African Heads of States and Governments recognise the potential contribution of tourism to the growth and transformation of the continent, given that Africa is endowed with rich and diverse cultures, landscapes, and biodiversity. Consequently, tourism is one of the strategic areas in the New Partnership for Economic Development (NEPAD) framework, and is identified there as a key driver for socio-economic growth.

To foster the development of tourism in the continent, the NEPAD Tourism Action Plan (TAP) was formulated under the guidance of African Ministers of Tourism, who convene annually under the auspices of the World Tourism Organization (WTO) Commission for Africa (CAF). The TAP was adopted at the 3rd General Assembly of the African Union (AU) in July 2004 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Since the adoption of TAP, the continent has been experiencing growth in the tourism sector despite facing major challenges, including a serious infrastructure deficit.

TAP was primarily established to harness Africa’s vast endowment of geographical assets and cultural heritage through promotion of the tourism sector. Indeed, the continent’s abundant natural resources have contributed an average of 5.2% annually to the continent’s economic growth over the past decade, including through foreign exchange earnings.
In 2013 alone, the continent’s receipts from international tourism were USD 34.2 billion. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that tourism as a service sector has been acknowledged as a driver of socio-economic development and growth in Africa. Moreover, it has been identified as such in the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063, which sets out a long-term strategy to “optimise use of Africa’s resources for the benefit of all Africans” and to accelerate development and integration across the continent.

Despite the progress made in the tourism industry, most African countries have yet to reach their full potential. A myriad challenges face the tourism sector: the urbanisation of the continent is faster than anywhere else in the world and by 2025 half of the African population will live in cities.

The issue of urbanisation will bring serious challenges of integrated waste management, transport and pollution, which will impact touristic activities. Additionally, slow visa facilitation; low investment levels; the capacity gap in the hospitality service industry; poor connectivity and infrastructure are major impediments to tourism growth and sustainability. For instance, what should be a normal 6-hour trip from West to Southern Africa can take as long as 48 hours due to poor air connectivity.

On the other hand, Africa is experiencing low levels of intra-regional economic exchange, while it also has the smallest share of global trade of all regions. Africa is the least integrated continent in the world.

Infrastructure inefficiencies are costing Africa billions of dollars annually and are stunting growth. Bridging the gap in infrastructure is vital for economic advancement and sustainable development. However, this can only be achieved through subregional and continental cooperation and solution finding. The Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) encourages regional cooperation as a means of building mutually beneficial infrastructure. It helps to strengthen the ability of countries to trade and establish regional value chains for increased competitiveness, as well as the free movement of African citizens. As the unique strategic and sectoral framework to accelerate the physical integration of the continent, PIDA promotes the development of infrastructure projects in the areas of transport, energy, information and telecommunications technologies, as well as transboundary water supplies.

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) 2014 report, Tourism Towards 2030, predicts that tourism arrivals in Africa will reach 134 million by 2030, from the present-day level of 65 million. This is a strong growth that could significantly contribute to the GDP, job creation, and transformation of African countries and the continent at large.

However, for this projection to become a reality, there is a need for an enabling environment that would facilitate infrastructure development, investment in human capacity development and growth in the Africa market to promote regional tourism.

In this regard, the importance of infrastructure to tourism development and growth in the continent cannot be over-emphasized hence PIDA implementation is imperative. This will require building strong partnerships and the collective effort and actions of African governments, the private sector, civil society, regional and continental institutions, as well as development partners.
NEPAD receives award for promoting sustainable tourism in Africa

The NEPAD Agency received an award for building strong partnerships in promoting sustainable tourism in Africa.

The award was presented by the Africa Travel Association (ATA) to NEPAD at their annual Congress on November 11-16 in Kampala, Uganda.

The Congress which was organised under the High Patronage of President of the Republic of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni, attracted over 300 national and international business leaders in the tourism sector.

The occasion was graced by dignitaries including African Union Permanent Representative to USA, Ambassador Amina Ali and United States Ambassador to Uganda, Scott Delisi.

Receiving the award on behalf of NEPAD CEO Dr Ibrahim Mayaki, Mrs Estherine Fotabong, Director of Programme Implementation and Coordination thanked ATA for bringing visibility to African tourism and providing a platform for stakeholder engagement.

Mrs Fotabong stressed that the continent is counting on the continued support of the private sector, such as ATA, in order to sustain touristic activities, and create jobs; especially amongst the youths.
The NEPAD Rural Futures Programme will receive a boost of USD4 million from the Africa Solidarity Trust Fund, to promote youth employment and agriculture entrepreneurship in rural Africa.

On December 2, NEPAD Chief Executive Officer, Dr Ibrahim Mayaki and UN Agriculture and Food Organization (FAO) Director-General José Graziano da Silva signed a Memorandum of Understanding to jointly implement the programme.

One of its aims is to create jobs for young people in the agriculture and agribusiness sector by helping countries to draw up and implement policies to boost enterprise development and entrepreneurship skills in rural areas.

Dr Mayaki said: “This programme is a concrete way to empower young men and women with the necessary capacities and skills to engage in the socio-economic transformation of their countries. The joint implementation of the programme demonstrates the strong partnership that exists between FAO and the NEPAD Agency.”

Promoting youth employment in the agriculture sector is a direct response to the outcomes of the Malabo Declaration in which African Heads of State re-committed to accelerate agricultural growth and transformation.

The programme also supports the implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) which aims to boost agricultural productivity and food security on the continent.

The Africa Solidarity Trust Fund, administered by FAO in partnership with key collaborators, pools resources from Africa’s strongest economies and uses them across the continent to implement initiatives under CAADP.

The Fund was launched in 2013 as a unique Africa-led initiative to improve agriculture and food security across the continent. Contributions are made from African Union member states and civil society organizations. It is governed by a steering committee currently consisting of Equatorial Guinea, Angola, the Chair of the Africa Group, the Chair of the Regional Conference for Africa, the African Union and FAO.
NEPAD Agency “hands over” student hostels

An application for student’s accommodation at the ECOM Vocational Training Institute in 2012, paid off recently, when they were handed over fully completed buildings on November 7. Two girls’ hostels were officially handed over by the NEPAD Gender Programme in Blantyre, Malawi, thanks to support from the NEPAD/Spanish Fund.

The handover ceremony was jointly organised with Stephanos Vocational Training Institute, which is a beneficiary of the other hostel.

The request for the hostels highlighted the challenges faced by female students from both Vocational Training Centers living in the peri-urban areas of Blantyre. The students had to travel long distances to attend class. This discouraged female students who felt unsafe to make the long trip to go to college, resulting in low levels of enrolment and a lot of drop outs.

The institutions were given USD106 769.92 to build one hostel each for 48 female students at the two vocational training centres - EVTI and SVTC. A loan guaranteeing facility was established to assist the students in setting up small businesses after the completion of their programmes. These funds were only given to students after they had embarked on Business Development Training Programmes after which they would have to present business proposals out of which successful proposals were funded. About 14 female students who completed the business development skills and submitted business plans have been assisted. They have set up small businesses that include livestock rearing, farming, informal restaurant, sale of used clothes and operating a tuck shop in Blantyre and peri-urban areas of Liwande, Mwanza, Limbe as well as Zomba.

“With the funding received from NEPAD, we were able to achieve three objectives: the first being that both hostels have been built, secondly, matrons have been hired for each institutions and we have also managed to set up a micro loan system to assist students interested in setting up businesses,” said Mr Edward Koloviko, Principal at Stephanos Vocational Training Institute during the handover ceremony.

The team also had an opportunity to speak to three of the beneficiaries to start businesses.

Faustina Lunda is a 25-year-old woman living in Goruwa village in Malawi. She started her business in March 2014 after her application to get funding for 250 00 Kwachas was approved. The business has enabled her to not only take care of her primary need of trying to grow her business to sell more basic items, but it has also enabled her to pay back the loan amount to Young Enterprises.

Mr Edward Koloviko, Principal at Stephanos Vocational Training Institute speaks to Media during the handover ceremony
With the funding, Faustina set up a store that sells basic items such as sugar, soap, snacks, toiletries, cell phone airtime and fabrics for women's clothing. She also tailors clothes for members of the community as she has also purchased a sewing machine.

Lucy Banda, 22 years old, received 241 500 Kwachas from the NEPAD/Spanish Fund. She sells second-hand clothes as she established that there were not many people at her local market who focused on selling such clothes. She highlighted the affordability of such clothes, especially considering the market she was catering for. Customers from her village and surrounding villages come through to her stall to buy their favourite clothing items at a reduced cost.

