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**Global Change and
Sustainable Development**

**Challenges and Opportunities
for South-South Cooperation
in Sub-Saharan Africa**

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Tourism Industry in a Changing World

TONY ONWUMAH

Introduction

Presently, the world has come to a new awareness of the role of tourism in fast-tracking development. The World Tourism Organisation has left no stone unturned in popularising tourism by drawing world attention to its multifaceted benefits. Along the same line, Nigeria seems to understand the importance of tourism, by the creation of a whole ministry, dedicated to the promotion of tourism, that is, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and National Orientation.

Understanding Tourism

There are many definitions of tourism. Different scholars and practitioners appear to emphasize different aspects of the concept. For some, time or duration have been emphasized, for others it is the purpose that is important. Nonetheless, the World Tourism Organisation, refers to it as the process whereby people "travel to and stay in places outside the usual environment for more than twenty-four hours and not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited". Speaking in the same voice, Lawan Marguba while quoting the International Association of Scientific Experts on Tourism (IASSET) (Lawan Marguba, 2001, P13) defined tourism "as people who travel, the sum of the phenomena and relationships arising from travel and stay of non residents in so far as they do not lead to permanent residence and are not connected with any earning activity".

Furthermore, the Tourism Society of England, defined tourism in 1976 as, the temporary, short term "movement of people

to destinations outside the places where they normally live and work and their activities during the stay at each destination". It embraces movement for all purposes. From the above definitions, some common factors are easily discernible. These are movement of people from one place to another: the stay in the host community is temporary. The purpose of the visit could range from business, to leisure, religion and other reasons.

The World Tourism Organisation classifies tourism into three categories:

- Outbound tourism, involving residents of a given country travelling only within the country
- Inbound tourism, involving non residents travelling in the given country
- Domestic tourism, involving residents of the given country travelling only within the country.

The above is however too broad, and has prompted further classification and breakdown of tourism. Therefore, we have such classification as follows:

- Leisure Tourism or Recreational Tourism
- Winter Tourism
- Medical Tourism
- Religious Tourism
- Pop Culture Tourism
- Recession Tourism,
- Ecotourism
- War Tourism
- Heritage Tourism
- Dark Tourism
- Educational Tourism
- Creative Tourism
- Sport Tourism
- Down Tourism

Benefits of Tourism

To put the discussion in perspective, it is necessary to highlight the many benefits of tourism, not only to Africa as a

continent but the whole world in general. According to the World Tourism Organisation (2010), tourism is the fastest growing industry in the world. It generates income and helps in addressing the much needed revenue requirements of different countries.

In terms of receipts from tourism, it generated a whopping US \$919 billion in 2010. This is predicted to grow with time. Similarly, local communities and bodies involved in ecotourism have been known to work in concert with local communities in addressing issues such as, deforestation, desertification, depletion of fisheries, soil erosion and misuse of agricultural resources. There is certainly no exaggeration, that the tourism industry is one of the major employers of labour not only in Africa but in the whole world.

Furthermore, tourism has helped in offering people exposure to new cultures and places. It is certain that when people move to some other places different from the ones they are used to, it helps them to overcome sentiments and prejudices about other people and places. Additionally, in the process of promoting tourism, some indirect effects result. Research by WTO has shown that these include but are not limited to the following; the process of developing lakes, waterfalls through damming has improved farming activities in the area of fishing. Some stakeholders have established support services like microcredit, healthcare, education and provided skills acquisition programmes for local communities. Of equal importance are: the provision of infrastructural facilities like roads, electricity, housing schemes, potable water to areas where such facilities were either non-existent or in short supply. In the same vein, tourism has helped to promote and preserve cultural heritage. There are monuments, sites, rock arts and many others which could have been destroyed but, for the activities of stakeholders in tourism which advised that rather than destroy, they should be preserved and researched into.

A major advantage is the growth in value of tourism resource. It should be noted that, unlike other natural endowments such as oil, tourism resources, with all things being equal, do not deplete. On the contrary, they appreciate over time. Therefore, it is important for

government to invest more in tourism. Right now, in some countries of Africa such as Kenya and others, tourism is the mainstay of their economies. It could still be re-organised through improvement in security, communication, and professionalism to take its place as a major revenue earner for the respective countries.

Available records show that the ten most visited countries of the world are the following:

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| 1. France | 6. United Kingdom |
| 2. United States | 7. Turkey |
| 3. China | 8. Germany |
| 4. Spain | 9. Malaysia |
| 5. Italy | 10. Mexico |

Together, these countries earned a total of US\$919 billion according to the 2010 figures which translate to an increase of 4.7% from the figures of 2009. The statistics from the World Tourism Organization show the following as the receipts of individual countries.

