

REMARKS BY HER EXCELLENCY DR. SAMIA SULUHU HASSAN,
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA DURING THE
OPENING CEREMONY OF THE 23RD WORLD TRAVEL AND TOURISM
COUNCIL GLOBAL SUMMIT HELD ON 2ND NOVEMBER, 2023
KIGALI, RWANDA

- *Your Excellency Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda;*
- *Your Excellency Prosper Bazombaza, Vice President of the Republic of Burundi;*
- *Ms. Julia Simpson, President of the World Tourism and Travel Council (WTTC);*
- *Mr. Arnold Donald, Chairperson of the WTTC;*
- *Ministers of Tourism here present;*
- *CEO's of travel and tourism companies;*
- *WTTC members;*
- *Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen*

GREETINGS AND COMPLEMENTS

Good morning to you all!;

Let me begin my remarks, by thanking my brother, President Paul Kagame, for the warm welcome and hospitality accorded to me and my delegation since our arrival in this beautiful city of Kigali. We felt *home, and of course Rwanda is our second home.*

I am also delighted to meet my friends Arnold, Julia, Manfred, Peter Greenberg and her wife. Welcome to Kigali, welcome to Africa.

The choice of Africa, and in particular, Kigali, as a venue for this important event was deliberate. Because, Africa and tourism are inseparable; so, it is in order, for those in tourism eco-system to meet in Africa and discuss the future of tourism.

I also wish to thank and commend Ms. Julia Simpson and her team for the job well done, and for putting all the necessary arrangements for this summit together. *Thank you for your time and dedication.*

TOURISM IN TANZANIA AND ITS CONTRIBUTION

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen;

It is a fact that, Africa is endowed with rich and abundant natural and cultural touristic attractions. To give my own country as an example, Tanzania has **21** National Parks including the Serengeti and the Ngorongoro Crater, more than **40** Game Controlled and Game Reserved Areas, more than **400** forestry reserves, and over **120** tribes with diverse cultures. Above all we have the beautiful Zanzibar Islands. This is just one country out of **54** countries of Africa. We have heard about Burundi and Rwanda, and we will soon here from President Kagame about what Rwanda has to offer.

Tourism contributes considerably in most of African economies. In Tanzania for example, tourism sector contributes up to **17.2%** of our GDP and **25%** of our total export earnings. While this is a massive contribution from one single source, it entails that, Africa can leverage tourism to drive economic growth and create employment opportunities. Thus, the sector if well utilized, can be of great use to most of African countries in terms of repositioning the continent in other connecting sectors, henceforth, attracting more foreign currencies.

So in order for tourism industry to make expected and required strides; there are however, some serious questions for African Governments to ask ourselves and some considerations to undertake.

Number one; is a Strategic Branding and Marketing:

Africa should develop compelling narratives and a brand identity that highlights Africa's unique cultural heritage, natural beauty, and diverse experiences. We must invest in targeted marketing campaigns across various platforms to reach the global audience.

In my country for example, we are experiencing a lot of new arrivals following the globally watched film, the “The Royal Tour” produced by CBS Editor, Peter Greenberg, whom I’m happy to learn is amongst WTTC brand ambassadors. Linked to this, Africa should ensure wider access to informative resources about local customs, traditions, and cultural practices. Africa should tell its own story in its own terms and set a positive narrative about our continent. We cannot afford to continue remaining silent in this era of fake news. We should stand up and put the record straight. *Africa in not only the future, it is now.*

Number two; is an issue of Conservation and Preservation: that Africa is regarded as *a guardian of nature*, because our forefathers played their part in protecting the same. If Africa is to rely on natural attractions, it is imperative that, we should prioritize conservation and support efforts to preserve cultural sites, artifacts, and traditions, and to ensure they remain accessible for generations to come. In Tanzania, we have the motto in our dedicated tourism Television, which says, “*tumerithishwa; tuwarithishe*” loosely translated, what we inherited we should also pass it on to the next generation.

In view of this, **distinguished delegates**, Africa should continue to prioritize sustainable tourism practices, by minimizing the environmental footprint of tourism activities, promoting the conservation of natural resources, and supporting community-based tourism initiatives. We, in Africa should emphasize on ecotourism, which promotes responsible travel to natural areas, contributing to conservation efforts and providing sustainable economic benefits to local communities.

My last point for consideration, but certainly not least is **Research and Data Analysis**. For the tourism sector to continue being relevant, we should endeavour to undertake research on tourism trends, visitor preferences, and environmental impacts. This will allow us, to make informed decisions and refine strategies for sustainable growth across the continent. In my view, this is an area where the WTTC and other partners can also come in. Linked to this, is enhancing the capacity of professionals to understand and respond effectively to the challenges facing the sector.

I am insisting on Research and Data Analysis, because some of us identify the sector as tourism sector, and we lose some constitutes of travel. This may have effects on calculations of the percentage of contributions to our GDPs and economies. This is why I insist on this point.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Excellencies; Distinguished delegates;

It will be remiss on my part, if I will conclude without acknowledging the role of private sector in the tourism eco-system. We in Tanzania believe that, a coordinated private sector is an engine to our economic growth. It is important therefore to note that, the private sector has a big role to play in our endeavours. I have indicated one example, the film by Peter Greenberg, the Royal Tour, which was fully-funded by the private sector in Tanzania. This is just one example, but the list can be long. Collaboration between government, private sector and non-profit organizations cannot be overemphasized.

I will at this juncture end my remarks by inviting the private sector to come and join our efforts in making travel and tourism more vibrant in our economies, in a win-win relationship. In Tanzania our doors are wide open, opportunities are endless, if you keep on waiting, you will be missing out.

I thank you very much for listening!