

AFRICAN UNION

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**SECOND ORDINARY SESSION OF THE
SPECIALIZED TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORT, INTERCONTINENTAL AND INTERREGIONAL
INFRASTRUCTURES, ENERGY AND TOURISM,
14TH – 18TH APRIL 2019,
CAIRO, EGYPT**

**PROGRESS REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF
TOURISM ACTION PLAN**

INTRODUCTION

1. The current Action plan of the African Union Commission (AUC) for the Tourism sector was adopted in Lomé, Togo, in March 2017, by the AU Specialized Technical Committee on Transport, Transcontinental and Interregional Infrastructure, Energy and Tourism (STCTTIIET), which also, in accordance with its rules of proceedings, adopted the creation of three sub-committees including: (a) Sub-Committee on Energy, (b) Sub-Committee on Transport and (c) the Sub-Committee on Tourism. The outcomes of the Lomé STC-TTIIET were considered by the AU Summit in July 2017, with assignment for the AUC to implement the recommendations of Lomé STC-TTIIET (Ex.CL (1024(XXXI))).
2. The Lomé Ministerial Declaration (***Annex I***) recommended that the AUC, in partnership with Member States, RECs and all African tourism stakeholders, ensure that the proposed African Tourism Organization in line with First Ten-Year Implementation plan, is established by March 2018. In addition, that the formulation of the AU Continental Tourism Framework to which member States should align their national tourism strategies in line with Agenda 2063, be urgently developed within one year of the declaration.
3. Accordingly, the Bureau of the STC-TTIIET held its first meeting in Addis Ababa 25-26 July 2017 and as an outcome, recommended the operationalization of the sub-committees of the STC-TTIIET.
4. To lay the foundation for the formulation of the continental tourism framework and establishment of the African tourism organization, AUC in partnership with the United Nations Economic Commission of Africa (UNECA) organised a technical inter-institutional meeting that brought together tourism experts and senior officials from key institutions including the AUC, NEPAD, AfDB, RECs, UN agencies and African Specialised institutions. The meeting was held between 11th and 13th of July 2018 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (***Annex II: Experts Report***).
5. The African Union Commission (AUC) in collaboration with the Government of the Republic of Kenya organised the First Ordinary Session of the Sub-Committee on Tourism of the STC on Transport, Intercontinental and Interregional Infrastructure, Energy and Tourism (STC-TTIIET), from 1st – 2nd October 2018 in Nairobi, Kenya. The main objective of the First Ordinary Session of the Sub-Committee on tourism, was **to update** the status of implementation of the Lomé Plan of Action for Tourism, and to chart the way forward to enhance the realization of established goals through the assignment of clear and precise responsibilities among all stakeholders.
6. The First Tourism Sub-Committee session considered Full implementation of a Continental Tourism Strategy Framework and the establishment of the African Tourism Organisation, as key prerequisites (***Annexe III- 1 & 2 : Ministers and Experts Reports***).

7. Following the recommendations of the Sub-Committee on tourism, the AUC in collaboration with UNECA, organised, in December 2018, a Continental Tourism Experts Consultative workshop (**Annexe IV: Experts Report**), and subsequently, in March 2019, a continental Experts validation meeting attended by RECs, Members States and key tourism stakeholders (**Annexe V: Meeting Report**).

1. The African Tourism Strategic Framework

8. The Strategy focuses on key priority intervention areas considered essential to guarantee competitiveness and which would serve as enduring frameworks for sustainable and long term tourism growth. In this context, the ATS 2019-2028 seeks to realise three core Strategic Directions: (1) Development of a globally competitive African Tourism Brand, (2) Ensuring that African tourism is sustainable, inclusive and a driver for regional integration, and (3) Formulation of enabling tourism policy, regulatory and institutional framework. To realise the Vision, outcomes and impacts sought by the African Tourism Strategy 2019-2028, ten Strategic Priority Areas are identified for implementation including: Quality and diversified tourism product; Development of tourism facilities and services; Tourism promotion and marketing; Destination accessibility and support infrastructure; Tourism human resource development; Mainstreaming participation of the local communities and private sector in the tourism value chain; Visitor safety and security; Natural and cultural heritage conservation and protection; An enabling tourism policy, regulatory and institutional framework and; Research and knowledge management. Under each Strategic Priority Area, key objectives and strategic actions are identified. The strategy has been reviewed by experts and the Sub-Committee on tourism and has undergone a continental validation process.

2. The African Tourism Organisation

The Lomé tourism action plan, which was part of the wider action plan 2017-2019, was adopted in Lomé, Togo by the Ministers of the STC for Transport, Interconnected, Interregional, Energy and Tourism, in March 2017. The main purpose of this Plan of Action is to define activities that will enable the attainment of African Union objectives, within the framework of AU Agenda 2063 First Ten Year Implementation Plan. In particular, the action plan set timelines for the establishment of the African Tourism Organisation by the March 2018. In line with this, based on the organisational and governance structure of the various regional bodies reviewed by UNECA, best practices were identified and analysed in the context of how best they could inform the establishment of the African Tourism organisation (ATO). The ATO rationale and statutes were then developed, elaborated and submitted for deliberation and analysis of experts and Sub-Committee on tourism for further refinement. The rationale and statutes have further undergone a continental validation process.

9. In view of its anchorage in Agenda 2063, ATO has been proposed to be established as a Specialised Agency of the African Union. Through the Treaty/protocol establishing it, ATO will advise the AU Member States and RECs on tourism matters and contribute towards:

- a) Meeting Agenda 2063 goals and aspirations;
- b) Putting in place quality assurance mechanisms to ensure that tourism in the region achieves and maintains international standards;
- c) Assisting RECs, Member States and tourism ministries and agencies to identify and implement good practices in institutional management and efficient use of resources;
- d) Developing human resource capacity in all disciplines of tourism in the region; and
- e) Promoting equal opportunities for all citizens in the region to participate and enjoy tourism activities and facilities including those with special needs.

3. Conclusion and Recommendations

10. The establishment of the African Tourism Organisation will enhance the coordination between Member States, RECs and main stakeholders operating in the tourism sector through the exchange of accurate and timely information. It will serve as a focal point from which accurate information can be obtained and to which submissions and inputs to future planning and implementation on the continental level can be operated.

11. The objective is to create a simplified, accountable entity, enabling Africa to overcome the tourism governance at the continental level, now fragmented and consequently failing to give stakeholders the needed support and guidance. The ATO is intended to be a relevant, cost effective entity and organisationally able to plan and monitor the Continental tourism Strategy implementation, foster strategy alignment of other stakeholders, and to prioritise and select strategic initiatives.

12. The endorsement of the current Rationale will afford the continent with two major practical tools (ATSF & ATO) capable to enable it recovering its competitiveness and thus to benefit from the recovery of tourism on the international level. Tourism in Africa has evolved to become very complex, with a myriad of operators, stakeholders in a structure that, instead of engendering innovation, cooperation and support has become apathetic and lacking focus.