

TOURISM AND PEACE IN AFRICA

4th IPT African Conference Kampala, Uganda, 20 –25 May 2007

Ministers, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

It is most appropriate and timely that the 4th African Conference on Peace through Tourism takes place in East Africa. This region has suffered some of Africa's most infamous atrocities and prolonged conflicts. Making peace was a slow, difficult and painful process. However, now, after many difficult years we can truly say that this region has won its peace. The challenge is now to use the peace to build the future and empower the peoples of this region to enjoy the fruits of peace and development.

Peace is a fragile commodity – it breaks easily and must be protected and defended against its many enemies. It is of vital importance that we make our peace as strong as possible – that we build our peace on rock, and not on sand – to use a biblical expression. The intermittent outbreaks of violence, conflicts and terrorist attacks in different parts of the world, and the increases in crime and violence, remind us that we live in an uncertain and dangerous world. The challenges the world is facing today are immense and varied:

There are crises in the Middle East, the Korean Peninsula and Africa; threads of terrorism and religious radicalism continue; there are clear and irrefutable signals that our present lifestyles and consumption patterns are causing dangerous harm to the fragile ecosystems that support life on Earth. The consequences are to be seen in global warming and the struggle for sustainability.

And then, overriding it all, the vast and worsening divide between haves and have-nots with the explosive potential that unfulfilled needs and expectations are creating. Poverty, with all its

problems of malnutrition, disease, crime, social collapse and the breeding ground for violence and terrorism - constitute a real threat to long term peace, stability and freedom. Addressing this problem has moved to the top of the world agenda,

It was against this background that the 189 members of the UN General Assembly unanimously agreed to the **Millennium Declaration** in 2000 - as a declaration of intent and a commitment to work for a better world in the 21st Century.

Regarding **peace** the declaration say: “We are determined to establish a just and lasting peace all over the world in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter” The Charter than identify seven fundamental values that they regard as essential, such as:

- **Freedom:** Men and women have the right to live their lives and raise their children in dignity, free from hunger and from the fear of violence, oppression or injustice. Democratic and participatory governance based on the will of the people best assures these rights.
- **Equality:** No individual and no nation must be denied the opportunity to benefit from development. The equal rights and opportunities of women and men must be assured.
- **Solidarity:** Global challenges must be managed in a way that distributes the cost and burdens fairly in accordance with basic principles of equity and social justice. Those who suffer or who benefit least deserve help from those who benefit most.
- **Tolerance:** Human beings must respect one other, in all their diversity of belief, culture and language. Differences within and between societies should be neither feared nor repressed, but cherished as a precious asset of humanity. A culture of peace and dialogue among all civilizations should be actively promoted.
- **Respect for nature:** Prudence must be shown in the management of all living species and natural resources, in accordance with the precepts of sustainable development. Only in this way can the immeasurable riches provided to us by nature be preserved and passed on to our descendants. The current unsustainable patterns of production and consumption

must be changed in the interest of our future welfare and that of our descendants.

- **Shared responsibility:** Responsibility for managing worldwide economic and social development, as well as threats to international peace and security, must be shared among the nations of the world and should be exercised multilaterally. As the most universal and most representative organization in the world, the United Nations must play the central role.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDG) was drawn from the Millennium Declaration. These Goals constituted an unprecedented promise by world leaders to address, as a single package, peace, security, development, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The key to unlock the implementation of the Millennium Declaration is Peace and security. Without a climate of peace we will not succeed in meeting the Development Goals – they will stay outside our reach. We need peace and a spirit of cooperation to mobilise the available resources to meet these goals. Kofi Annan – then SG of the UN - strongly emphasised this point in a speech in 2005 when he said "We will not enjoy development without security, we will not enjoy security without development, and we will not enjoy either without respect for human rights. Unless all these causes are advanced, none will succeed".

One may ask - how does tourism fit into this picture. Well, as a truly global business and a core sector of the world economy tourism has become a major international role player.

I do not wish to bore you with statistics, but a few pointers could illustrate the magnitude and the development power the tourism industry can generate.

- Over more than half a century tourism has been the fastest growing economic activity. In 1950 International tourist arrivals (the way in which tourism growth is measured) were 25 million arrivals. In 2005 (55 years later) it broke through the barrier of 800 million and reached **843 million in 2006**.
- And, **the long term trends for the Tourism industry are incredibly positive**. The tourism industry is expected to

double in size over the next 12-14 years – faster in some regions than in others - simply because boundaries are going down and disposable incomes are going up. One example: In 1990 approximately 1 million Chinese travelled outside China – 16 years later – in 2006 **China generated 36 million** outbound tourists. China is now the biggest tourism generating country in the world and it is expected that they will generate a 100 million international tourists by 2020.

