



STATEMENT ON THE TOURISM SECTOR REVIEW 2018



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Tourism is an important sector of Uganda's economy and is currently Uganda's leading foreign exchange earner with US\$1.45 billion in 2017, followed by remittances at about US\$1.2 billion. In addition to generating foreign exchange earnings and creating jobs, tourism promotes trade and investment and significantly contributes to the development of other sectors of the economy, such as construction, manufacturing, retail and financial services. Tourism is increasingly becoming a key source of livelihood and pride, helping to support families and local economies, and to build communities throughout the Country.

Over the past 10 years, the tourist arrivals into Uganda have steadily increased from 850,000 in 2008 to over 1.4 million arrivals in 2017, and most of tourists (56%) fell within the 20 - 39 age category. Africa contributed the majority of tourists with Rwanda and Kenya sharing 31% and 24% of the total arrivals respectively. Although the proportion of leisure visitors to total visitor arrivals is still relatively small, it increased from 18% in 2016 to 20% in 2017. It is important to receive more leisure tourists because they spend more. An average international leisure tourist to Uganda spends US\$ 1,209 (excluding air transport fares) compared to other categories.

SECTOR ACHIEVEMENTS IN FY 2017/18

Policies, Regulations and Governance

To improve tourism Government took more steps to improve Tourism Sector governance by creating Tourism as a fully-fledged standalone sector. Continuous efforts were made towards strengthening the legal framework for wildlife conservation in Uganda through the revision of the Uganda Wildlife Act 2000. The Uganda Wildlife Bill 2017 is currently awaiting enactment by Parliament. The Bill proposes higher penalties for wildlife crimes like poaching and illegal ivory trade, addresses human wildlife conflict issues, enhances community participation in conservation and harmonizes conservation with other sectors of the economy. The Bill once enacted will among others, ensure that Uganda is no longer used as a source or transit for illegal trade in wildlife species and specimens.

To strengthen the promotion and sustainable utilization of cultural heritage resources, Principles of the Museums and Monuments Bill were approved by Cabinet and submitted to First Parliamentary Counsel for drafting. Once enacted, the new Bill will repeal the Historical Monuments Act 1967.

In an effort to minimize the negative impacts of petroleum, hydro power, minerals and other developments, environmental sensitivity atlases for some protected areas have been developed and inspections were conducted on restoration of both exploration and production oil wells in Murchison Falls National Park (MFNP) and Kabwoya Wildlife Reserve.

Availability of tourism statistics in a timely manner is vital for all stakeholders and various steps have been undertaken to have immigration data captured electronically at point of arrival such as Entebbe International Airport and border posts. This has been a long awaited for achievement as the sector will be able to process and disseminate tourist arrivals data on a monthly basis and with improved levels of accuracy.

Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Wildlife Resources

Many initiatives have been carried out in regards to conservation and sustainable utilization of wildlife resources. These include protected area boundary management to mitigate human-wildlife conflict; wildlife diseases and prevalence management and control; ecological monitoring and research; community conservation education and awareness; and regular patrols and intelligence surveillance. These efforts resulted into the denouncement of poaching by 304 poachers, arrest and prosecution of 1,611 suspects and confiscation of wildlife products including 1,333kgs of ivory, 88kgs of pangolin scales, 405kgs of hippo teeth, 75 ostrich egg shells and assorted wildlife skins and game meat. Various poaching tools were also recovered including 2,812 wire snares, 91 spears, 106 metal traps, 332 pangas, 20 bows, 34 arrows, 127 nylon snares, 146 hoes, 78 trapping nets, 26 dogs.

The populations of key species were monitored, animal distribution pattern and home ranges defined and populations determined in all protected areas. Ground surveys for medium to large wild mammals were conducted and the results for the Virunga Massif Gorilla Census conducted in 2016 show that the mountain gorilla population in the Virunga Massif increased from 480 in 2010 to 604 in 2016.

Besides the animal populations, the performance of revenue sharing funds nearly doubled during the seven year period of 2012-2018 compared to the seven year period of 2005-2011. A total of 7.5 billion was disbursed over the period 2005-2011 while a total of Ushs 14.3 billion was disbursed to communities during the period 2012-2018. Communities are therefore increasingly benefitting from tourism growth especially in regards to visitation to protected areas. For the last 14 years (2005 to date), a total of Ushs 21.8 billion has been shared with communities. This amount excludes the Gorilla Levy that benefits Bwindi Impenetrable National Park amounting to UShs 1.86 billion since its start in the FY 2011/12.

Progress on the Development of Tourism Roads

In 2012, over 60 roads were mapped out as Tourism roads and these lead to national parks and other tourist attractions. To date, the Government has completed works on six of these roads, 12 roads have ongoing civil works while civil works contracts have been signed for 4 more roads.



President Y. K. Museveni Hands over revenue sharing cheque to Nwoya District Chairperson Mr. Patrick Okello Oryema

Tourism Promotion and Marketing

During the financial year, the Sector organized and participated in various domestic events but also continued with domestic tourism promotion campaigns *Tulambule* (let's explore) with enhanced focus on popularising tourism sites and encouraging Ugandans to visit and experience the beauty of their Country.

In an effort to achieve concretized presence in the African market which supplies about 80 percent of the foreign tourist, efforts were made through participation and showcasing in events of Kwita Izina-Rwanda, Magical Kenya, Indaba-South Africa and Nigeria Road shows. Uganda held Business to Business engagements and networked with regional and international hosted buyers and tour operators; distributed over 2,000 assorted tourism promotional materials and attended the Silver Chef Competition held in Rwanda, which showcased food from within the region.