Lucy also sells Rice and Beans as they are popular products, especially close to the festive season. She buys her products at another market and sells them at her local market and makes enough profit to assist her family with buying basic groceries while also being able to fund her personal needs and expenses.

118 900 Kwachas was given to Angela Chadzandiyani based on her proposal to start her business of selling “plastic ware” products. On a daily basis, Angela travels on a bike to sell her items at different neighbouring markets. The profit she makes is enough for her to assist in financially taking care of other family members within the compound.

“I even started saving some money in my back account as I am making good profit," she said. The handover ceremony brought together Board Members and staff from both institutions, as well as students, representatives from the NEPAD Agency and the Malawian media. All had an opportunity to witness the official “closing” of the funding from NEPAD for this project.
Graça Machel Trust commends partnership with NEPAD/Spanish Fund

Millions of African women are engaged in small- and medium-size enterprises. They are the backbone of Africa’s economy; yet real wealth creation translates to only a few.

The NEPAD Agency through its flagship programme the NEPAD/Spanish Fund partners with the Graça Machel Trust (GMT) to economically empower African women.

Mrs Graça Machel, widow of former President of South Africa Nelson Mandela, is the founder of GMT, which aims to create platforms for African business women’s networks to build their capacity and leadership in the finance sector.

Mrs Machel played an advocating role in the establishment of the NEPAD/Spanish Fund in 2007. The Fund is a partnership between the NEPAD Agency and the Spanish Government through the Spanish Agency for International Development and Cooperation (AECID). It has benefited from a 20 million Euros contribution from the Government of Spain.

The NEPAD/Spanish Fund provides financial and technical support and disburses money to women’s organisations, civil society organisations and government institutions to scale-up women’s economic empowerment and gender equality. 78 projects in Sub-Saharan Africa have been supported since its inception.

Through funding of EURO 385,000, the NEPAD/Spanish Fund has supported GMT in setting-up networks of Women in Business, Women in Agriculture and Women in Finance.

On November 21 to 23, women’s business associations from over 10 African countries with a membership in GMT’s networks met in Johannesburg, to identify business and finance opportunities for African women.
In her opening remarks, Mrs Machel said that the “Trust’s work is to empower more than a few good women, but to significantly multiply the numbers of women who can have access to the tools for success.”

“It is important that women believe in the fact that they will be the major force in transforming African societies and the continent as a whole”, she said.

Ms Sisonke Msimang, Trustee of GMT, commended the genuine partnership between the NEPAD/Spanish Fund and the Trust and their effort to jointly grow women’s economic leadership.

So far, GMT has provided capacity building training in entrepreneurship management, finance literacy and leadership to associations part of their Network of African Businesswomen (NABW) in Zambia, Zimbabwe, Uganda and Burundi. The training sessions will be scaled up to Ethiopia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Malawi and Tanzania next year.

**NEPAD Agency leads discussions to regulate good quality and affordable medicine in Africa**

Weak or non-existent regulatory systems for medical products have hampered access to affordable, safe and quality medicines on the African continent. This has led to a need for the harmonisation of medical products regulation within Regional Economic Communities (RECs).
On November 17 to 18, the NEPAD Agency rallied around SADC Member States, various experts from Ministries of Health, National Medicines Regulatory Authorities, Ministries of Trade and Industry, Ministries of Justice, Pan African Parliament and development partners to input into a Draft Model Law on Medical Products Regulation.

The objective of the meeting, which took place in Harare, Zimbabwe, was to provide a guide for African Union member states to review and/or enact national laws on the regulation of medical products, and subsequently harmonise them with regional policies.

In his opening remarks, Professor Aggrey Ambali, Head and Advisor of NEPAD’s Science, Technology and Innovation Hub spoke on the critical role that the Model Law will play in ensuring that there is a harmonised approach to medicines regulation to ensure public health protection through improved access to efficacious medicines on the continent. “We would like to encourage all representatives from countries, RECs and partner organisations to input into this document to ensure that member states take ownership of the Model Law,” Professor Ambali said.