- According to the figures of the IMF (International Monetary Fund) tourism has become the **biggest export industry** – bigger than the chemical or motor industries.
- Tourism is highly labour intensive and one of the **biggest employers** in the world - particularly for women and young people;
- Tourism consists of more **small, micro and medium sized businesses**, providing more products and services to the tourism industry, than any other economic sector. It has a strong impact on local farming, fishing, handicrafts, services and even on the construction industry.
- It is a leading **service sector driver** – representing one quarter of all exports of services world-wide. If air transport is included, it represents 40% of all exports of services.
- Tourism is a **frontline industry** when it comes to **poverty-reduction**. International tourism receipts for Developing countries amounts to about US\$ 250 billion. In the 49 **LDC's** (Least Developed Countries) – of which the vast majority are in Africa – 46 (that is 46 out of 49) have tourism as one of their three leading sources of **foreign exchange**. For many poor countries tourism remains one of the few – if not the only – opportunity for development.
- The contribution of tourism to **conservation and sustainable development** is critical – the natural environment is the most important product on which the tourism industry depends – whether it is in the form of beaches, mountains, ski-slopes, or game parks, to name but a few. Tourism has shown its capacity to serve as a

tool that can be used to achieve the right balance between social, economic and environmental goals.

- Tourism has the ability to build **bridges of understanding and tolerance between peoples and nations – it promotes world peace**. Think about it for a moment: Every peace agreement includes tourism exchanges as one of its first components. It is people-to-people contacts that establish the first bridges to cultural understanding and tolerance. That is why UNWTO has quietly been driving tourism projects to help build post-conflicts development in East Timor, Sri Lanka, Rwanda and even in DPR Korea.
- And when it comes to **development**, Tourism is one of the best – and often the only option - for many of the world's poor countries to create new jobs, provide opportunities - particularly for women - and to help lift people out of poverty. That is why UNWTO is helping countries to place tourism at the core of their Development and Poverty Reduction Strategies

When it comes to the MDG - Tourism is – directly or indirectly – related to all the goals. Peace and Tourism belong together - they are inter-related. Without Peace there can be no tourism, but tourism can also contribute to the peace process. I call peace a process, because it can never be absolute, final or complete. Peace is not a destination, a place where you arrive and unpack. Peace is a journey that demands continued effort. It requires that we vigorously protect and advance those rights and values that form the foundation of real peace. In such a climate tourism will flourish, as will other economic activities.

Africa is well positioned to derive more value from tourism. Its tourism strength however, is above all to be found in its originality and authenticity. It has a lot to offer that can no longer be found elsewhere. Africa still has a legacy of romanticism as the continent of the explorers and as a place for adventures.

Africa is an exciting continent but its progress and development are hampered, amongst other, by the impediments created by poor or non-existent infrastructure and fragile developing economies. However, most African countries have one, common, unique selling

property, namely an abundance of Africa's diverse and fascinating fauna and flora. If this great natural wealth can be correctly conserved and managed, their sustainable utilization should contribute significantly to the long-term development of the continent.

One of the most successful and powerful initiatives to utilize the immense value of Africa's natural potential comes from the concept of Peace Parks and Transfrontier Conservation Areas. The principle is to integrate large tracks of land crossing national boundaries into Peace Parks. The goal is to advance sustainable economic development, the conservation of bio-diversity and regional peace and stability.

The national boundaries of African countries proclaimed in colonial times and during the period that was dubbed the "scramble for Africa", cut across tribal land and ethnic groupings, across animal migration routes, thereby fragmented eco-systems and led to the destruction of bio-diversity. No wonder Africa had so many civil wars and regional conflicts. The concept to cluster together – across national boundaries those tracks of lands that belong together and manage its flora and fauna in integrated ways - lays the foundation for economic growth, progress and peace. It is not accidental that the initiative is called Peace Parks.

This concept has the potential to open many new doors for Africa's development. Peace Parks can be created across the continent and linked together to create unique animal kingdoms and make Africa the world's leader in the protection of fauna and flora. The economic benefits would be enormous – mind-boggling. The world has lost more than 30% of its plant, fish and animal species over the past 30 years. It has lost more than 30% of its forests. I don't even want to begin to refer to the many global environmental threats such as climate change and global warming. Suffice to say that with peace parks across Africa we would create "lungs" for the world – lungs that can become the backbone of Africa's economic growth over the next three decades.

Tourism is already making a major contribution towards achieving the MDG – it could be used more effectively in many developing countries. It is crucial for our generation to fulfil the dream and make the MDGs a reality. I would like to conclude with Kofi

Annan's statement about the MDGs. "Let us be clear about the costs of missing this opportunity: millions of lives that could have been saved will be lost; many freedoms that could have been secured will be denied; and we shall inhabit a more dangerous and unstable world".

The opportunity is ours to make the Millennium Development Goals a reality. We must not wait for others – we have to do it ourselves – not by blaming others – but by using our opportunities to make Africa a continent of peace and progress. To achieve that goal the strength of tourism should be more effectively use as a tool for sustainable development and poverty alleviation. This challenge is our opportunity.

Thank you