

**SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA: THE IMPERATIVE FOR
TOURISTS/HOST COMMUNITIES SECURITY**

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Abstract

One of the obvious developmental challenges in African countries is poverty, made worse by the enormity of human and natural resources that should ordinarily be antithetical to poverty. One way of addressing this challenge is economic diversification from the traditional agricultural or oil mono-economy to such new areas as tourism. In this paper, we examine the benefits of tourism to local economy and conclude on its potentials in transforming the rural poor's life. Arising from this benefit is the security challenge which is often least discussed even among researchers on tourism. This paper identifies the physical security of the tourists and the psychological security of the host communities crucial for sustainable tourism development in Africa. It is concluded that sustainable tourism development is visible and possible if a mechanism exists that guarantees the security either way.

Introduction

The tourism industry is the largest industry in the world, with receipts from international tourism expenditure totalling US \$474 billion in 2004 and it is estimated by the World Tourism Organization to continue to grow up to the year 2020. Tourism represents a rapidly rising proportion of world trade. In 1999, tourism represented over 40% of exports of

services and about 8% of the entire global exports¹ of goods and services exceeding trade in items like food, textiles, and chemicals. Furthermore, the pre-eminence of the industry in trade is quite widespread; according to the World Tourism Organization (WTO, 2001), it ranks among the top five export categories for 83% of countries and is the dominant source of foreign exchange earnings for not less than 38% of them.

Whereas Third World countries are blessed with numerous tourist resorts and attractions, the foregoing benefits have largely eluded the region due to the poor state of the industry and ensuing low patronage, and inadequate government attention. Quite recently, governments of developing countries began to commit huge financial resources to the sector, particularly the hospitality and nature reserve (parks) sectors, because of the realization that the industry is a veritable tool for poverty alleviation, attainment of the millennium goals (MDGs), and sustainable development. A negative factor related to tourism in many African countries is the perception people have of safety and security issues. It is in the light of this that this paper examines the issue of security, both of the tourists and the host communities, with a view to proffering concise measures to address the problem.

The Concept of Tourism

The concept of tourism is described as “the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related with the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited”. This, and related definitions, have always been adapted to reflect the sphere and components of the tourism phenomenon, which has hitherto

¹According to the World Tourism Organization, any tourism service that a visitor purchases when traveling in another country is considered an export from the country being visited.

systematically referred to the activities of the “visitors” on whom studies of tourism have focused in each of the periods of the development process. The definition of tourism has undergone a number of modifications mirroring the changing face of tourism development, the activities engaged in by tourists, and the impact not only on economic activity overall but, also on environment, infrastructure, and the natural, historical, and cultural heritage. This paper draws examples from Nigeria and Africa. In both cases, we identify highly endowed communities whose inhabitants are exceptionally poor amidst plenty.

Africa, and indeed Nigeria’s, landscape is dotted with natural tourist attractions that are comparable to the best in the world. This is complemented by her rich cultural and traditional heritage, which dates back to over two thousand years (FRN, 2004). It possesses unique tourist attractions many of which are overland safaris: national parks, exotic game viewing, deep-sea recreational fishing, lake and river fishing, archaeological tours, beach resorts and hotels, transportation (water, land and air), surfing and snorkeling, theme parks and exposition centers, and recreational beaches lined with coconut and palm groves (Olokesusi, 1989; NIPC, 2000).

The region offers considerable, albeit largely untapped, potential not only for cultural tourism but also for environmental tourism, ecotourism, sports tourism, and discovery tourism. Generally, the development and marketing of new ecotourism products reflecting Africa’s special attributes need to be aggressively pursued.

Contributions of Tourism to National Development in Africa

So great is the importance of tourism at the national and worldwide level that the traditional concept of tourism has been extended beyond and hitherto has exclusive focus on the visitor (and the concept of tourism demand equated with tourist expenditure), to

encompass “other complementary elements”, such as tourism fixed capital formation and tourism collective consumption (Quevedo, 2001). The tourism industry has an increasingly important economic, social, cultural, and environmental impact, both globally and on the national scale. The sector is a major driving force behind the economic advancement of many countries, including developing ones, where it fosters job creation, stimulates economic diversification, and boosts foreign exchange earnings (IPU, 1999). This is described in Figure 1.

