

A KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY SENATOR TOKUNBO AFIKUYOMI, HONORABLE COMMISSIONER FOR TOURISM AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS, GOVERNMENT OF LAGOS STATE OF NIGERIA DELIVERED BY ASHAMU SEWANU FADIPE, DIRECTOR OF TOURISM IN THE MINISTRY ON **“CATALYZING MORE EFFECTIVE MODELS OF COLLABORATION TO LEVRAGE NORTH-SOUTH AND SOUTH-SOUTH INITIATIVES FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT, POVERTY REDUCTION AND SOCIAL BETTERMENT”** ORGANIZED BY INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR PEACE THROUGH TOURISM AT STENDEN UNIVERSITY LEEUWARDEN, NETHERLANDS, 21st TO 24th OCTOBER 2008.

Preamble

I wish to thank the founder of the International Institute for Peace through Tourism and the organizers of this very important conference for bringing the world to The Netherlands to discuss and fashion out ways of bridging the gap between the North and the South and creating understanding between South-South through sustainable tourism. I am particularly impressed with the cream of personalities at this conference drawn from Africa, Asia, Americas and Europe. This is an indication that the continents are ready to leverage assistance to themselves not only through tourism but also through other initiatives.

Globalization as an Effective Model of Leverage

The world is a global village and tourism is a global economy activity with a more wider process of globalization. The growing importance of globalization is based on principles of a new economic order, with global markets; it is a process of shaping our purchases and leveraging our needs and initiatives. While our daily lives are largely concentrated in our localities that we live, work and play, globalization is an international process which transcends local and national boundaries representing an international geographical entity which has eroded the autonomy of the nation state for the good of humanity.

The process of globalization since 1980s has aided financial deregulations in many countries and has reduced the barriers to capital and private enterprises. (Stephen & Joanne 2006, p. 17-18) Example of this in the tourism sector is the growing and expansion of multicultural enterprises in different countries of the world. Meridian group for instance with headquarters in Paris and at the same time having chains of hotels in other developed and developing countries of the world. The same is noted for Protea of South Africa with chains of hospitality establishments in Nigeria.

The role of information technology in globalization cannot be under-estimated. It has made the world a more connected place by compressing time and money and energy to travel to obtain information. Rather, information technology intensifies connections with enterprises to access and do businesses with global consumers via the internet.

However, global investment flows are creating global forms of tourism production and consumption. The hotel chains produce the service and the tourists consume the services at destinations through the activities of the travel agents, transporters and the tour operators. Nonetheless, globalization is bringing cultures into contact with each

other, bridging understanding between the North and South and creating collaboration between South and South.

Characteristics and Terminology of The North and The South

Various labels have been used to describe the North and the South in the recent times. The North is described as the advanced nations and sometimes called the First and Second Worlds. The First world is the westernized countries with capitalist economic structure and virile political democracy. Countries that fall within this category include Germany, France, Holland, Great Britain, United States among others. The Second world is mainly the less wealthy communist countries and other technologically advanced countries with non-capitalistic economic structures but have sound enduring political system. Countries that fall within this category are Bulgaria, Czech Republic, China, South Korea, Spain among others. The South is the “Third World” some of which are now refer to as the “Fourth World”. The Third World are the developing nations with relatively high economic structure and fairly stable political system. Brazil, India, South Africa fall within this category while the Fourth World is the poor and the less developed countries. Most of which are found in Africa, Asia, Indian Ocean and in the Caribbean.

Nonetheless, the countries of the South can be characterized with the following depending on their relativity:

- fast rate of urbanization and population explosion;
- high birth rate and high employment;
- limited economic resources and low level of industrial production;
- low level of literacy;
- low gross national product (GDP);
- high rate of debts;
- dependence upon importation and overseas aids including finance for development. (Stephen & Joanne 2006, p. 457-465)

Nature of Tourism in the Less Developing Countries

As a keynote address, I will not be able to give a comprehensive account of nature of tourism in the less developed countries, I will rather state the diversified products base which many South-South countries have adopted for their economic growth.

The Caribbean and Pacific zone including small islands and coastal areas have adopted resort-based tourism while a few of them in Asia concentrated on business and conference-based tourism. This is the case of Thailand and Singapore. Ecotourism and wildlife tourism is largely practiced in Africa particularly in the Eastern part of Africa while cultural tourism is more adopted in West Africa. Most Western African countries used their culture to attract visitors and display their culture for the pleasure of tourists. One of those important cultural festivals of the zone is the Abuja Carnival in Nigeria. The salient cultural festival of West African people is related to the slave route. This geographical zone holds belief that they must relate with their brothers and sisters in the Diasporas as such organize the following festivals:

- Black Heritage in Nigeria holding in the ancient slave port of Badagry;
- The Root Festival in Gambia holding in Kunta Kinte village of Juffreh;
- PANAFEST Festival in Ghana holding in Cape Coast and Elmina.

