

Africa needs fairness, vaccines to revive its tourism sector - Kenya tourism minister

NAIROBI, Kenya - African countries need to get equal access to Covid-19 vaccines so they can start rebuilding their devastated tourism industries, Kenya's tourism minister said on Friday.

By [Duncan Mriri](#) 19 Jul 2021



Image source: [Gallo/Getty](#)

About 21 million jobs have been lost in the sector across the continent since the start of the pandemic, Na Balala said on the sidelines of a meeting of his African counterparts, called to discuss the crisis.

"Without the vaccination of hospitality workers, Africa will be isolated," he said.

Africa has essentially had to pause its rollout of Covid-19 vaccines because of supply problems - and only 18 million people are fully vaccinated in a continent of 1.3 billion, the World Health Organisation (WHO) said on Thursday.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has repeatedly decried what he calls the scandalous difference in vaccine supplies between richer and poorer nations.

Balala said some rich nations had been hoarding shots, stockpiling enough doses for up to four times their populations, at the expense of African nations.

"We are just demanding fairness... so we can revive our economies," he said.

The collapse of the tourism sector has deprived many African countries of one of their main sources of hard currency.

Kenya, which welcomed 2 million visitors in 2019, only got 300,000 visitors in the first half of this year, the tourism ministry said on Thursday.

Britain's decision to put Kenya on its red list of countries had had a particularly significant impact, Balala said.

He called for a single, global protocol for travel to apply to all nations, to prevent rich nations from starving their African counterparts of travel and business opportunities.

Friday's meeting in Nairobi, hosted by Kenya and funded by Saudi Arabia, discussed ways of reviving the sector, including by encouraging inter-African travel.

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