

20 million Africans rely on tourism sector

Africa is one of the world's fastest-growing tourist destinations, second only to Southeast Asia and employing some 20 million people. Visitor numbers in 2014 went up by 4%, not far behind the 6% recorded by Southeast Asia.



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Last week, the African Development Bank (AfDB) officially launched its third edition of the Africa Tourism Monitor in collaboration with New York University's Africa House and the Africa Travel Association (ATA). It is titled 'Unlocking Africa's Tourism Potential'.

More tourists, more jobs

According to the report, more tourists also mean more jobs. Across the continent, there are around 20 million people working directly or indirectly for the tourism industry. This means that the sector accounts for 7.1% of all jobs in Africa. Jobs supported by the sector include guides, hotel staff, interpreters, aviation staff, and small businesses. Yet the economic impact of tourism extends beyond job creation.

Other key findings in the report are that in 2014, a total of 65.3 million international tourists visited the continent, an increase of around 200,000 more than in 2013. "Back in 1990, Africa welcomed just 17.4 million visitors from abroad. The sector has therefore quadrupled in size in less than 15 years," the report states.

Most-visited countries

Two North African countries top the list of most-visited countries in Africa. Egypt experienced the strongest growth in the sector in 2014, with 454,000 more international arrivals than in 2013, an increase of 5% in just one year.

Second on the list is Morocco, which once again recorded more than 10 million incoming international tourists in 2014 - an increase of 236,000 when compared with the previous year. In third place is Côte d'Ivoire, in West Africa. The country is experiencing a strong economic recovery.

Although it recorded "only" 91,000 more international arrivals in 2014 than in 2013, this figure represents a

24% rise in just 12 months. This influx of tourists means more money coming into the continent. In 2014, Africa recorded US \$43.6 billion in revenue.

According to the UK's World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), the international tourism sector now accounts for 8.1% of Africa's total GDP.

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