Distinguished participants, let me at this juncture draw your attention to the specific challenges confronting tourism development in West Africa. The people of this zone has relatively common understanding that cuts across some national boundaries. This understanding includes; cultures, languages and commerce. In addition, the region has a regional organization called Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). For tourism to excel in this region, there is the need for leaders of ECOWAS to come together and address the following issues:

- There is need for a common **visa** to be known as ECOWAS Visa which can be obtained from any of the West African missions abroad. The visa is expected to give tourists the opportunity to travel to any of the countries which will in turn leverage the local community through visitors' spending;
- The need for **one currency** as the case of Europe is important. ECOWAS should introduce one currency notes that will be legally accepted in the region. This will also assist the economic base of each of the destinations in the zone;
- **Security and Immigration** issues must be addressed if we are to encourage visitors to West Africa. This is a political and administrative issue. Each country must abolish multiple check points particularly on Lagos-Seme road in Nigeria, Cotonou-Hilaconji road in Republic of Benin and multiple immigration check points in Nigeria, Benin and Togo. There can be a joint **ECOWAS police patrol** on the high-way to secure lives and properties of nationals and the visitors. **Training and induction courses** must be organized for personnel in tourism related sector on how to assist travelers and tourists alike. **Tourism awareness** must be organized among the destination communities on their roles in tourism and security of visitors;
- **Trans-West African roads** must be developed from Lagos to Dakar to enhance easy movement of people across the region. Rail system should also be developed while ECOWAS is encouraged to float a minimum of two airline companies and purchase aircrafts to make the sector viable. Water transportation should also be developed to appreciate the values of our water base tourism resources;
- **Events** such as international conferences, seminars, festivals and sports be encouraged to hold in some of the West African towns and cities. This will encourage more people from the North and the South to choose West Africa as a preferred destination to be visited on regular basis and
- **Technical training** should be encouraged. Human capital is the vehicle for sustainable tourism. ECOWAS should approach donor agencies to train their personnel and the destination communities on handling of tourists and on how they can benefit from tourism activities.

However, tourism in the South-South nations has its challenges which include the following:

- foreign companies dominate the tourism sector and influence government decisions;
- foreign tourists demands are not always met by local service providers and as such look for foreign partners;
- infrastructures for tourism development are not sufficient;
- transportation, both air-rail-land and water is a great challenge;
- technical know-how is inadequate, there is a great need for human development and
- funding tourism projects has been very difficult, they have to resort to foreign loan and partnership.

Some Organizations Leveraging Assistance on Tourism to Less Developed Countries

Some of the South-South countries may leverage assistance from the following selected donor organizations from the North developed nations. These include:

- World bank;
- Commonwealth Development Programme;
- United Nations Development Programme;
- US Agency for International Development;
- Netherlands Development Assistance;
- Norwegian Agency for Development Corporation;
- Japan International Co-operation;
- Global Environment Facility;
- International Finance Corporation;
- European Investment Bank;
- Finnish International Development Agency;
- Canadian International Development Agency;
- Australian International Development Assistance Bureau United Nations World Tourism Organisation;
- International Labour Organisation;
- United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation etc. (Stephen & Joanne 2006, p. 459)

It is important that strategic plan be put in place before approaching any of these institutions so that monies donated or borrowed do not lead to another colonization and abject poverty.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Tourism is an instrument of development. The South-South countries are encouraged to toe the line of sustainable tourism development to achieve poverty reduction, social betterment and above all the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations. The goal of destination development is its sustainability that is; the ability to plan, retrain and maintain qualities for a long period of time. Sustainable

destination development therefore is the practice which maintains in perpetuity the characteristics that make the destination a desirable place to visit and to live.

Desirable to visit in the sense that all elements of attractions which pulls tourist to the destination must be regularly maintained. Such elements include; historical and cultural assets (built heritage, relics, religious sites), biophysical facilities (rare and endangered species vegetation) and tourism facilities (water supply, alternative energy supply, sewage system, water transportation harbours, road network, airport terminals). Desirable to live implies the happiness of the local communities. In other words, resident communities' aspirations must be duly considered. These include what they stand to benefit like number of local people employed into tourism industry, the stable earnings derivable from tourist's spending and their access to the facilities provided. (WHO: Indicators of Sustainable Development of Tourism 2004, p. 7-8, Edward Manning and David Dougherty 2000) ,

Furthermore, South-South countries are encouraged to view tourism **as a political tool** for poverty reduction and employment growth. In other words, tourism can then transform the economy as:

- a way of obtaining hard currency and improving balance of payment/indebtedness through admitting tourists from the North-North nations;
- a catalyst of social change with closer contact between the indigenous community and the tourist;
- a symbol of freedom, allowing citizens to travel freely within and outside the country;
- a mechanism for improving local infrastructure to cater for tourist need, thereby benefiting local people;
- an integral part of economic restructuring through privatization, exposure to national and international market forces and transnational corporations - and
- a compliment to commercial development through growth of local tourism business and small-scale entrepreneurship activity. (Stephen & Joanne 2006, p.461)

References

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2. Edward Manning and David Dougherty: Planning Sustainable Destination (Centre for a Sustainable Future) Canada, 2000
3. WHO: Indicators of Sustainable Development for Tourism Destination (World Tourism Organisation) Madrid, 2004