The case for developing comprehensive Destination Information Systems (DIS); Opportunities and challenges for National Tourism Authorities in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Presented by: Kwame N Neba

Stenden University, Qatar

Structure

☞ **Introduction**

☞ **Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for Peace**

☞ **Tourism in Sub-Saharan Africa**

☞ **Information in Tourism**

☞ **Destination Information Systems (DIS)**

☞ **Advantages of DIS for Tourism Authorities in Sub-Saharan Africa**

☞ **Challenges for Sub-Saharan African Destinations**

☞ **Overcoming these Challenges (Way forward)**

☞ **Conclusion**

☞ **Questions**

ICT for Peace

Tunis World Summit on the information society 2005.

☞ **Recognition of the role of ICT in Peace and Sustainable development.**

☞ **Commitment to bridge the gap between North/South.**

Tourism in Sub-Saharan Africa

☞ **Sub-Saharan Africa received 3.1% of world tourists arrivals in 2007.**

☞ **Does not lag in tourism resources but lags in tourism numbers.**

☞ **Not much is known of the tourism product of the region.**

Information in Tourism

☞ **For consumers multiple suppliers mean a constant need for accurate information.**

☞ **For Suppliers the perishable nature of the product means information is key.**

In Short it is the "lifeblood" of the tourism Industry.

Destination information systems (DIS)

Definition:

A Data base that contains comprehensive information about a destination's facilities and tourism products and is accessible by the travelers or travel planners, either in the destination or the home region.

Examples:

☞ PROMIS-Finland.

☞ TIScover-Austria, Germany, Italy and South Africa.

Advantages of DIS for Sub-Saharan Africa.

Benefits from DIS:

☞ Provide 'one stop shopping' for consumers.

☞ Provide exposure at a cheaper cost.

☞ Enhance the collection and dissemination of tourism related databases for destinations and facilities.

☞ Provide interactive capabilities and encourage virtual travel.

☞ Provide data and statistics to facilitate investment in tourism projects.

Challenges for Sub-Saharan destinations

Lack of Commitment from Authorities:

☞ **Tourism is often not considered a priority.**

☞ **Lack of well conceived, articulated and realistic tourism policy objectives.**

Poor ICT Infrastructure:

Africa is about 14% of the world's population, but only 3% of the phones, 1.5% of the world's computers and just over 3% of the world's internet users.

✸ **Irregular Electricity Supply:**

Challenges for Sub-Saharan destinations

Contd.

Lack of Public/Private Sector Co-operation:
☞ **Poor organization and mistrust of government.**

Lack of capacity:
☞ **High ICT illiteracy**

Budgetary Constrains(Public/Private):
☞ **ICT competes for scarce resources with other priorities.**
☞ **Citizen income is low: Average cost of using a local dial up internet account for 20 hrs a month in Africa is about $60/month. Consider that $60 a month is higher than the average African salary.**

Little or no Statistics for Data Base:

Overcoming challenges: The way forward.

Government should lead the effort: Why?

☞ **Private sector is not very developed**

☞ **Tourism development needs to be holistic.**

Existing infrastructure as starting point:

☞ **Adaptation.**

Adopt a policy of ICT Capacity building:

Overcoming challenges:
the way forward.

Recruitment of and Co-operation with Experts:

☞ Benefits could outweigh cost.

☞ Co-operation with partners and donor organizations, e.g. (UNCTAD).

Private Sector Co-operation:

☞ Benefits need to be demonstrated.

☞ Platform for setting standards and regulation.

Conclusion

☞ **The challenges facing the tourism industry in sub-Saharan Africa are enormous.**

☞ **Is DIS a Panacea? No!**

☞ **Would it improve and enhance? Yes!**

☞ **Where there is a will there is a way!**

Questions?

Thank you for your patience.

Will be happy to entertain any questions.