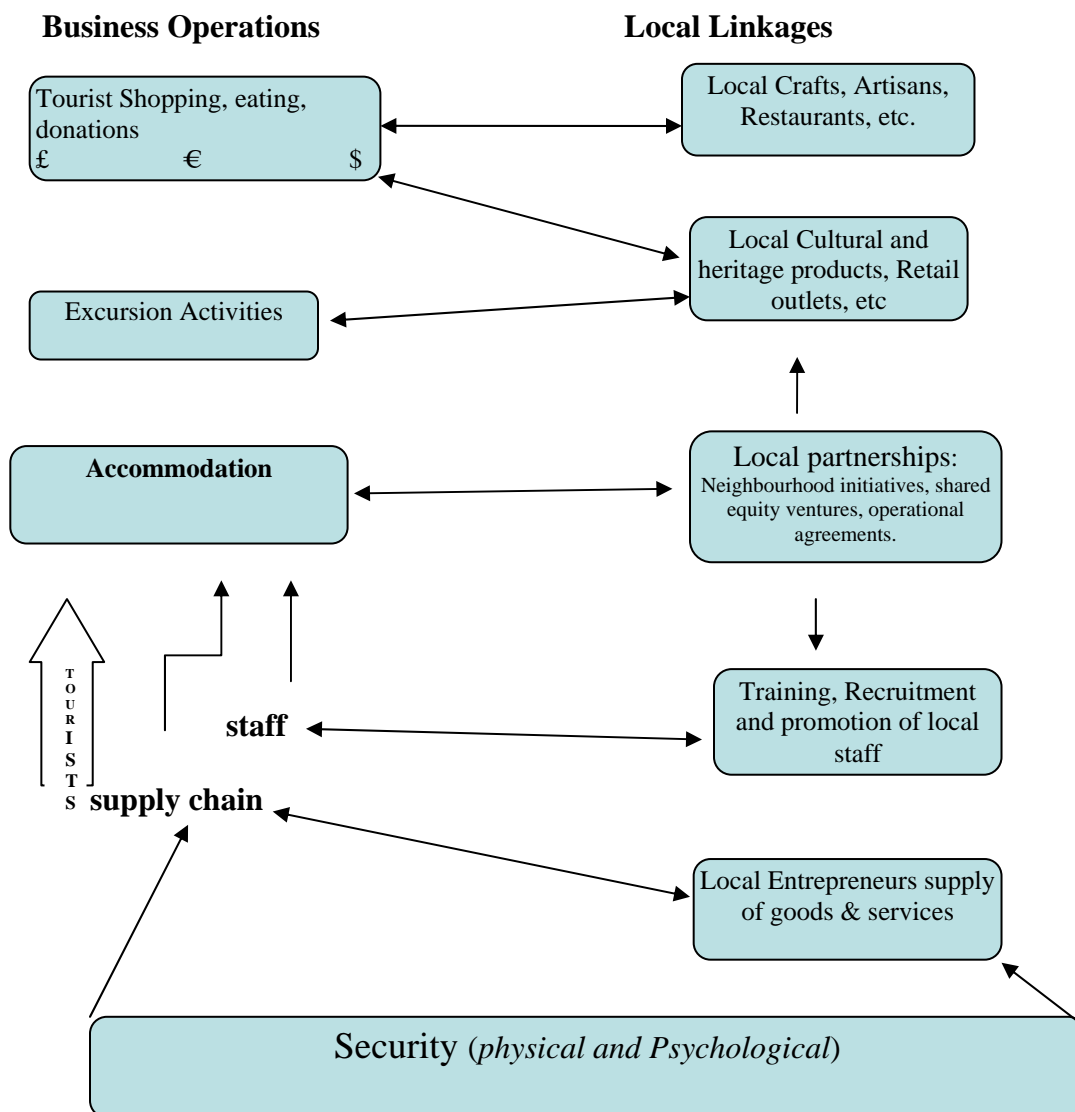


Figure 1: Tourism Linkages into Local Economy and Security Requirements (Modified from: ODI, 2006)

Thus, African countries have begun to mainstream tourism into their poverty reduction strategies. This is because of the realization of its pro-poor benefits (Roe, 2004). Part of the challenges arising from this is the accessibility to tourism sites with minimum security risks for both tourists and local residents. This becomes more important because many African countries have weak, embryonic tourism sectors with much of the investment, management, and development emanating from private sector initiatives.

