

**The 4th IIPT African Conference on Peace through Tourism
Kampala, Uganda
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**Advancing the Contribution of Tourism to Poverty Reduction
and Socio-Economic Development
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I have had the pleasure of presenting papers at previous two conferences successfully organized in Africa by IIPT and was therefore honoured to have once again received Dr D'Amore's invitation to speak at this conference on "Advancing the Contribution of Tourism to Poverty Reduction and Socio-Economic Development".

Before I dwell on the subject, allow me to join Dr Noel Brown in conveying to President Museveni our thanks for honouring the participants by formally opening the Conference, for his inspiring and eloquent address and for declaring this week as "National Peace through Tourism Week". I am confident that at the end of the conference we will have gone some way in establishing collaborative strategies for sustainable tourism development in support of the UN Millennium Development Goals.

Secondly, Mr Chairman, also permit me to congratulate Louis D'Amore the Founder and President of this International Institute and his colleagues, who since its formation in 1986 have tirelessly worked

in galvanising global leaders' support in focusing on achievement of peace through tourism which inevitably precedes creation of prosperity and equality amongst peoples of the world.

Although the tourism sector has a down side – in that it is sensitive to issues of health hazards and security even if these may not be near the travel destination it plays a significant role in enhancing socio-economic development. For many countries in the world tourism has become a crucial vehicle towards the ultimate goal of achieving sustainable peace. With a contribution of more than US\$. 5 trillion annually tourism is offering millions of jobs directly and many more millions indirectly, thus endeavouring to make hospitality-related industry as the engine of growth. Judging from the growth of the tourism sector in Africa, and later I shall give statistics to support this, one is led to believe that over the years it will take over the key position from the traditional sectors of agriculture, mining and construction. Mr Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, globally tourism is the only sector which in the past 20 years has been growing at the rate of almost 4% annually, even after taking into account a decline to a 1% growth rate in 2001 following the September 11 event in the United States.

On our continent, in Kenya, Gambia, Egypt and the Seychelles, this sector is a leading money spinner while in Tanzania, South Africa and Mauritius it is No. 2 or in some cases approaching No. 2.

In Africa this vibrant sector depends on natural attractions namely, wildlife, geography, history and culture. On the later aspect we heard from participants at one of the concurrent sessions. I might at this stage add that our governments are consciously committed in safeguarding the current attractions for the posterity by appropriate regulations and encouraging the development of eco-tourism. The industry is increasingly developing cultural destinations. For instance, in Tanzania we are guiding tourists to many such centres where also cultural tourism products are sold. Yesterday Hon. Wayne Michael Cainer passionately spoke about Diaspora Frail and I wish to suggest that they may enjoy tracing “the great slave trade route which runs from Bagamoyo to Kigoma in Tanzania which was followed by the famous explorers Dr David Livingston and Mr Henry Morton Stanley in the 19th century and perhaps to look into ancient civilisations dating back to the 13th century in Bagamoyo, Zanzibar and Kilwa.

Mr Chairman, Fellow participants, as we talk of enhancing Tourism’s contribution to poverty reduction we should address the need to tackle effects of climate change, degradation – caused by nature and by man. A Ugandan newspaper, the New Vision of 10th January this year carried an article dealing with this aspect which, inter-alia, said: “The vulnerability of East Africa's tourism industry to climate change has become more apparent with two striking cases; the vanishing snow of Mount Kilimanjaro and the receding numbers of flamingos of Lake Nakuru in Kenya. Whilst we may not have control over the vanishing snow on Mount Kilimanjaro because of the reduced effects

of pulses from the Indian Ocean, we should be able to take action against pollution caused by the climbers. Another safeguard which the authorities can take is to minimise destruction by elephants of trees in the national parks by protecting tree trunks with wires.

Mr Chairman, the subject of our talk is advancing tourism's contribution in improving the quality of life of our people to ensure consistent prosperity. To this end, there is still much which needs to be done. For instance strategy should be planned to harness the benefits of technology to diversify our markets to encourage the Park guides to learn the languages of tourists, to develop entertainment attractions such as traditional dances such as the ones we enjoyed yesterday and music and improving accommodation and other infrastructure facilities. In this connection very few governments in Africa grade their hotels on an international standard. As I had pointed out at a previous conference, Megan Rowe writing in June 2002 for Forbes Magazine said that in the US, Mobil Travel Guides and the American Automobile Association conduct regular inspections and issue annual guidebooks listing accommodations on one-to five-star or on diamond scales.

Mr Chairman, let me now give some statistics on the growth of tourism in Africa. According to WTO tourist arrivals in Africa in year 2005 was 9.8% and in 2006 it was 10.6%. In comparing with the world growth of 4% our continent is in the lead. We have seen much progress between the last IIPT Conference in Lusaka and now. This year, a multi-discipline panel comprising of an American broadcasting

company, Good Morning America and USA Today, named Tanzania's Serengeti National Park, the site of the world's great migrating animals, as mentioned yesterday by Minister Jumanne Maghembe, the Seventh New Wonder of the World.

Mr Chairman, Fellow participants, I hope these remarks will engender discussion which will help us to reach a meaningful consensus.

Thank you.