WTTC offers a considerably wider analytical framework. Its partnership with Oxford Economics, consistent cross-country modelling and inclusion of GDP, employment, domestic tourism, spending and

...World's First B Corp-Certified Balloon Company

Cont'd from page 14

and social performance.

B Lab, the non-profit organisation behind the certification, assesses companies against standards covering governance, workers, communities, customers and the environment. More than 10,000 companies globally have achieved B Corp certification.

For Serengeti Balloon Safaris, the designation also has a direct commercial dimension because its business depends on protected wildlife landscapes that underpin Tanzania's tourism

investment make its research especially useful for commercial and policy analysis.

WTTC's modelling is also its principal limitation: estimates are only as strong as the underlying data and assumptions, particularly in economies where comprehensive Tourism Satellite Accounts are unavailable.

The strongest analysis therefore uses the datasets together rather than treating either as a complete description of tourism.

UN Tourism can help answer: How many international arrivals were recorded, and where are those flows changing?

WTTC can help answer: What does all this travel mean economically?

Airline capacity and passenger data can test whether connectivity supports the story. Hotel occupancy and rates can reveal whether destinations

economy.

The company began commercial balloon flights over the Serengeti in 1989 and now operates in Serengeti, Ruaha and Tarangire national parks. It says it has carried more than 300,000 passengers.

The company also says it was the first operator to train and employ Tanzanian commercial balloon pilots on a full-time basis. Its chief pilot, Capt. Abeid Soka, became Tanzania's first balloon pilot examiner after his appointment by the Tanzania Civil Aviation Authority.

Mr. Pascal Kirigiti, commercial manager of Serengeti Balloon Safaris,

are converting arrivals into accommodation demand. Payment and transaction data can provide more timely indications of spending. National statistical offices and Tourism Satellite Accounts can then provide the detailed country-level foundation against which international estimates should be checked.

The most significant message in the latest numbers may therefore be something the headline total obscures.

Global tourism appears to have moved from the rapid post-pandemic recovery phase into a period in which growth is slower, geographically uneven and increasingly exposed to geopolitical disruption, aviation costs and climate events.

UN Tourism has reportedly reduced its 2026 international-arrivals growth expectation from

said the company had invested in developing the sector alongside its own expansion.

"We are often referred to as the Balloonist's Ballooning Company because of our passion for pioneering new routes, standards and developments in the industry," Mr. Kirigiti said.

Safety remains subject to regulatory oversight by the Tanzania Civil Aviation Authority, while the company competes in the high-value segment of Tanzania's wildlife tourism market.

The B Corp certification follows another sustainability milestone. In 2026, Serengeti Balloon

3%-4% to 1%-2%. That is a significant change in outlook, but it remains a forecast rather than an observed result.

The question for the industry is no longer simply whether more people are crossing borders.

It is whether travellers are staying longer, spending more, supporting employment and generating sustainable economic returns, and whether destinations can maintain those benefits when geopolitical or

Safaris became the first commercial balloon operator in Tanzania to achieve Travelife Certified status after an assessment covering environmental management, labour practices, community impact and customer communication.

The company says its procurement, staff development and environmental management practices are intended to reduce its impact while strengthening the communities and ecosystems on which its business depends.

Mr. Corse said the B Corp assessment formalised practices that had been embedded in the company's

climate shocks interrupt established travel patterns.

On those questions, an arrival count is only the beginning of the story.

And for investors, businesses and governments trying to understand the actual economic weight of Travel & Tourism, WTTC's broader economic-impact framework may provide the more useful lens, provided its modelled estimates are read with the same scrutiny that should be applied to every global tourism dataset.

operations for decades.

"Every decision we make from our procurement process to our staff training is guided by these principles," he said.

The certification does not mean the company has zero environmental impact. Rather, it provides an external framework for assessing how the business is governed and how its operations affect workers, communities, customers and the environment.

For Serengeti Balloon Safaris, the designation adds an internationally recognised sustainability standard to a tourism business whose commercial model is built around Tanzania's protected wilderness.



UN Tourism

UNITED NATIONS
WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION



Bianca Odumegwu-Ojukwu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Nigeria

Nigeria: Tanzania Removes Nigeria From Referral Visa Category

The department said it is officially removing Nigerian nationals from its Referred Visa category.

The department said it is officially removing Nigeria from this category following amendments to its immigration regulations.

The department said it is officially removing Nigeria from this category following amendments to its immigration regulations. "The Immigration Department informs the public that citizens of the Federal Republic of Nigeria have been officially removed from the Referred Visa Category,

following published amendments in the Government Gazette number 246 of 2026," the statement read.

This means Nigerians will no longer be required to obtain any additional travel clearance aside from securing a visa.

The department also declared that the new directive would take effect immediately.

"With immediate effect, Nigerian nationals

traveling to the United Republic of Tanzania are no longer subject to referral visa restrictions and will follow standard visa application procedures through the official immigration online portal or designated entry points," it also said,

This change is expected to simplify travel arrangements for Nigerians visiting Tanzania for tourism, business, study, or other permitted purposes.

Tanzania's referral visa system often requires foreigners from countries on its list to receive additional clearance from the immigration authorities.

The country has 27 countries on its list, aside from Nigeria. Applicants in this category cannot rely on the ordinary visa-on-arrival process. Instead, they must apply in advance and wait for approval before travelling.

Countries in this category are Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Chad, Djibouti, Eritrea, Equatorial Guinea, Iran, Iraq, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and Lebanon.

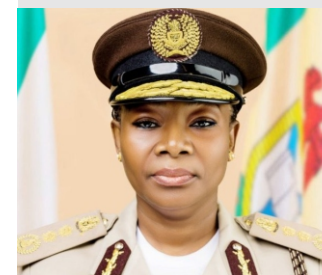
Others are: Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Pakistan, Palestine, Senegal, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Somaliland, Sierra Leone, Syria, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Yemen.

CONTENTS



Dakar 2026 Youth Olympic Games: All The Sports And Cultural Events Taking Place On The Corniche

Page 7



NIS, IOM Review Nigeria's Border Management Strategy Ahead of 2027-2031 Policy Cycle

Page 8



UN Tourism vs WTTC: How Reliable Are Global Tourism Statistics?