Uganda's tourism offering was extended to participants of international conferences and meetings hosted in Uganda such as the World Customs Organization conference and the East and Southern African Association of Accountants-General conference where the sector had exhibition stalls and worked with organizers to have tours for 1,100 participants.

Other Tourism promotional efforts abroad included; conducting of familiarization trips, exhibiting at international expos and events including the British Bird Watching Fair where over 14 trips were confirmed and over 500 birding booklets & maps showing birding spots in Uganda distributed to visitors at Uganda's stand.

The above interventions in international markets coupled with appointment and deployment of Market Destination Representation (MDR) firms in United Kingdom, Ireland, Canada, United States, Switzerland, Austria and Germany in 2016, have yielded tangible results. For example the number of visitors from the American market increased by 17% in 2016 and 10.4% in 2017. Uganda has also registered tremendous increase in the number of foreign nonresidents visiting national parks with this category increasing by 24.4% in 2016 and 28.4% in 2017. The government and the private sector have greatly acknowledged the importance and good works of these MDR firms and as a result resources have been provided for continued engagement in FY 2018/19 and deployment of another set of three (3) Market Development Representation (MDR) firms to market and promote Uganda in the source markets of China, Japan and the Gulf States.

Cultural Heritage Conservation

Maintenance was ensured and the artifacts conserved for the regional museums and sites of Kabale, Moroto, Wedelai, Barlonyo Kumi, Patiko, Nyeru rock site, Soroti and the Uganda Museum. A Master Plan for the Kasubi Tombs (2018-2028) was completed and the documentation and packaging of some cultural heritage sites in Eastern Uganda done. Government started on the renovation of Omugabe Place in Ankole with the aim of improving its conservation and developing it into a competitive tourism product.

The construction of the transport gallery at Uganda Museum was also completed, Barlonyo Memorial Site renovated, and construction works started on Interpretation centre for Nyeru Rock Art sites in Eastern Uganda.

Tourism Infrastructure and Product Development

Tourism infrastructure and products are key in improving visitor experience and hence have huge influence on length of visitor stay and expenditure. During the financial year, a total of 1,536kms of trail network, 140kms of tourism track and 597kms of boardwalks were maintained in all protected areas. Resting shelters were constructed along the trails of Mt Rwenzori at Nyamuleju, Omwihembe, Scot Eliot, Kicucu, and Fresh Field. Board walks were established at; Bujuku, Rukenga, Rubango, John Mate, Butau, Mitinda and Bigata. With support from Africa Wildlife Foundation (AWF), improvements were made on the Bukurungu trail in Rwenzori Mountain National Park. In Bwindi Impenetrable National Park (BINP), 38 bridges and drainage channels were worked on, one resting hut repaired while 100 ground pegs were fixed in order to make the tourism experience enjoyable, memorable and safe.

In an effort to improve conservation education infrastructure, the Education Centre at Paraa is in the final stages of construction while the Education Center hostel in Queen Elizabeth National Park was furnished and is operational. In Mount Elgon National Park, construction of self-contained double bandas was completed while the construction of the student's exhibition hall is ongoing yet to be roofed.

Three modern tourist launch boats were acquired and deployed in Queen Elizabeth Murchison Falls and L.Mburo National Parks and also the construction/extension of the jetty for boat landing at Lake Mburo National Park was concluded. Five Tour buses were also acquired through Competitiveness and Enterprise Development Project (CEDP) and are expected to improve visitation to Protected Areas by Ugandans.

In order to guide the redevelopment of the Source of the Nile into a world-class tourist destination, the development of a master plan was initiated and the plan is expected to be ready by December 2018.

Skills Development and Training in Tourism and Wildlife Management

Human resources are a critical dimension for the successful delivery of tourism services. A total of 8,024 students in FY2017/18 were enrolled in Tourism related courses in various academic institutions in Uganda with a majority of them registering for certificate courses (67.3%). A very small proportion (0.2%) enrolled for Post Graduate programs.

In an effort to improve the quality and competitiveness of labour force in Uganda's hospitality industry, Government reviewed and improved the national tourism and hospitality curriculum. The curriculum is under implementation, international accreditation is being pursued and efforts are underway to partner with international tourism and hospitality institutions to achieve international recognition. Government has also embarked on improving facilities of the Uganda Hotel and Tourism Training Institute to meet the required conditions for international accreditation. In line with this, the training hotel at the Institute is under construction and its completion is expected by June 2019.

Registration and Quality Assurance of Tourism Services

In line with classification of tourist facilities, the sector has achieved tangible results including the classification of 81 accommodation facilities-Five star (5), Four star (13), Three star (27), Two star (36); Sensitization of over 2,400 hotel owners, managers and inspectors about quality assurance of tourism service standards; Registration of 3,675 accommodation facilities and 36,419 restaurants; Registration of 251 Tour and Travel Companies; and Inspection of 2,090 accommodation facilities. Government has embarked on the development of e-registration, e-licensing and e-classification tools and the review is ongoing for the grading system to make it more enabling.

The Tourism Sector will hold its 9th Annual Sector Review Conference on 9th November 2018 at **Hotel Africana, Kampala** starting at 8:30am. The conference will be held under the theme **"Enhancing inclusiveness in tourism for sustainable job and wealth creation"**.

The objective of the conference is to provide a forum where the performance of the sector during the FY 2017/18 will be reviewed and priorities for FY 2019/20 identified, as well as strengthening collaboration with key stakeholders.

The Sector Review conference brings together stakeholders from the public sector, private sector, international organizations, development partners, researchers and the academia. The Ministry therefore invites all stakeholders to attend and participate in the conference.

Government appreciates the contribution of the Private Sector, Development Partners and Civil Society organisations who have continued to work towards the development of the country's Tourism Industry as well as the conservation of natural and cultural Heritage resources.

FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY.