

"THE ROLE OF TOURISM IN HEALING THE WOUNDS OF CONFLICTS"
AT THE 2ND IIPT AFRICAN CONFERENCE ON PEACE THROUGH TOURISM
COMMUNITY TOURISM – GATEWAY TO POVERTY REDUCTION
AT GOLDEN TULIP HOTEL: 7TH – 12TH DECEMBER, 2003

Your Excellency Frederick Sumaye
Prime Minister of the United Republic of Tanzania

Honourable Ministers

Distinguished Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Distinguished Participants

Ladies and Gentlemen.

WORDS OF APPRECIATION

Let me at the onset state how pleased I am to address such a distinguished gathering of senior government officials, renowned internationalist, and particularly those dealing with the Tourist Community in the world.

The fact that so many of you have found time to come to this "City of Peace" – Dar es Salaam and participate in this very important

conference, is a testimony to the efforts deployed by the International Institute for Peace Through Tourism in partnership with the Africa Travel Association at sensitizing the public on Peace through Tourism.

The invitation to attend this distinguished gathering and talk to you was extended to Dr. Salim A. Salim, The Chairman of The Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation. Unfortunately, he is unable to attend. He has had to travel to New York, to attend the first meeting of Eminent Persons recently appointed by the UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan to be members of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change in the World. Dr. Salim asked me to represent him and the Board of Trustees of The Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation, and to convey to you his warm greetings and best wishes, as well as a sincere apology for his inability to be with you.

It is indeed a great privileged and a special honour for me to address this distinguished gathering of Senior African Executives from both the public and private sectors of Tourism, donor agencies,

educators, policy makers, leading-edge practitioners, entrepreneurs, future leaders of industry and senior representatives of related sectors, including environment, culture and economic development. I offer a very special thank you and sincere congratulations to the organizers of this important conference – The African Travel Association (ATA), the IIPF Founder and President, Mr. Louis D'Amore, our Minister for Natural Resources and Tourism Hon. Zakia Hamdani Meghji, and all those in the Ministry who have worked with the Minister to bring this conference to us and in this well organized form. It is marvelous and beautiful. Ahsante sana Mhe. Waziri Meghji.

The specific subject of my talk is "THE ROLE OF TOURISM IN HEALING THE WOUNDS OF CONFLICT". This subject is to be discussed within the context of a broader subject of COMMUNITY TOURISM – GATEWAY to POVERTY REDUCTION.

Tourism is about PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT. It is also about the whole business of some people providing services,

including accommodation to others who choose to visit places, be the districts or countries such as Tanzania. It is, therefore, about Human Rights and Social Justice, and about domestic governance nationally and internationally. It is also about friends, individuals and societies. It involves people traveling and visiting places basically for pleasure. People visited, and those visiting are communities of human beings living in certain environments, and they share certain common interests. Tourism, is therefore, an industry that facilitates contacts between and among people of diverse origins, nationalities, history, culture, norms, religions, educational achievements, temperaments, and from varying environmental surroundings; etc. The whole process of healing wounds starts from this interaction between and among peoples, and within and between countries.

This diversity of peoples brought together under the Tourist Industry is, and can be, the beginning of the process of conflict as well as the healing of the wounds of conflict. For conflict is a common characteristic inherent in all Men, including Tourists and those who host Tourists. One wise Man, the late Mwalimu Julius

Nyerere, in his deliberations, as thinker and philosopher, about what he called a New Synthesis of Men and Society, wrote as follows:

"Man's existence in Society involves an inevitable and inescapable conflict – a conflict of his own desires. For every individual really wants two things: Freedom to pursue his own interests and his own inclinations. At the same time he wants the freedom which can be obtained only through life in Society – freedom from fear of personal attack, freedom from the effects of natural dangers which from time to time hit every individual and which cannot be withstood without help, and freedom to gain rewards from nature for which his own unaided strength is insufficient. Yet as soon as an individual becomes a member of Society he must sacrifice in the interests of the Society, certain of the private freedoms which he process outside society. This means neither the good of the individual as such, or the group as such, can always be the determining factor on society's decisions".

For individuals as for communities, humanity's life is conflict ridden: people are in conflict with ministry as well as between themselves and others. The reasons for this are many. Even traveling to Dar es Salaam, for this meeting, from wherever we came from, will probably have involved some kind of conflict for some of you – involving decisions on how to spend the money – paying for travel to Tanzania or doing some other things with the money. A decision by individuals or a community of Tourists, to stay in this hotel or that was probably difficult to make a decision to be in this room on time or a little late, may probably have caused a bit of conflict for some of us. All these decisions involved a bit of debate-internal in our own hearts, or external involving more than one person. Those conflicting ideas and decisions produce little wounds in us; the healing of those wounds is achieved only where the conflicts are resolved through self conducted debate or when productive positive dialogue between the parties to the conflict leads to mutual agreement.

Community Tourism is prone to conflict because it involves people who live with conflict. The interests of the two parties to this kind of Tourism - the visitors from a local location or a foreign country and the hosts to the visitors - must agree on the Tourist benefits of the business to both sides. A Tourist who travels for pleasure to a foreign distant land, must be satisfied and convinced about the value of his money in terms of the services he receives from his hosts, be they hoteliers, tour operators, drivers, travel agents, people in the local communities he/she will visit, etc. Similarly, people in the host countries to Tourists have to be happy about the returns they receive from the Tourists in relation to the value of their services in monetary terms. It is only when the visiting Tourists, and their hosts in the country visited share a common understanding of the benefits of Tourism to both sides that conflict can be avoided or averted.

In Africa today conflicts have become the order of the day in the Eastern, Southern, Western, Northern and Central parts. Too many resources have been expended in order to resolve those

conflicts, thus leaving many more important socio-economic development programmes and projects without funds, or with inadequate resources, including financing, to run them. Even the poverty which is the cause of so much misery in our continent, has not yet received adequate attention and the resources which go into supporting useless and unnecessary conflicts and wars, could have been better used to abolish or reduce poverty considerably. Instead, the conflicts are allowed to continue, while some leaders in politics and business engage in pursuing personal wealth to the extent of endangering the peace and security of the State and the people. For in Africa today, poverty is not the real problem of the people – for African has adequate knowledge and ample resources to enable her people overcome their conditions of poverty. The real problem – the root cause of the misery, conflicts and subsequent wars, hate and destruction of life and property is the division of people into the rich and the poor. Today the poor are getting poorer, and the rich are getting richer.

This kind of arrangement breeds INJUSTICE in society. Yet injustice and peace are incompatible – where there is injustice peace will in the long run disappear. The peace and stability needed for Tourism to flourish is the child of social justice. The reasons for the existence of this appealing state of affairs are to be found both within the African States themselves, and from outside Africa. And, whatever the source of the problem, the results are the same – the suffering of the people, and the subsequent accumulation of hate, and conflict situations which some times flare into open wars, leading to the many deep wounds needing our attention before they can be healed.

None of us wish to live in the past, or even to experience or be part of the situation prevailing in many countries of Africa today. We are not even here to apportion blame, for there is no one to blame when Man is making his/her history. The issue is what we can do together to mitigate the situation, and improve the quality of life of the people. It is gratifying to know and note that this conference is dedicated to discussing how the force of Community Tourism can be

used to reduce, and ultimately eradicate poverty. This is important, for as long as poverty persists in Africa and elsewhere in the World, Community Tourism will not flourish as we expect it to do. And where it will be undertaken it can indeed cause more harm than good if peoples perceptions in the host countries continue to associate it with wealth and link it to their poverty and misery. Tourism is a huge Economic Industry. It has, and must be seen to making its maximum contribution to efforts by Governments and their citizens, to eradicate, or as we say today, reduce poverty.

Globalization has made the World small, and destroyed the many myths associated with countries and peoples the World over. Today people in different parts of the World – be it in the USA, Canada, Japan, Africa, India, etc, are close to one another, and perhaps know better about what goes on around them than it has been before the developments in Science, Technology and Information Technology Communication. Globalization has turned the World into such a small village that issues of peace and security in part of the World are no longer irrelevant to other parts of the

World. The War between Iraq and America, the conflicts between the Israelis and the Palestinians, the Civil wars and conflicts in the countries of the Great Lakes in Africa, the war between India and Pakistan etc. raise issues of peace and security for all humanity – not only for the countries directly involved in the conflicts or wars.

Community Tourism is affected negatively by those unstable situations in the World. Travel and accommodation become risky, and those involved are the victims of vulnerability. Incomes derived from Tourism is lost by the beneficiaries of the Tourist Trade, and programmes and projects for poverty alleviation/reduction are halted at great cost to the would be beneficiaries of those projects – states and individuals alike.

Yet despite all these problems, it is encouraging to know that the prospects for international peace and security through Tourism seem brighter than ever before. For despite an increased number of regional and local conflicts in Africa and the rest of the world, and the widening gap between the rich and poor, the dominant trend is

towards increased international cooperation and solidarity based on shared vision of universal human rights, democratic governance, freedom for the individual and society, greater liberty and social justice for all. One powerful indicator of success is the fact that more and more people are traveling as Tourists, and for other reasons. Tourism remains today one of the biggest and fast growing industry globally. Its growth is expected to continue, and its influence on the process of peace building and conflict resolutions will also continue to have a positive impact.

TOURISM AND ITS CONTRIBUTION IN HEALING THE WOUNDS OF CONFLICTS

Mr. Chairman,

The Thessaloniki Declaration on Peace through Tourism on 14th May 2001 recognized the fundamental human right of people to travel, and that travels opens minds, builds mutual respect and understanding, and provides benefits to both the traveler and host destinations. The Declaration further observed that the more people learn about their own culture, history and traditions, the more they

wish to share their heritage; and that through tourism, people discover that they have much in common to share and celebrate and live together in harmony. The Thessaloniki participants under this declaration unanimously agreed to collaborate in a manner that brings mutual benefits to all parties towards the common aims of improving the quality of life and the social, cultural, economic and environmental spheres as is possible through sustainable tourism development. In so doing, they recognize culture; education; student exchanges; information sharing; cultural religious and alternative tourism; and responses to natural disasters as potential areas of cooperation. At the end, they recommended that there should be:

1. Liberalization of government formalities and visa restrictions, and the reduction of taxes and levies in the Balkan and Eastern Mediterranean Region.
2. Increases in the frequency and modes of transportation connecting destinations within the region.
3. Use of 21st Century technology such as the "World Wide Web" and the Internet as vehicles to promote the Building of a

- Culture of Peace through Tourism within the region and to share information on how travelers can contribute and assist with local social, cultural, environmental and humanitarian projects in the areas they visit.
4. Protection and restoration of historical monuments and landmarks as reminders of lessons learned from historical milestones from which wisdom can be gained in guiding us in future decision making towards a better future for humanity.
 5. Emphasis be given on Peace and Cultural Studies in the education of children of all ages and the learning of languages, culture and histories of neighbouring states encouraged. That the element of Peace and Friendship be incorporated in all tourism curricula.
 6. Initiation of Communications programs to create greater public awareness and involvement within the region to the vision of "Building a Culture of Peace through Tourism" including promotion of the IIPT Credo of the Peaceful Traveler and the IIPT logo "Travel Promotes Peace".

7. The concept of Peace through Tourism and tourism education be incorporated in the Cultural Olympiad; and that we strive to make Cyprus a model of Peace and friendship through Tourism for the Mediterranean Region and throughout the world in the spirit of the original Olympic Games.
8. Welcomed and supported the declaration of the United Nations of an International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001/2010).

This declaration is a milestone in the development of Community Tourism: we have to learn lessons from it in healing the wounds of conflicts in Africa. While some African countries have succeeded in ending political instability internally, in a bid to institute good democratic governance, the world should continue to struggle for harmony, not only among countries, but also between and among peoples.

Tourism: A tool for Peace and Harmony:

Facts show that peace is one of the vital requirements for tourism development. Tourism on the other hand, can also contribute

to fostering peace and harmony among the people in various ways it facilitates direct contacts between the Tourist visitor and the host communities in their diversity of the services needed by the Tourists and which are provided by their hosts, provide an intimate link between the two groups, which goes a long way in cultivating and inducing a source of confidence, trust and ultimate security for the peoples involved.

Tourism can thus play a major role in spearheading an atmosphere of reconciliation, forgiveness and peace in the world and the African continent in particular. This may be done through tourism's inherent message of goodwill, hospitality, trust, service without servility, tolerance, interaction and communication. Tourism is an effective mechanism for fostering trans-national cultural exchanges and understanding among people. Its many programmes and projects intended to benefit specific target groups should be encouraged, and those who initiate them remembered and congratulated.

A significant step Africa has taken towards providing an enabling environment for Community Tourism is the establishment of SADC and re-establishment of East African Community. The two Community Blocks provide ample space for Tourist development and promotion. The value of establishing these regional organizations lies in the potential for good relations and the partnerships they provide for those involved or wishing to get involved in Community Tourism. The potential benefit of Tourist joint ventures in these economic blocks is obviously great.

Tourism must also be crucially linked to the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), whose main objective is to alleviate poverty on the African continent through developmental programmes that are economically viable and sustainable. One of the ways the fight against poverty can be won is through job creation, a task Community Tourism can fulfill effectively and efficiently within the framework of the NEPAD and its many avenues for implementation.

In Tanzania, for example, tourism plays a significant role in its economic development. The industry is credited for being one that

offers employment opportunities either directly or indirectly through its multiplier effect. The sector directly accounts for about 16% of the GDP and nearly 25% of total export earnings. It directly supported an estimated 157,200 jobs in 2002. Foreign exchange receipts from tourism grew from US\$ 259.44 million 1995 to \$ 730.00 million in 2002. These receipts were generated by tourist arrivals, investments and related activities in Tourism. Tourist arrivals have shown a steady increase from 295,312 in 1995 to 575,235 in 2002. With an average growth rate of 20%, it is estimated that it will hit the high target of one million tourists by the year 2010.

It is, however, crucial that benefits brought by tourism are sustainable. As such, the tourism industry within the African continent should ensure the creation and consolidation of partnership programmes between people in the host countries and investors and operators in the Tourist industry. This is one sure way of alleviating conflict and healing the wounds of conflict through Community Tourism.

For tourism to truly be a generator of peace, and claim to be a healer of wounds of conflict, it should be people-driven. It is only through active involvement of our communities in tourism programmes and projects that attitude change from suspicion to trust, and from bitterness to love and harmony can be achieved. It is also important that communities living around tourist attractions are not left out in the cold as we embark on development programmes for peace, security and partnership.

The achievement of this conference should judge by its ability to adopt strategies that will ensure active involvement and participation of all nationals of the continent in promoting peace and security through tourism, as well as promoting international understanding in order to heal the wounds of conflicts.

Further, in order to consolidate the achievements towards peace in the world, there is an urgent need to engage the private sector in helping the empowerment of SMMEs around the continent and the world at large. Defining and agreeing on policies regarding

SMME development and empowerment should be one of the objectives to be achieved at this Conference.

The availability of finance to develop and promote the tourism industry is yet another critically important issue for the industry's further growth and development. Financial institutions will need to revisit their financial policies and come up with a financial plan that will vigorously promote bankable tourism programmes and projects within the continent. Those will help alleviate poverty that humiliates local communities, and sometimes leads to conflicts that create the wounds that need healing later. "Prevention is better than cure."

Issues of political, economic and social stability confronting the African continent that will have impact on tourism within the continent should be addressed through the regional cooperations and their interrelated institutions juxtaposed with an action plan developed to address them.

CONCLUSION:

Mr. Chairman,

Africa can use tourism as an effective tool for healing the wounds of conflicts through peace and sustainable development if we seriously embark on sustainable tourism development. Conflicts that give rise to wounds requiring our attention care and healing, arise out of injustice. Community Tourism must be about Justice globally, and address itself to all through, plan and action that perpetuate INJUSTICE in the World. Community Tourism needs peace and security to flourish and grow. Yet peace and security cannot also be achieved without growth in the economies which can guarantee prosperity for Communities in the host countries, and alleviate further conflicts. People's rights to travel and enjoy life have to be guaranteed and secured. We all draw inspiration from this Conference, and the help that Community Tourism, the World's largest industry will develop and grow in an environment of Peace and Security, and for the benefit of humanity as a whole.

I thank you for listening to me!