Page 16

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Tourism: All Roads Lead To Malta As Africa Takes Strong Presence At WTTC Global Summit

...African tourism ministers, tourism chiefs and industry leaders join more than 1,000 delegates in Valletta

All roads in the global Travel & Tourism industry will lead to Valletta, Malta, next week as the World Travel & Tourism Council [WTTC] hosts its 26th Global Summit from October 7 to 9. The three-day gathering, taking place at the Mediterranean Conference Centre, is expected to bring together more than 1,000 delegates from more than 100 countries, including over 200 leading Travel & Tourism CEOs, senior executives and government leaders.

But this year's summit will carry particular significance for Africa, with a strong African presence expected among the ministers, tourism

authorities and private-sector leaders taking part in the global discussions. Among the African government leaders confirmed for the summit are South Africa's Minister for Tourism, Patricia de Lille, and Egypt's Minister of Tourism and Antiquities, Sherif Fathy Attia. The programme also includes senior African tourism officials and representatives of continental institutions.

African tourism authorities will also be represented by leaders including Ahmed Youssef, Chief Executive Officers of the Egyptian Tourism Authority; Juliana Kagwa, Chief Executive Officers of the Uganda Tourism Board; and Jean-Guy Afrika, Chief Executive Officers of Visit Rwanda and the Maame

summit provides another important international platform at a time when governments, tourism organisations and private operators across the continent are seeking greater investment, stronger connectivity and increased international visibility.

The presence of African ministers and tourism leaders alongside some of the world's biggest travel companies is significant because the WTTC Global Summit is designed as a meeting point between government and the private sector.

The programme will bring together leaders from airlines, airports, hotels, cruise companies, destinations, technology firms, investors and tourism authorities.

That combination gives African participants an opportunity to engage directly with some of the world's most influential decision-makers in Travel & Tourism.

Their participation places destination marketing, investment, connectivity and Africa's tourism opportunities firmly within the wider global conversation.

The African representation extends beyond national tourism administrations. Francisca Tatchouop Belobe, African Union Commissioner for Economic Development, Tourism, Trade, Industry and Minerals as well as Dr. Lucky Onoriode George of the African Travel Commission [ATC], are also among the senior African figures participating in the summit programme.

For Africa, the Malta

Tourism.

The choice of Malta is itself significant. Valletta, described by WTTC as a historic Mediterranean capital, will provide the backdrop for discussions involving some of the most senior figures in global tourism.

Malta is hosting the summit in collaboration with the Malta Tourism Authority and the Government of Malta.

The summit will also attract leading figures from some of the world's largest tourism businesses, making Valletta a major networking and investment meeting point.

WTTC has confirmed participation from more than 200 CEOs and senior Travel & Tourism executives, reflecting the breadth of the global industry, from hospitality and aviation to cruise, technology, financial services and destination investment.

For African tourism operators and destination leaders, such a gathering provides an opportunity to put Africa's tourism products, investment opportunities and market potential before an audience of global decision-makers.

The summit is being held under the theme “FUTU[RE]SET: Shaping the Future of Travel & Tourism”, with discussions expected to examine the forces transforming the industry, including technology, artificial intelligence, investment, sustainability, connectivity and changing traveller expectations.

The significance of Africa's participation will therefore extend beyond simply having African names on the delegate list. With ministers, tourism authority executives and private-sector representatives from the continent participating alongside global industry leaders, Malta will provide a platform for African tourism to engage with the wider international industry.

Cont'd on page 6

Cont'd from page 16

more comprehensive economic picture, but some of that picture is necessarily estimated.

There are several points readers should examine closely when interpreting the latest UN Tourism numbers.

Global tourism statistics ultimately depend heavily on information collected by individual countries and destinations. Reporting schedules, border systems, survey methods and revisions differ. Preliminary global estimates therefore should not be confused with a simultaneous census of every international journey made around the world.

International arrivals measure border movements under agreed tourism definitions, but countries do not all possess identical statistical infrastructure. Administrative border records, accommodation statistics, surveys and other sources can have different strengths and weaknesses.

UN Tourism itself has long published methodological guidance on tourism data collection and has recognised that different data-collection methods need to be understood when interpreting tourism statistics. It has also described air-passenger information as a complementary source that can add characteristics not captured by basic arrival totals.

Early tourism numbers can change as destinations provide updated information. Readers therefore need to distinguish between

preliminary estimates and subsequently revised historical series.

This issue is not exclusive to UN Tourism. WTTC explicitly warns that its historical Economic Impact Research data are updated each year.

UN Tourism's September 2025 Barometer also reported almost 690 million international tourists in the first six months of 2025, approximately 33 million more than in the equivalent 2024 period.

The newly reported 2026 figure is again approximately 690 million, but is described as around three million above the corresponding 2025 level.

Those statements are not necessarily contradictory because both annual totals are rounded — “almost 690 million” in 2025 and an estimated 690 million in 2026 can conceal several million arrivals.

But it demonstrates precisely why rounded headline numbers should not be used to infer fine changes in market performance.

If the difference between two enormous global estimates is only around three million arrivals, readers need the unrounded underlying totals, country coverage and revision status before drawing strong conclusions from the headline.

There is another useful comparison. UN Tourism's September 2025 publication showed first-half arrivals rising 5%, whereas the supplied 2026 data indicate that growth has slowed to almost zero.



John W.H. Denton AO, Secretary General, International Chamber of Commerce with Gloria Guevara, President & Chief Executive Officer, World Travel & Tourism Council [WTTC]

That slowdown is arguably more informative than the 690-million headline itself.

The 2026 figures attribute weakness to factors including the Middle East conflict, airspace disruption, higher fares, a European heatwave, Typhoon Sinlaku and the timing of Easter.

But a statistical fall occurring alongside a geopolitical event, heatwave or change in the holiday calendar does not by itself establish how much of the decline was caused by each factor.

For example, saying Western European arrivals fell 6% in June is an observation. Saying the decline was partly caused by extreme heat is an interpretation that ideally requires supporting evidence, booking trends, aviation capacity, cancellations, source-market data or econometric analysis.