Tourism sectors organized this way may be able to identify strategic linkages of tourism with the local economy through local crafts, artisans, restaurants, retail outlets, local cultural and heritage products, local partnerships, etc, as shown in Figure 1.

This paper posits that within such a linkage system, security is a major knot in the chain because it forms an organic bedrock of a sustainable benefit for both the tourists and the host communities. For instance, tourists must be assured of their adequate safety of life and property during their stay and on transit to sites. On the other hand, the local people are inherently sceptical of the overriding benefits of tourism over their traditional usages of such sites as shrines surrounded by enormous mystics. They must, therefore, be assured that their well-being stands to benefit more and that the tourists are not some group of '*under-takers*' willing to take over their local land and its artefacts. The former requires the mobilization of local human resources to fortify tourism sites and cordon-off the vicinity against local security threats, both on site and on transit. In this case security is defined as physical or tangible. In the latter, the local people must be adequately sensitized on the potentials of tourism and its ability to transform local economies without compromising local values, cultures and traditions. In this case, security is psychological and social in nature. This paper

sees those dimensions of security as critical imperatives for tourism development in Africa. It proposes ways of entrenching or strengthening them.

The economic impact of tourism is better conceptualized by taking a holistic approach. This implies the computation of the direct tourist spending in addition to the indirect effects of this spending, like generating income for farmers, souvenir producers, or creating employment in hotel construction and services. Using this approach, the London-based World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) estimated that travel and tourism accounted for some US \$43.6 trillion of economic activity in 2000 or about 11% of gross world product, thus making it the largest industry in the world. During this reporting year, direct and indirect tourism activities supported about 200 million jobs which were approximately 8% of world employment and 1 in every 12 jobs (WTO, 2002).

Globally, the world tourism industry has increased tremendously over the years. According to the World Watch Institute (WWI), international tourism increased 3 percent in 2002, to 715 million arrivals. This better-than-expected growth came after one of the most difficult episodes in recent tourism history. In 2001, for the first time in nearly 20 years, international tourist arrivals actually declined by 0.6 percent. The drop reflected the impacts of both the September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States of America, and the global economic slowdown (World Bank, 2002). Overall, tourism-related spending accounted for some US \$4.2 trillion of global economic activity in 2002 and represented 12 percent of total world exports, according to the WTTC. And despite the employment slowdown, the activity generated an estimated 199 million jobs – one in every 13 jobs worldwide.

Based on 2004 data, this is the largest industry in the world with receipts from international tourism expenditure totalling US \$474 billion in 2004 (WTO, 2005). In view of

its relatively labor-intensive nature, this industry is an important foreign exchange earner, and it is for this reason that it has become fashionable for developing countries to promote it (Naude & Saayman, 2004). According to Frangialli (2001), tourism is profoundly important for economic development through its impacts on employment, exports, stimulation of infrastructure provision, generation of revenue, and promotion of international cultural appreciation, peace and harmony.

The World Tourism Organization estimates that 625 million tourist travelled worldwide in 1998, which generated US \$445 billion, excluding transport. Out of this, Africa received only about 8 percent of the global tourist trips, or 25 million arrivals. Although this shows an improvement of 2 million arrivals over the 1997 value, this is quite low compared to the tourism potentials of the continent. Within this, the northern sub-region had the highest share with 34.6 percent of the arrivals and 33 percent of the revenue. This is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Tourism Trends in Africa by Sub-Region (1995-1998)

Sub-Regions	Tourist Arrivals (000s) 1998	% Change-Over 1997	Market Share Total Africa %		Tourism Receipts (US\$m) 1998	% Change-over 1997	Mkt Share of Total Africa	
			1995	1998			1995	1998
Eastern ¹	5,761	7.7	121.7	23.1	2,426	5.75	23.4	25.4
Middle ²	483	7.81	1.4	1.9	82	5.13	1.7	0.9
Northern ³	8,623	7.79	38.7	34.8	3,176	9.90	38.1	33.3
Southern ⁴	7,671	7.94	29.9	30.8	2,950	2.54	28.1	30.9
Western ⁵	2,365	4.97	8.3	9.5	917	4.23	8.5	9.6
Total Africa	24,903	7.5	100.0	100.0	9,551	5.9	100.0	100.0

Countries of the Sub-region:

1. *Burundi, The Comoros, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Reunion, Seychelles, Somalia, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe.*
2. *Angola, Cameroon, Central Africa Republic, Chad, Congo (Brazzaville), Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Sao Tome & Principe, Democratic republic of Congo.*
3. *Algeria, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia.*
4. *Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland.*
5. *Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote D'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo.*

Source: WTO (1999)

Whereas Africa is blessed with numerous tourist resorts and attractions, the foregoing benefits have largely eluded the country due to the poor state of the industry, ensuing low patronage, and inadequate government attention. Between 1999, huge financial resources were committed to the sector by the government on the industry; particularly the hospitality and nature reserve (parks) sectors. Yet, the industry is a veritable tool for poverty alleviation, attainment of the millennium goals (MDGs), and sustainable development.

Tourism generally contributes to national development in view of its forward and backward linkage effects. However, the quantum, nature, pattern, and sustainability of economic benefits depend on the extent to which leakages are minimized. Such leakages occur in the form of imported food, beverages, furnishings, construction materials, managers, etc. It is useful to note that both domestic and external leakages exist. Purchase of goods and services within Nigeria, but outside the local government area in which a resort is situated, is domestic economic leakage. If the goods and services are brought in from a foreign country, then we refer to this as external leakage.

Another contribution of tourism is the promotion of mutual understanding, trust, goodwill, and peaceful co-existence. Tourism is a tremendous and thrilling experience which teaches humankind how to enjoy the beauty of other nations and places, and how to enrich ourselves from the varied culture of others. Indeed, tourism breaks down different prides and prejudices, and makes us more serviceable.

According to World Travel and Tourism Organization (1999), tourism is able to contribute to development which is economically, ecologically, and socially sustainable, because it:

- has less impact on natural resources and the environment than most other industries;
- is based on enjoyment and appreciation of local culture, built heritage, and natural environment, as such that the industry has a direct and powerful motivation to protect these assets;
- can play a positive part in increasing consumer commitment to sustainable development principles through its unparalleled consumer distribution channels; and
- provides an economic incentive to conserve natural environments and habitats which might otherwise be allocated to more environmentally damaging land uses, thereby, helping to maintain bio-diversity.

While tourism is not the antidote for economic development, it provides some veritable opportunities, especially geared towards sustainable development and poverty alleviation. Pertinent among such opportunities are the following:

- Tourism industry is multi-faceted encompassing the travel and hospitality sectors, entertainment, culture, arts, and the parks service.
- Tourism does not face tariff barriers, although taxes on air travel may have comparable effect.
- It opens up ample opportunities for local access to markets for endogenously produced goods and services.
- In view of its multi-faceted nature, it has considerable linkage with other economic sectors particularly natural resources, farming, and fisheries.

- The examples of Jamaica and Kenya in the furniture industry portray the potential of the industry to create initial demand for a good or service that can subsequently become a growth sector. In these two countries the efforts of furniture firms to meet the demand of the tourism industry led to the development of the furniture industry and export.
- Tourism provides off-farm employment opportunities especially in the rural areas. The industry is also relatively labor-intensive.
- The industry provides job opportunities for a relatively high proportion of women, hence, may contribute to gender equality.
- Tourism products can be developed with a focus on natural resources and culture, which are assets that most people possess. This new development is referred to as sustainable tourism or ecologically sound tourism (eco-tourism) (Roe *et al*, 2004; Olokesusi, 2004, 1992, 1990a, 1990b).

Safety and Security in Tourism

A negative factor related to tourism in many African countries is the perception people have of safety and security issues. Many destinations are perceived as having safety and security risks, even though this is not necessarily so (WTO CAF, 2001). However, countries' internal conflicts, the divisions between them, and the resulting insecurities hamper tourism development. Extensive areas of Africa (deserts, savannahs, and tropical forests) are fragile. The usually poor host communities are more sensitive than others to the sometimes-negative social and cultural effects of tourism. In Nigeria, for instance, Bankole (2002) highlighted some of the problems confronting the tourism sector in Nigeria to include lack of

detailed data, insecurity through crime and terrorism, inadequate funding and marketing, and low disposable income.

Safety and security in tourism refers to the protection of life, health, physical, psychological, and economic integrity of travelers, tourism staff, and people constituting host communities, including the consideration of security interests of tourist sending and receiving states and their tourism entrepreneurs and establishment operators (WTO, 1991).

Over the past few years, the tourist industry has been seriously undermined by the growing lack of security among the citizens. This has manifested itself in the tourist sector in different ways. The crime afflicting the major cities of the developing world, according to Inter-American Travel Congresses (1997), includes the following:

- Direct robbery of persons in city streets or parks;
- Attacks on vehicles between airports and hotels;
- Attacks on tourist vehicles on roads and highways in the country;
- Attacks on tourists visiting national parks;
- Acts of corruption on the part of officials at the ports of entry;
- Exploitation on the part of dishonest employees of transportation companies, who charge arbitrary rates;
- Exposure of host communities to criminal activities of some tourists; and
- The activities of tourists sometimes undermine community values and culture.

Security of Host Communities

Local communities are significantly vulnerable to the deleterious impacts of tourism development, particularly indigenous cultures as they directly experience the socio-cultural

impacts of tourism. Disruption to established activity patterns, anti-social behavior, crime, and over-crowding caused by tourism development can also have a negative impact on local lifestyles and the quality of life of both indigenous and non-indigenous communities (Okech, 2001). Consequently, ecotourism has the potential to create support for conservation objectives in both the host community and the visitor alike, through establishing and sustaining between the tourism industry, local communities, and protected areas.

As social and environmental benefits are essentially interdependent, social benefits accruing to host communities, as a result of ecotourism, may have the result of increasing overall standards of living due to the localized economic stimulus provided for by an increased visitation to the site. Similarly, environmental benefits accrue as host communities are persuaded to protect natural environments in order to sustain economically viable tourism. Local communities comprise groups with different and potentially conflicting interests. That is, not all groups want the same things. The tourist industry seeks a healthy business environment with financial security, a trained and responsible workforce, attractions of sufficient quality to ensure a steady flow of visitors who stay longer and visit more often, as well as a significant return on investment.

Those interested in the natural environment and cultural heritage issues seek protection of the environment through prevention, improvement, correction of damage, and restoration; and also to motivate people to be more aware and, therefore, care for rather than use up resources. Community members seek a healthy place in which to live with food, adequate and clean water, health care, rewarding work for equitable pay, education, recreation, respect for cultural traditions, and opportunities to make decisions about the future. Some concerns that each may hold in common include: issues of access (such as

when, where, and how tourists visit and move from place to place), host and guest issues (such as cultural impact or common use of infrastructure), land use issues (such as hunting wildlife habitat, agriculture, recreation, preservation, and development). There are a number of reasons why local communities may consider ecotourism: a desire to be part of strong growth in tourism, to see the potential of catering for special-interest tourism (niche markets), an awareness of the high value of natural attractions in the locale, empathy for conservation ideals, and the need for sustainable tourism and a desire to responsibly rejuvenate the local tourist industry. However there are conflicting issues expressed by representatives of host communities to tourism development that generally fall into a number of interrelated categories.

These categories, according to Okech (2001), include:

- The lack of opportunities for involvement in decision-making relating to ecotourism,
- Inadequate responses from governments when administrative or legislative mechanisms have been established to involve them in such decision-making,
- The lack of financial, social, and vocational benefits flowing to these communities from projects that commercially exploit what they regard as their resources,
- The need to establish better tools for evaluating socio-cultural impacts, and ensuring this is completed over the more emphasized environmental impacts on the natural environments which are usually of more interest to the outside investors and conservation groups,
- Impacts on community cohesion and structure, as well as the rapidity of tourism development that, in many cases, significantly accelerates social change.

These concerns embrace a wide range of issues relating to the management of natural resources adjacent to these communities. The central issue is the inadequate levels of participation perceived by these communities in the management of what they regard as their traditional domains. In view of the significance of wildlife conservation on its own and its tourism value, wildlife-human conflicts will remain a permanent problem in the neighborhoods of protected areas. As such, the role of policy is to reduce the conflicts to a tolerable level. This involves dealing with problem wildlife and devising mechanisms to allow local people to derive direct benefits from wildlife-based tourism. Such an approach is likely to encourage the residents of those areas to conserve the fauna and the flora.

Security of Tourists

In order to address the issue of security in tourism, two broad categories of measures are recommended. The first approach is preventive, especially in respect of the security of host communities, and the other involves direct protection for visitors (WTO, 1991). In taking this action, the state should take a cue from similar measures implemented in other countries which have faced tourist security problems of one kind or another.