Representing the Pan African Parliament (PAP), Mr Mbaya Abubakar stressed that Africa has a huge disease burden making economic prosperity and political stability difficult. “In recognising the socio-economic benefits of the model law on the continent, PAP is committed to playing its role in providing political leadership for the approval and adoption of the Model Law,” Mr Abubakar said.

The meeting is part of regional consultations across the continent to finalise the Draft Model Law.

The inputs made by all stakeholder representatives were incorporated into the draft document.

It is expected that the final Draft Model Law will be submitted to the African Union Assembly in January 2015 for adoption.

NEPAD launches 2nd Call for Proposals for its Climate Change Fund

The NEPAD Agency with support from the Government of Germany has launched the 2nd Call for Proposals for its Climate Change Fund.

NEPAD Director of Programme Implementation and Coordination, Mrs Estherine Fotabong, states that the focus of the Fund is on results delivery and thus geared at ensuring, a robust, broad-based and all-inclusive approach to addressing climate change issues on the continent. “It is imperative for African countries to take issues of climate change very seriously as it affects the lives of millions of people, especially in the rural communities,” Mrs Fotabong says.
The Fund was established in 2014 with an initial seed funding of 3.6 million Euros from the Government of Germany for a two-year period. It provides technical assistance and grants to projects aimed at strengthening the resilience and capacity of African countries.

Climate change is emerging as a major challenge to Africa’s economic growth and threatens its vulnerable populations. The continent is the hardest hit region in the world by the adverse impacts of climate change, yet least responsible for it.

The Fund is aligned with African Union priority initiatives and frameworks such as the NEPAD Environmental Action Plan and the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Plan (CAADP).

It is administered through a targeted and competitive Call for Proposals, open to national and provincial institutions of African Union memberstates as well as Regional Economic Communities. Following the 1st Call for Proposals, eleven proposals were approved for funding. The selected projects relate to adaptation of agriculture to climate change, biodiversity conservation, access and benefit sharing, development and implementation support to National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and mainstreaming climate change into National Agricultural Investment Plans (NAIPs).

The 2nd Call for Proposals Fund is open from December 3, 2014 to February 28, 2015.

For detailed information on the NEPAD Climate Change Fund, click [here](#).

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**African leaders recommit to agricultural-led development**

When African leaders and Heads of State met in June 2014, Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, they adopted the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods. The Malabo Declaration is framed around seven key commitments to transform African agriculture in the next decade.

The Declaration calls for concrete action to turn these commitments into action and results. In order to lay the groundwork for these actions, the African Union Commission (AUC) and the NEPAD Agency were charged with developing an implementation strategy and roadmap.
The draft implementation strategy and roadmap was discussed at a stakeholder validation meeting held on November 17 and 18 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The validation Meeting was attended by representatives from AU member states and other stakeholders including development partners.

The Malabo Declaration is also an AU recommitment to the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), and Africa's agricultural transformation and food security agenda in the 2015-2025 decade.

What is unique in the Malabo Declarations and Decisions is that, amongst others, there is the resolve and commitment to concrete action and delivering tangible results and impact. Furthermore, there is recognition of the “rural space” as an engine for growth and transformation. The rural space is deemed as a critical base for countries’ natural resources (land and water), as well as accommodating a significant portion of the African population in general and smallholder farming populations.

Women are also recognised as key players in delivering increased agricultural performance as well as ensuring that this transforms into impact on livelihoods. Youth are also a key asset and resource that Africa has for transformation of agriculture. Moreover, the role of the private sector is seen as a critical success factor in delivering on implementation, with preferential focus on the domestic private sector.

The implementation strategy and roadmap will be presented to the African Union Executive Council Ordinary Session to be held in January 2015.
Upcoming events

10 – 11 December 2014: Sustainable Energy for All in Gambia - Validation Workshop for the National Action Agenda and Investment Prospectus, Banjul, Gambia
12 - 14 December 2014: AUC/NEPAD/RECS/UNECA Retreat, Johannesburg
23 – 31 January 2015: 24th Africa Union Summit, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
8 - 9 February 2015: Mining Indaba Forum, Cape Town, South Africa
17 – 18 February 2015: Africa Energy Indaba, Johannesburg, South Africa

See also online at: www.nepad.org/eve

Proverb

Bateke proverb ~
You learn how to cut down trees by cutting them down

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