The same caution applies to claims that weaker South-East Asian demand resulted from

geopolitical tension or higher travel costs.

These explanations may be correct, but users of the Barometer should distinguish measured tourism movements from analysis of why those movements occurred.

Perhaps the greatest weakness in using the Barometer as a proxy for the health of tourism is what the headline arrival numbers do not measure.

They do not, by themselves, reveal whether tourists are spending more or less, whether hotel profitability is increasing, whether tourism employment is expanding, whether domestic tourism is compensating for international weakness, whether investment is increasing, or whether tourism's contribution to GDP is growing.

Domestic travel is particularly important.

A global international-arrivals figure necessarily concentrates on people crossing borders. Yet domestic tourism can represent a huge part of the

travel economy. A country suffering weaker international arrivals could simultaneously experience strong domestic demand.

WTTC's framework explicitly incorporates both international and domestic visitor spending and measures GDP and employment effects, giving policymakers and investors additional dimensions with which to judge the sector.

WTTC has also expanded its research into environmental and social measures, including greenhouse-gas emissions, energy and water use and characteristics of tourism employment. Its environmental methodology acknowledges that global coverage sometimes requires estimation or extrapolation where national information is less complete.

That disclosure is important. Good tourism statistics are not simply about producing more numbers; they are about making clear which

Cont'd on page 18



Shaikha Al Nuwais, Secretary-General, UN Tourism.

UN Tourism vs WTTC: How Reliable Are Global Tourism Statistics?

How reliable are the tourism statistics shaping headlines and policy? We compare UN Tourism's latest international arrivals figures with WTTC data and other indicators to show what the numbers include, what they leave out, and why counting tourists alone may misrepresent the global traveleconomy.

UN Tourism's latest figures released today suggest global travel barely grew in the first half of 2026. But the numbers deserve closer examination — and comparing them with WTTC data exposes the limits of measuring tourism's health by counting international arrivals alone.

According to figures attributed to the latest UN Tourism World Tourism Barometer, an estimated 690 million international tourist arrivals were recorded between January and June 2026, around

three million more than during the same period a year earlier.

The headline suggests an industry that is still growing, albeit marginally. Beneath it, however, the picture is considerably more complicated.

International arrivals reportedly increased 2% in the first quarter before declining 1% in the second. June was particularly weak, with arrivals down 3% globally. Western Europe fell 6% in June, South-East Asia declined 5%, and parts of Oceania were also affected by disruption.

The Middle East recorded the sharpest regional deterioration, with arrivals reportedly down 22% during the first six months of the year.

Yet there is a bigger question for governments, investors and tourism businesses: How much does an international-arrival number actually tell us about the health of the

traveleconomy? UN Tourism's international tourist arrivals are an important and widely used measure of cross-border tourism. But an "arrival" should not be casually interpreted as a unique person.

A traveller entering several countries during one trip can generate multiple international arrivals. The measure also says little by itself about how long visitors stayed, how much they spent, what kind of accommodation they used or how much economic activity their trip generated.

A destination could receive fewer international visitors while generating more tourism revenue if those visitors stay longer or spend more. Conversely, arrivals can rise while the economic return per visitor falls.

That makes the widely reported global arrival total a useful indicator of volume, but an

incomplete indicator of tourism's economic health.

It is here that data produced by the World Travel & Tourism Council, in collaboration with Oxford Economics, can provide a broader economic picture.

WTTC's Economic Impact Research covers 184 economies and examines tourism's contribution to GDP and employment as well as international and domestic visitor spending, leisure and business spending, investment and other measures. Its framework also distinguishes direct economic effects from the wider indirect and induced contribution of Travel & Tourism.

For decision-makers trying to understand whether tourism is actually creating economic value, jobs and investment rather than simply moving people across borders, that can make WTTC's dataset more informative.

WTTC answers a different, and often more commercially useful, question

The two organisations should not be treated as if they were publishing rival versions of exactly the same statistic.

UN Tourism is particularly important for internationally comparable official tourism statistics and international-arrival trends. WTTC's Economic Impact Research is designed to answer a wider economic question: what does Travel & Tourism contribute to an economy?

WTTC says its latest annual research estimates that Travel & Tourism contributed \$11.6 trillion to

global GDP in 2025, equivalent to 9.8% of the global economy, including direct, indirect and induced effects.

Its country research can include GDP and employment contributions, domestic and international visitor spending, business versus leisure expenditure, investment, government spending and outbound expenditure. It also publishes forecasts.

That breadth is a significant advantage when assessing the industry's commercial importance.

WTTC also has the benefit of a common modelling framework developed with Oxford Economics. Its methodology is explicitly intended to provide comparable estimates across countries and to fill gaps where complete Tourism Satellite Account data are unavailable. The framework uses official tourism information where possible and estimation techniques where necessary.

This makes WTTC particularly valuable where national tourism statistics are incomplete, delayed or difficult to compare.

But that strength comes with its own warning label: modelled data are not the same thing as observed data.

WTTC itself explains that alternative sources and estimation techniques are required where Tourism Satellite Account information is unavailable, and notes that historical data can be revised as the annual research is updated.

So WTTC can offer a

Cont'd on page 17



Maame Efua Houadjeto, Chief Executive Officer, Ghana Tourism Authority [GTA]

Maame Efua Houadjeto: Positioning Ghana Tourism for Sustainable Growth and Investment

...GTA Chief Executive and African Travel Commission Vice-Chair brings Ghana's tourism leadership to the regional stage

Ghana is positioning tourism as a major engine of economic growth, with the Ghana Tourism Authority [GTA], under the leadership of its Chief Executive Officer, Maame Efua Houadjeto, playing a central role in promoting the country as a sustainable and competitive destination.

Established under the Tourism Act, 2011 [Act 817], the Ghana Tourism Authority is the principal government agency responsible for the promotion and sustainable development of Ghana's tourism industry, both locally and internationally.

The Authority's vision is ambitious: to become a major driver of Ghana's economic growth, maintain the country's position as a

leading sustainable tourist destination in West Africa and place Ghana among the top five tourism destinations in Africa by 2028.

Her position within the

ATC is particularly significant because Ghana is one of the founding members of the African Travel Commission, dating back to the Commission's establishment in the 1960s.

The connection between Ghana and the ATC therefore goes beyond contemporary institutional cooperation. It reflects Ghana's longstanding involvement in continental tourism development and its continued interest in strengthening African tourism cooperation.

As Vice-Chair of the ATC, Houadjeto is part of a regional framework that seeks to bring African national tourism organisations, tourism authorities and private-sector stakeholders closer together around common

tourism interests.

Under its statutory responsibilities, the GTA regulates tourism enterprises across accommodation, food and beverage, entertainment, conference facilities, events, travel trade operations, restaurants, recreational centres, children's play centres and theme parks.

The Authority carries out this responsibility through registration, inspection, licensing and classification, providing a regulatory framework intended to improve standards across Ghana's tourism industry.

Promotion is another major component of the GTA's mandate. The Authority markets Ghana domestically and internationally through publications, promotional materials, participation in tourism fairs and exhibitions, and the organisation of special events.

For Houadjeto, this promotional responsibility comes at a time when African destinations are increasingly looking beyond traditional tourism markets and seeking new opportunities in intra-African, European, American and Asian travel.

Beyond marketing, the GTA's mandate recognises the importance of research in shaping tourism policy.

tourism interests.

Her dual responsibilities consequently place her at the intersection of national tourism development and continental tourism cooperation, leading Ghana's tourism promotion at home while contributing to the wider African tourism agenda.

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Beyond marketing, the GTA's mandate recognises the importance of research in shaping tourism policy.

The Authority undertakes research and studies on tourism trends both at home and abroad to support decision-making and policy formulation. It is also responsible for facilitating the development of tourist facilities and products and supporting human-resource development across both the public and private sectors.

This combination of research, regulation, promotion and investment facilitation provides the institutional foundation for Ghana's broader tourism ambitions.

One of the strongest messages in the GTA's tourism proposition is its invitation to investors.

The Authority identifies opportunities across food, beverage and entertainment; meetings, conferences and exhibitions; accommodation; resorts; eco-lodges; hostels and camping facilities; and health and wellness tourism.

The food and beverage segment, for example, is presented as an area with growing demand from international tourist populations, creating opportunities for restaurants and food-service businesses offering traditional, Oriental and continental cuisines.

The meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions market also presents opportunities for multipurpose convention, conference and exhibition centres, particularly facilities integrated with shopping and other visitor services.

Accommodation remains another important area, with opportunities ranging from large and

Cont'd on page 6

... Strong Presence At WTTC Global Summit

Cont'd from page 5

medium-sized hotels to smaller establishments serving business travellers, conference participants and holidaymakers.

The GTA's investment proposition also extends beyond conventional hotels to coastal and inland lake resorts, mountain resorts, eco-lodges in national parks and countryside locations, youth and adventure tourism facilities, and health and wellness tourism.

Tourism cannot grow without the infrastructure to move and accommodate visitors. The GTA therefore identifies transport-related opportunities including luxury coaches, charter-flight services, domestic flight carriers and cable-car infrastructure at mountain resorts.

This highlights the increasingly interconnected nature of tourism development, where destination marketing must go hand in hand with accommodation, attractions, mobility, entertainment and other visitor services.

Houadjeto's role within the African Travel Commission adds a continental dimension to Ghana's tourism ambitions. As Vice-Chair of the ATC, she represents a Ghanaian tourism institution that has been connected to the Commission since its formative years. Her participation also provides an opportunity for Ghana to contribute its experience in tourism promotion, destination development, regulation and investment to broader African tourism conversations.

The ATC's objective of strengthening cooperation

among African tourism authorities and private-sector stakeholders complements the GTA's own emphasis on partnerships, marketing, research, regulation and innovation.

For Ghana, this creates an important bridge between its national tourism programme and the wider movement to strengthen intra-African travel, connectivity, investment and tourism cooperation. The GTA's mandate places collaboration between government and the private sector at the centre of tourism development.

The Authority's investment message is equally direct: it is open to working with investors in developing mutually beneficial tourism businesses.

That approach is significant because tourism is not created by government alone. Hotels, airlines, restaurants, tour operators, attractions, conference centres, transport companies, financial institutions, technology providers and local communities all form part of the tourism value chain.

Ghana's tourism strategy, as presented by the GTA, therefore goes beyond attracting visitors. It seeks to build an ecosystem capable of generating investment, employment, enterprise development and wider economic activity. The target of becoming one of Africa's top five tourism destinations by 2028 provides a clear benchmark for the Authority's ambitions.

For Maame Efua Houadjeto, the challenge and opportunity extend



Maame Efua Houadjeto

beyond her national mandate. As GTA Chief Executive and Vice-Chair of the African Travel Commission, she occupies a position that connects Ghana's tourism development with the broader African tourism agenda.

Her leadership comes at a time when African countries are increasingly

recognising the need to work together to grow tourism within the continent, attract international investment and make African destinations more accessible and competitive.

From Ghana's historic role as a founding member of the African Travel Commission in the 1960s to Houadjeto's present-day role as its Vice-Chair, the

country's involvement reflects a longstanding commitment to tourism cooperation.

The message from Ghana is therefore both national and continental: tourism remains a powerful instrument for economic development, and stronger partnerships—within Ghana and across Africa, will be central to unlocking its full potential.

For Africa, the conversations in Valletta will offer an opportunity to ensure that the continent's destinations and tourism ambitions remain part of those global conversations.

From Cairo to Cape Town, Kampala to Kigali, and across the continent's many tourism markets, Africa will have a voice in Malta.

And as the world's tourism leaders converge on Valletta from October 7 to 9, all roads will lead to Malta, and Africa will be there.

WORLD
TRAVEL &
TOURISM
COUNCIL

Cont'd from page 4

The summit comes as the global tourism industry confronts rapid technological change and a

new generation of travellers, while destinations compete for investment, visitors, talent and connectivity.

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...Travel & Tourism Event: WTTC's Global Summit

Cont'd from page 13

Malta Tourism Authority, will join WTTC Chairman Manfredi Lefebvre d'Ovidio and WTTC President & CEO Gloria Guevara as the Summit gets underway.

A key feature of the programme will be the exclusive Global Leaders Dialogue, which will bring together Ministers, policymakers and global business leaders for candid discussions on the future competitiveness of Travel & Tourism. The Global Leaders Dialogue will feature two highly interactive, moderator-led panel discussions, each bringing together eight Ministers and four global CEOs for a genuine exchange of perspectives rather than a series of formal interventions.

The Summit will also mark the launch of the WTTC Youth Movement, a new global initiative

designed to inspire greater interest in careers across Travel & Tourism and give young people a meaningful voice in shaping the sector's future. Addressing the industry's growing workforce and skills needs, the programme will bring together around 90 students and 10 professors from 16 partner institutions, representing more than 30 nationalities. Through direct engagement with industry leaders, policymakers and global business leaders for candid discussions on the future competitiveness of Travel & Tourism. The Global Leaders Dialogue will feature two highly interactive, moderator-led panel discussions, each bringing together eight Ministers and four global CEOs for a genuine exchange of perspectives rather than a series of formal interventions.

The Summit will also provide the platform for WTTC to accelerate its Together in Travel initiative, a global effort designed to connect, support and champion small and medium-sized

enterprises (SMEs), which represent around 85% of the global Travel & Tourism community. As WTTC works towards its ambition of building a one million-strong community of Travel & Tourism SMEs, Summit delegates will hear how the initiative is providing businesses with practical tools, insights, networking opportunities and a stronger collective voice in global policy discussions.

Shaping the future agenda for Travel & Tourism

Across the programme, delegates will explore the most pressing opportunities and challenges facing the sector through discussions including "Digital Identity: Resetting the Border Experience", "AI Unlocked: The New Era of Travel", "Unlocking the Power of Travel & Tourism SMEs", "Building Resilience in an Age of Disruption", "Destination Stewardship: The Right Kind of Growth", "Connecting the World: The

Future of Mobility", "Tourism for All", and "Public and Private Leadership: The Next Trillion Dollar Investment". These conversations will focus on how governments and businesses can work together to accelerate innovation, improve connectivity, enable seamless travel, strengthen sustainability efforts, attract investment, develop talent, support destinations and create greater resilience in an increasingly complex global environment.

The Summit will also examine the future traveller, the growth of luxury and wellness tourism, the emergence of new tourism powerhouses such as India, the changing investment landscape, Europe's future competitiveness, next-generation leadership and the growing importance of accessibility and impact-driven travel.

The Summit will conclude with Moving Forward Together, bringing Gloria Guevara, President & CEO of WTTC; Manfredi Lefebvre d'Ovidio, Chairman of WTTC; and Carlo Micallef, CEO of the Malta Tourism Authority, back to the stage to reflect on the key themes, commitments and actions that emerged throughout FUTU[RE]SET. As the global Travel & Tourism community looks ahead, the session will reinforce the importance of collaboration between the public and private sectors in delivering a stronger, more resilient and future-ready industry, before culminating with the announcement of the host destination for the 2027 WTTC Global Summit.

Future of Mobility", "Tourism for All", and "Public and Private Leadership: The Next Trillion Dollar Investment". These conversations will focus on how governments and businesses can work together to accelerate innovation, improve connectivity, enable seamless travel, strengthen sustainability efforts, attract investment, develop talent, support destinations and create greater resilience in an increasingly complex global environment.

The Summit will also examine the future traveller, the growth of luxury and wellness tourism, the emergence of new tourism powerhouses such as India, the changing investment landscape, Europe's future competitiveness, next-generation leadership and the growing importance of accessibility and impact-driven travel.

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The Summit will also provide the platform for WTTC to accelerate its Together in Travel initiative, a global effort designed to connect, support and champion small and medium-sized

Tanzania: Serengeti Balloon Safaris Becomes World's First B Corp-Certified Balloon Company

Serengeti Balloon Safaris has become the world's first hot-air balloon company to achieve Certified B Corporation status, giving the Tanzanian tourism operator an internationally recognised benchmark for its environmental, social and governance practices.

The certification, awarded in August 2026, follows an assessment by B Lab of the company's governance, treatment of workers, community impact, environmental performance and customer practices.

Serengeti Balloon Safaris said it achieved a B Impact Score of 97.1, compared with a current median score of 50.9 for businesses completing the B Impact Assessment.

"We are thrilled and honoured to have achieved this recognition for the way we run our company," said Mr. John Corse, managing director of Serengeti Balloon Safaris.

"At SBS we are passionate about promoting a positive impact for each and every stakeholder we have - our team, our guests, our community and the environment we live and work in."

The certification gives the company a new sustainability credential as international tourism businesses face increasing pressure from travellers, investors and business partners to demonstrate measurable environmental

Cont'd on page 18



Bassirou Diomaye Faye, President of Senegal

Dakar 2026 Youth Olympic Games: All The Sports And Cultural Events Taking Place On The Corniche

During the Dakar 2026 Youth Olympic Games, competition venues will not be the only places to experience the Games. The Corniche will also host activities, concerts and shows, offering families and friends the chance to enjoy the Games in a different way.

Sport, but not only. From 31 October to 13 November 2026, the Dakar 2026 Youth Olympic Games will bring Senegal to life through the excitement of competition.

Alongside the sporting events, including the road cycling events taking place on the Corniche Ouest on 8 and 10 November, spectators will be able to enjoy a cultural and entertainment programme designed for everyone.

Near Place du Souvenir Africain, the Dakar 2026 programme will put music, dance, comedy and the arts centre stage. It is another way to extend the Youth Olympic Games experience beyond the competition venues.

Interactive activities will give the public the chance to discover the Games in a fun and engaging way. They will also provide an opportunity to take part in activities centred around the 10 engagement sports.

These sports have a special place in Dakar 2026. They offer young people and the general public the chance to discover new ways to move, play and connect.

During the Youth Olympic Games, artistic expression will be celebrated at the Corniche. Traditional performances, contemporary dance and urban dance will bring the site to life throughout the Games.

The programme will also showcase a range of musical styles. Reggae, hip-hop, jazz, Afro music and live performances will create a variety of atmospheres for visitors to enjoy.