Rank	Country UNWTO	International	Regional	Market
Tourism Receipts (2010)⁽²⁾				
1.	United States	North America		\$103.5 billion
2.	Spain	Europe		\$52.5 billion
3.	France	Europe		\$46.3 billion
4.	China	Asia		\$45.8 billion
5.	Italy	Europe		\$38.8 billion
6.	Germany	Europe		\$34.7 billion
7.	United Kingdom	Europe		\$30.4 billion
8.	Australia	Oceania		\$30.1 billion
9.	Hong Kong (China)	Asia		\$23.0 billion
10.	Turkey	Europe		\$20.8 billion

From the figures therefore, the tourism industry is growing by the day and forecast is that it will grow more in the years to come. Interestingly, no African country or city is included among the first ten places visited or destinations which earned the highest revenue

from tourism. This situation is disturbing because Africa has an abundance of tourist sites.

To understand the tourism industry in a changing world, we need to understand some of the problems facing the industry. These are lack of government commitment and political will, poor infrastructural facilities: like good road networks, inadequate supply of electricity, poverty and ignorance. The problem of the tourism industry especially in Nigeria is that government does not pay enough attention to it. First is the issue of funding. According to Alabi, a one time permanent secretary of Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC) at the inception of the corporation only a paltry N120m was allocated (Alabi, 2001, P.39). With poor funding, it follows that the attainment of the goals of the establishment will be limited. The problems of the sector, also include cultural factors and lack of awareness as some of the factors militating against the tourism sector. Many people are not aware of the tourism facilities around them. When they are aware, they do not see the need to "waste" money taking a holiday or travel for leisure purposes. It is therefore suggested that, there is need for more awareness about the need for leisure.

The African Situation

Even though no African country or city is included in the world's top ten destinations of tourists, yet, the African study Centre report for 2010 show that it is the fastest growing industry in Africa. In clearer terms

Tourism is the fastest developing enterprise in Africa and currently one of the continent's major investment opportunities viewing its 6% growth rate for the last decennium. Africa receives 4.8% of all tourist arrivals in the world and 3.3% of the receipts and although it is not at the heart of the global tourist market (African Study Centre, *Tourism in Africa*, 2010, p1)

Even by African standards, Nigeria's case is one of the countries with poor performance in tourism. If we are to reposition tourism to become a vital sector of our national life, we must address

the issues of inadequate security and lack of professionalism. Tourists do not want to go places where they are not secure.

Additionally, it seems that tourism is being left to non-professionals. This should not be so because there are only a few places where tourism practitioners are trained. It is important to have training and retraining programmes to help develop the tourism industry.

Nigeria and other African countries need to change their negative image on the international scene. Tourists do not want to go to places that have been portrayed as havens of crime and insecurity.

The Changing World

There is no gainsaying the fact that the world is changing at a hitherto unimagined rate. The world is becoming more materialistic and individualistic. Before now, in Africa, the emphasis was on communalism especially through the medium of the extended family network but globalisation and particularly urbanization have changed all that. Though the extended family system still exists but does not operate as before. The pool tends toward the nuclear family system. Similarly, Information Communications Technology (ICT) has aggravated the dynamics of globalization. The scenario in the world is that what happens in one part of the world could reverberate in all parts of the world instantaneously.

In the world today, people are facing a myriad of challenges which have grown in number and complexity. There is the challenge of huge bills to settle which include education, health, and mortgage among others. As a result, life has become more stressful and the need for recreation is also growing by the day. Furthermore, the world is growing increasingly sophisticated with different countries looking for, and exploring ways of multiplying options of strengthening and widening their economies and resource base in the face of dwindling resources such as oil.

One of such ways has been found to be in the tourism industry. Therefore, tourism is supposed to grow commensurately with new trends in a changing world. Stakeholders in the industry

must always function with speed and accuracy and make the attainment of efficiency their ultimate goal. To do this, it has to be proactive and be involved in training and retraining. To keep pace with a changing world, emphasis has to be placed on research and development. It would be necessary that new and better ways of service delivery have to be discovered and old and obsolete ones jettisoned.

It must be borne in mind that, tourists of today have grown in numbers as they have grown in sophistication. Thus, they deserve and demand nothing, but the best. They want value for their money and nothing but the best can satisfy them. Against this background, it is important for practitioners and stakeholders to understand that we are in a world that has grown increasingly impatient and intolerant with mediocrity and half measures. Tourism should be taken from the back waters of irrelevance and brought to its well deserved place of significance and national importance. It can replace oil and can generate far more income for Nigeria than oil if it is taken seriously.

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