The responsible authorities/agencies for tourism in African countries should therefore:

- a) Identify potential tourist risks in specific types of travel, specific tourism receiving sectors, and specific tourism sites;
- b) Adopt safety standards and practices in tourism facilities and sites, and ensure that they are observed by operators, with particular reference to:
 - fire protection,

- food safety,
 - sanitary and health requirements,
 - environmental safeguards, and
 - Tourists personal safety;
- c) Establish guidelines for use by operators of tourism facilities in the event of unlawful interference in the operation of such facilities;
- d) Ensure adequate protection by law enforcement bodies of tourism sites and facilities, so as to detect and prevent offences directed against tourists;
- e) Provide to the public, both going on trips abroad and arriving in the country, as well as staying in tourism facilities, appropriate documentation and information on tourism safety, so that such information could address, among other matters:
- basic regulations regarding tourism safety,
 - good security practices at tourist transport points (motor parks and other transport terminals),
 - warnings with respect to possible threats at tourism sites and facilities,
 - possible health hazards and means of self-protection, and
 - services available to tourists when assistance is required;
- f) Protect tourists from illicit drug trafficking and protect the means of tourist transport for being used for carrying and smuggling illicit drugs;
- g) Ensure that the staff of tourism establishments and tourism-oriented services is adequately trained in matters of tourism safety;
- h) Foster the development of travel assistance insurance, as well as information which facilities access to, and selection of, such insurance by tourists;

- i) Foster the development of liability rules in tourism establishments and ensure that information on such rules is readily available to tourists and their representatives;
- j) Develop national policies and services with regard to tourist health, including reporting systems on health problems of tourists.

Emergency Medical Assistance to Tourists

In line with WTO (1991), the African countries should undertake to designate or indicate appropriate public or private health service for tourists and make information about such services available to tourists and their representatives:

- a) exchange of information on tourism safety;
- b) international compatibility of safety standards and practices in tourism facilities and sites;
- c) training of staff for tourism safety;
- d) travel assistance, tourist insurance and civil liabilities;
- e) consumer protection of tourists;
- f) assistance to tourists in emergencies;
- g) tourist health;
- h) suppression of illicit drug abuse and trafficking relating to tourism.
- i) awareness that safety is a basic need in all spheres of human activity, including tourism;
- j) considering that ensuring tourism safety arises from the traditional notion of hospitality, which is shared by all peoples;

- k) solemnly affirming that safe tourism for all contributes to accomplishing the social and cultural objectives of tourism, and serves international understanding, confidence, peace, and universal respect for, and observance of, all human rights and freedoms;
- l) convinced that safety of tourism should be enhanced in tourism planning and promotion;
- m) further convinced that contemporary mass tourism requires the definition of a set of basic measures which should be commonly followed so as to make tourism development more stable and harmonious in the interest of all those who travel, those who supply tourism services, and the populations of the host communities;
- n) noting the need for periodical review of such measures.

Conclusion

The importance of tourism to economic growth, national development, and poverty reduction cannot be overemphasized. This had been enunciated in recent national and international policies, such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), and National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), among others. The potential for this sector is clearly enormous for Africa, but a lot has to be done to cash-in the dividends of these policy reforms. One of the sure ways of doing this is to address the issue of safety and security in the tourism industry. This paper tried to do this as it is a critical issue for sustainable tourism in Africa. It has drawn examples from across the continent and based on an appraisal of the evidences, the paper demonstrates the evident benefits of the sector for poverty reduction and pro-poor development strategies. It also

recognizes the critical linkage of the sector in Africa with the rural economy. Tourism development in such areas is greeted with skepticism and culturally founded apprehension. The security challenge in this case is intangible but viewed as essential for a democratic and participatory tourism sector. On the other hand, tangible forms of security are canvassed for the tourists, both on site and on transit, who shall be visiting sites located in the midst of people living in chronic poverty and deprivation. The submission of this paper is that in order to address the issue of security in tourism, two broad categories of measures should be taken. The first approach is preventive, especially in respect to the security of host communities, and the other involves direct protection for visitors. In taking this action, African countries should take a cue from similar measures, implemented in other countries which have faced tourist security problems of one kind or another. This is because an insecure tourism sector can neither be profitable nor sustainable.

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