The public will also be able to attend a slam poetry evening, a comedy show and a fashion show. These events will make the Corniche one of the key places to meet, connect and celebrate during the Youth Olympic Games.

Women will also take centre stage in the programme. An exhibition entitled "African Olympians", produced in partnership with the Olympic Museum, will be open to the public.

It will shine a light on the journeys, talent and creativity of African women athletes through sport and culture.

The Dakar 2026 Youth Olympic Games will be the first Olympic sporting event ever held in Africa.

For this landmark edition, the Games aim to offer an experience that goes beyond sporting competition alone.

Spectators will be able to cheer on young athletes, discover new sports, take part in activities and enjoy a rich cultural programme.

During Dakar 2026, culture will be at the heart of the celebrations. And the celebration will be everywhere.

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Bahrain To Host The International Tourism Investment Forum 2027 With UN Tourism

Under the patronage of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince and Prime Minister, the Kingdom of Bahrain will host the International Tourism Investment Forum [ITIF], from 10 to 12 January 2027, in partnership with UN Tourism.

Her Excellency Fatima bint Jaafar Al Sairafi, Minister of Tourism of Bahrain, and Her Excellency Shaikha Nasser Al Nuwais, Secretary-General of UN Tourism, signed the hosting agreement at the Arabian Travel Market 2026 in Dubai, in the presence of officials and representatives of the tourism sector.

The Forum will bring together ministers, investors, financial institutions and private-sector leaders, with a focus on where tourism investment is heading, how projects are financed, and how to build partnerships that deliver long-term economic and social returns. The programme will also present Bahrain's tourism projects and investment opportunities to international investors.

Her Excellency Fatima bint Jaafar Al Sairafi said: "This agreement is an important step in establishing Bahrain as a regional and international destination for tourism investment. The Forum will give investors and decision-makers a global platform to find new opportunities and build lasting partnerships. It will also show what Bahrain offers: a strong investment environment, advanced infrastructure, a strategic location and a diverse tourism offer."

Her Excellency Shaikha Al Nuwais said: "Investment decides whether tourism grows in a way that creates jobs, builds resilience and lasts. UN Tourism will bring its investment expertise and global network to Manama, and we thank the Kingdom of Bahrain for hosting the Forum. Our ambition is clear: to help turn tourism potential into investable projects that deliver lasting value."

The agreement reflects Bahrain's commitment to international cooperation in tourism, drawing on UN Tourism's global expertise to strengthen the Kingdom's investment environment and the competitiveness of its tourism sector.



Kemi Nanna Nandap, Comptroller, Nigeria Immigration Service [NIS]

NIS, IOM Review Nigeria's Border Management Strategy Ahead of 2027–2031 Policy Cycle

The Nigeria Immigration Service, Kemi Nanna Nandap, said the Service [NIS], in new strategy must be built around credible migration data, effective implementation mechanisms and sustained collaboration among relevant government agencies.

The development followed a three-day Top Management Workshop held at Zuma Rock Resort, Niger State, from September 27 to 30, 2026, to review the 2019–2023 National Border Management Strategy [NBMS] and its Action Plan.

The review is expected to provide a foundation for the next policy cycle covering 2027–2031, with emphasis on addressing emerging migration, border management and security challenges.

Speaking during the workshop, the Comptroller-General of the Nigeria

proposed 2027–2031 policy cycle.

The process culminated in an NIS Executive Management Endorsement Session, where key recommendations were reviewed and endorsed, while proposed interventions, financing options and the strategic direction for the new policy cycle were considered.

The NIS said the engagement reflects its commitment, alongside its partners, to strengthening collaboration and improving Nigeria's border management system.

The review is expected to contribute to a more coordinated approach to border governance, migration management and national security as Nigeria prepares to enter a new five-year policy cycle.

Source: Nigeria Immigration Service [NIS] Public Relation Office.

President Bio Appoints Hotel Association President John Shallop To National Tourist Board

His Excellency, President Rtd. Brigadier Julius Maada Bio has appointed the President of the Sierra Leone Association of Hotels and founding member of the Federation of Allied Tourism Associations [FATA], John Shallop, to serve as a Board Member of the National Tourist Board [NTB].

The appointment comes at a crucial time for the tourism sector.

Shallop has in recent months intensified nationwide capacity-building programmes for hotel staff, aimed at improving service delivery and professional standards across the country.

He is also currently leading consultations and sensitization drives with other key players in the tourism industry on the formation of a private sector-led federation that will serve the best interest of all operators in the tourism landscape.

The move is seen by industry observers as a recognition of Mr. Shallop's long-standing contribution to hospitality development and his push for unity in the sector. Mr. Shallop has been

a vocal advocate for collective bargaining, reduction of multiple taxation on tourism businesses, and for private sector collaboration to attract investment into the country's hospitality industry.

Members of the Sierra Leone Association of Hotels and the Federation of Allied tourism Association have since sent congratulatory messages to Shallop, describing the appointment as well-deserved and timely.

In his response, Shallop commended President Bio for the confidence reposed in him and pledged to serve diligently.

He said he wholeheartedly accepts the appointment and will deliver on the expectations of the President.

"I thank His Excellency the President for this consideration. I pledge to serve in the best interest of the nation and in the interest of the sector, and will work with other Board members to take the National Tourist Board to greater heights," Shallop stated.



Julius Maada Bio, President of Sierra Leone



Giorgia Meloni, Prime Minister of Italy.

WTTC Brings Together More Than 100 Global Speakers For The World's Most Influential Travel & Tourism Event: WTTC's Global Summit

CEOs, Ministers, Members of Parliament, Commissioners and former Heads of State from G20 economies, international organisations and the world's most influential Travel & Tourism businesses.

A landmark global programme bringing together leaders from airlines, airports, hotels, cruise lines, destinations, technology companies and investment firms over two days.

Malta Global Summit to explore AI, investment,

seamless and digital identity, connectivity, sustainability, workforce, destination stewardship and the changing traveller, reflecting WTTC's eight strategic priorities.

The World Travel & Tourism Council [WTTC] has unveiled the full programme for its 26th Global Summit in Valletta, Malta, bringing together more than 100 global speakers for what is the most influential gathering of public and private sector leaders in Travel & Tourism anywhere in the world.

