

Supporting Tourism Recovery In Africa

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UNWTO Secretary-General Francesco Frangialli will visit Mauritania, Côte d'Ivoire and Kenya, underscoring the Organization's support of their tourism potential. These countries are now back on track to relaunch their tourism offer and start receiving international visitors under improved conditions.

Overall, Africa has sustained its above average tourism growth with international arrivals above 8% in 2007, representing 44 million additional travellers, according to the latest UNWTO World Tourism Barometer.

'These figures prove that tourism has the potential to foster sustainable development and Africa as a whole is among the top growing regions. But many countries who have experienced less favourable developments in the recent past have now the opportunity to regain tourism strength', Francesco Frangialli said.

After the events that led to the suspension of the Paris-Dakar Rally, conditions in Mauritania are returning to normality. Also here, tourism represents an opportunity for economic diversification for a country which relies heavily on agriculture, livestock and iron exports.

Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) is overcoming internal tensions, led by a new interim government of national unity. The announcement this week that a Presidential election will be held by the end of November constitutes a positive signal sent to the international community. The country seems ready to pick up again tourism growth and to work towards becoming the important destination it has been in the past. This represents an opportunity for diversifying an economy employing the majority of its workforce in agriculture and related activities.

With the constitution of a new Government of national unity, Kenya is regaining stability after the unrest posted by the election process at the end of 2007, which strongly affected tourism. The country has always been one of the main African destinations, with 1.6 million international arrivals in 2006. International tourism has now the opportunity to experience a strong comeback, thanks to the famed wildlife and costal attractions.

'In the same spirit as my recent participation at the National Tourism Conference in Algeria, after the terrorist attacks this country has endured, our active support to countries like Mauritania, Cote d'Ivoire and Kenya comes at a critical point in time, given the current global economic outlook. These countries are starting to recover in many ways, and UNWTO underscores that tourism is a means to support this positive development', Mr. Frangialli added.

Francesco Frangialli will visit Côte d'Ivoire from 20 to 22 April, Mauritania from 22 to 24 April, and Kenya on 6 and 7 May.

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