Taking place under the

from international institutions, government bodies and many of the world's most prominent Travel & Tourism businesses. From airlines, airports and hotels to destinations, technology companies, investors and tourism authorities, FUTU[RE]SET will reflect the full breadth of the global Travel & Tourism ecosystem.

The Summit programme is built around WTTC's eight strategic priorities: enabling safe and seamless travel, strengthening destination stewardship, advancing sustainability, harnessing emerging technologies and AI, improving crisis preparedness, expanding connectivity, developing the workforce of the future and unlocking investment and economic growth opportunities.

Gloria Guevara, President & CEO, WTTC, said: "The WTTC Global Summit brings together an extraordinary range of voices at a moment when Travel & Tourism is being reshaped by AI, technology, changing traveller expectations, geopolitics and new patterns of investment and growth.

"Our eight strategic priorities provide a clear framework for action, but it is through conversations like these - bringing governments and business leaders together - that we can turn opportunities into progress. Malta provides an exceptional setting to challenge thinking, share solutions and build the partnerships needed to shape the next decade of our sector."

Carlo Micallef, CEO, Malta Tourism Authority,

said: "The programme for FUTU[RE]SET reflects the extraordinary breadth of issues shaping the future of Travel & Tourism. Over the summit, leaders from across our global industry will address some of the most important questions facing our sector. What makes this programme particularly valuable is the diversity of perspectives it brings together. Airlines, airports, hotels, cruise operators, technology companies, governments, tourism authorities and international organisations will all have a seat at the table, creating an important platform for sharing experience, challenging established thinking and identifying opportunities for collaboration."

The Minister for Tourism of Malta, Jo Etienne Abela, stated: "We are delighted to be hosting this prestigious event and we are well aware of its potential for lasting benefit to our islands. The Summit is an excellent opportunity to forge new partnerships that are built on trust - trust that is borne of initiative, integrity and the determination to do better. The future of tourism rests on meeting the expectations of discerning tourists in a sustainable way, whilst adding value to our local communities."

The Summit will open with senior Maltese leaders setting out the country's vision for the future of Travel & Tourism. Dr. Robert Abela, Prime Minister of Malta; H.E. Ian Borg, Deputy Prime Minister of Malta; H.E. Dr. Jo Etienne Abela, Minister for Tourism of Malta; and Carlo Micallef, CEO of the



Beach Somewhere in West Africa

...Investment And Easier Movement Across Borders - ATC
Cont'd from page 11

tourism. It said African countries should not measure tourism success exclusively by international visitor arrivals, noting that domestic travellers provide an important foundation for tourism businesses.

In countries such as Nigeria, with large populations and significant geographic and cultural diversity, the domestic market represents a substantial opportunity.

The ATC said better roads, affordable accommodation, reliable transportation, improved attractions, destination management and effective marketing would be necessary to stimulate domestic travel.

The Commission noted that tourism's economic impact extends well beyond hotels and

airlines.

Hotels purchase agricultural products. Restaurants employ workers. Tour operators engage drivers and guides. Tourists buy locally produced goods, crafts and clothing. Airports and airlines support thousands of direct and indirect jobs.

Tourism can therefore contribute to economic diversification in countries traditionally dependent on oil, gas, minerals and agricultural commodities.

The ATC said tourism should increasingly be regarded as a strategic economic sector rather than simply a leisure industry.

The Commission also stressed the need for greater investment in tourism infrastructure and human capital.

Airports, roads, railways, hotels, attractions, museums, national parks, conference facilities and digital

infrastructure all require investment.

However, the ATC said financing should also reach small and medium-sized tourism enterprises, including restaurants, tour operators, travel companies, cultural businesses and community-based tourism enterprises.

It further called for greater investment in hospitality education, tour guiding, foreign languages, digital skills, destination management and customer service.

The ATC said tourism growth must also be accompanied by responsible management of Africa's natural and cultural resources.

National parks, wildlife, heritage sites, forests and coastal environments constitute some of the continent's most valuable tourism assets.

The Commission said tourism revenues can

contribute to conservation, heritage preservation and community development when properly managed.

The African Travel Commission said stronger cooperation between African governments, national tourism organisations, airlines, hotels, investors and private-sector tourism associations would be essential to unlocking the continent's full potential.

Rather than viewing tourism solely through individual national markets, the Commission said Africa should increasingly develop regional and multi-country tourism corridors.

West Africa, for example, could develop stronger tourism circuits linking countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal, while East Africa already provides examples of the benefits of multi-country tourism.

The Commission said Africa's tourism future should be based on greater connectivity, collaboration and shared economic opportunities.

The African Travel Commission said the continent possesses the natural attractions, cultural diversity, population and creative energy required to build a much larger tourism economy.

However, it stressed that potential alone does not create economic value.

“Attractions must become tourism products. Products must become experiences. And experiences must become sustainable economic opportunities for local communities,” the Commission said.

The ATC maintained that Africa's tourism future will depend on investment, infrastructure, connectivity, easier legitimate movement across borders, technology, skills, effective destination management and stronger public-private partnerships.

The Commission concluded that Africa should not only seek to attract more visitors from outside the continent but should also encourage more Africans to discover Africa.

“More Africans travelling within Africa means more opportunities for African airlines, hotels, restaurants, tour operators, attractions, communities and small businesses,” the Commission said.

“The continent's tourism journey is far from over. In many respects, Africa is only beginning to discover how large its tourism potential can become.”



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Nigerians Groan As Uber Gap Remains Unfilled: African Travel Commission Calls for Better Ride-Hailing Services

Nigerians are increasingly groaning under the pressure of rising ride-hailing fares, inconsistent services, limited location coverage, and growing concerns about passenger safety, even as several operators compete to fill the gap left by Uber in Nigeria's urban transportation market.

The African Travel Times says the challenge goes beyond the departure or reduced presence of a major ride-hailing operator. It reflects a wider problem within Nigeria's urban mobility system, with implications for commuters, businesses, domestic tourism and international visitors.

According to it, Uber's entry into Nigeria fundamentally changed passengers' expectations of urban transportation by introducing a convenient digital system through which users could request

vehicles, identify drivers and vehicles, estimate fares, track journeys and rates services.

That experience, the magazine noted, created a new standard for convenience and predictability.

Today, however, many passengers complain that they are paying significantly higher fares, experiencing trip cancellations and difficulties with pickup locations, while some destinations remain poorly represented on digital platforms.

"Nigerians are groaning, and the issue can no longer be treated as simply a competition between ride-hailing companies," according to an African Travel Times report.

"Transportation is fundamental to the quality of life in our cities. It is also an essential component of tourism. When

transportation becomes expensive, unreliable or perceived as unsafe, the consequences go beyond the passenger. Restaurants, hotels, attractions, tour operators, retailers and other businesses can also feel the impact."

The report stressed that Nigeria's tourism ambitions cannot be separated from the quality of its transportation infrastructure.

A visitor arriving in Lagos, Abuja, Calabar, Kano or Port Harcourt needs to move easily between airports, hotels, conference venues, restaurants, attractions, shopping districts and entertainment centres.

"If visitors can reach a destination but cannot move around conveniently, then the tourism experience is incomplete," the report noted.

The report urged government agencies, tourism authorities,

transport regulators and private technology companies to treat digital mobility as an important component of Nigeria's tourism infrastructure.

It also highlighted passenger safety as one of the most important issues facing the ride-hailing industry.

Ride-hailing depends fundamentally on trust, with passengers entering vehicles operated by people they may have never met.

It also noted that effective driver verification, vehicle identification, trip monitoring, emergency response systems, and responsive customer support should be treated as essential elements of modern ride-hailing services.

"Technology by itself does not guarantee safety,". "The systems behind the technology must work, and passengers must have confidence that their complaints and emergencies will receive appropriate attention."

The report identified accurate digital mapping as an important part of the problem because according to it, Nigeria's cities are expanding rapidly, with new hotels, restaurants, estates, offices, shopping centres, event venues and tourist attractions emerging regularly.

Where such locations are poorly mapped or difficult to identify on ride-hailing platforms, passengers and drivers can experience delays, cancellations and unnecessary frustration.

For international visitors unfamiliar with Nigerian cities, the problem can be even more

significant.

It also revealed that the current market situation presents an opportunity for Nigerian technology companies and transport operators to develop services specifically suited to the country's rapidly changing urban environment.

"The demand has not disappeared," the report says. "Nigerians still want convenient transportation. Visitors still need reliable mobility. Businesses still need efficient movement of people."

"What Nigerians are asking for is straightforward: reasonable fares, reliable service, accurate locations, wider coverage, responsive customer support and safety."

It noted that the difficulty of filling the space left by Uber demonstrates the scale of the opportunity in Nigeria's transportation market.

Rather than simply seeking to replace one operator with another, the report concluded that the industry should focus on rebuilding consumer confidence and delivering a more reliable mobility ecosystem.

"As Nigeria's cities continue to grow, mobility will become even more important to economic activity and tourism," George said.

"The objective should not simply be to have more ride-hailing applications. The objective should be to provide Nigerians and visitors with better transportation, fairer pricing, reliable service, wider coverage and a safer way to experience Nigeria."



Africa Must Prioritise Intra-African Travel, Connectivity, Investment And Easier Movement Across Borders - ATC

Africa's tourism industry has enormous room for further growth despite the significant contribution the sector already makes to the continent's economies, the African Travel Commission [ATC] has said.

The Commission said Africa's tourism potential extends far beyond attracting visitors from Europe, North America and other international markets, stressing that the continent's population of more than 1.4 billion people represents one of the world's largest emerging tourism markets.

According to the World Travel & Tourism Council [WTTTC], Travel & Tourism contributed about US\$228 billion to Africa's economy in 2025 and supported approximately 30.2 million jobs. The

continent also recorded about 99.2 million international visitors during the year.

The ATC said the figures demonstrate the growing importance of tourism to Africa but also highlight the significant opportunity that remains to be unlocked.

"The question is no longer whether Africa has enough tourism attractions. It clearly does," the Commission said. "The challenge is how to transform those attractions into competitive tourism products and connect them efficiently to African and international markets."

The Commission identified intra-African tourism as one of the continent's most significant opportunities.

For decades, African destinations have placed

substantial emphasis on attracting long-haul international visitors. While international tourism remains important, the ATC said African countries should pay greater attention to Africans travelling within the continent.

A Nigerian visiting Ghana, a Ghanaian travelling to Senegal, a Kenyan visiting Rwanda or a South African travelling to Morocco creates economic activity through spending on accommodation, transportation, restaurants, attractions, entertainment, shopping and other services.

The ATC said stronger intra-African tourism could help retain more tourism expenditure within the continent while contributing to cultural exchange and regional economic integration.

The Commission also

identified air connectivity, road and rail infrastructure as critical areas requiring greater attention.

It noted that there are still instances where travelling between two African countries requires passengers to connect through Europe or the Middle East, increasing travel time and costs.

According to the ATC, improving direct air connections between African cities would create new tourism corridors, encourage multi-country itineraries and strengthen business and conference tourism.

"Tourism cannot grow without movement," the Commission said. "Every direct connection between African cities creates an opportunity for tourism, trade and economic cooperation."

The ATC also called for continued progress in facilitating legitimate movement across African borders.

It said greater use of e-visas, online applications, visa-on-arrival arrangements and other digital travel facilitation systems could make intra-African tourism easier while maintaining appropriate border-security measures.

The African Development Bank's Africa Visa Openness Index has documented progress in improving travel access across the continent, although significant barriers remain.

The ATC said African countries should continue working towards travel systems that are secure, predictable, transparent and efficient.

The Commission also urged African destinations to move beyond traditional sightseeing and develop tourism products around culture, music, festivals, cuisine, fashion, sports, wellness, adventure, history and entertainment.

It cited Nigeria as an example of a country whose global cultural influence through Afro beats, Nollywood, fashion and cuisine could be further converted into tourism opportunities.

The ATC said major cultural and entertainment events could become gateways to wider tourism experiences, encouraging visitors to stay longer and spend more across local economies.

The Commission further emphasised the importance of domestic