

Achievements in the tourism sector

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SHAMSA MWANGUNGA has been the Minister of Natural Resources and Tourism for Tanzania since 2008. She was also elected as President of Africa Travel Association in 2008. Prior to this, she served as Deputy Minister of Water for two years and has been a Member of Parliament, Special Seat from 2000. Earlier, she held various posts including Tanzania-Swiss Trust Fund as Executive Secretary; Business Care Services as Project Manager and Small Industries Development Organisation as Coordinator.

Today, tourism is regarded as one of the key sectors in the economic growth of developing countries. In Tanzania, tourism plays a significant role in the country's economy. The importance of this sector is evident on many fronts: the sector helps to improve the country's GDP, balance of payments, generation of employment and the entire range of multiplier effect. The sector currently accounts for over 17.5 per cent of the National GDP and nearly 25 per cent of total export earnings; it also supports some 250,000 jobs in the economy.

Tanzania's tourism product is centred on a network of protected areas such as national parks, game reserves, marine parks and reserves and a rich cultural heritage. On the other hand, this high quality of natural resources is attributable to Tanzania's strict conservation policy. Since independence, it has been the policy of the government to continue with the extension of a network of wildlife protected areas, notably national parks and game reserves. Wildlife, however, is not the only natural resource that Tanzania's tourism boasts of. The country also has about 335,000 square kilometres (km) of forests and woodlands, including nature reserves accounting for about 38 per cent of the total land area. Wetlands are also part of our natural resources, covering 10 per cent of the total land area of which 5.5 per cent consists of four sites listed as wetlands of international importance classified as Ramsar Sites. The Tanzania coastline, which is 804 km long, is also unique, with three designated marine parks and reserves within its 200 nautical miles of the Exclusive Economic Zone.

Achievements in the past five years of the Fourth Phase of the Government

For the past five years of the Fourth Phase Government,

the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism has been working hard to boost the contribution of the tourism sector to the Tanzanian economy and employment creation.

Tourism promotion campaigns have been undertaken in the traditional markets of Western Europe and North America and in the emerging markets of China, Russia, Japan, South Korea and India. Various strategies have been used to promote Tanzania's tourist products, such as the use of posters on London's buses and taxis, as well as CNN. Tourism is also promoted through participation in various trade fairs within and outside the country.

Apart from the above achievements, the Ministry is spearheading development of the infrastructure, management and services provided by tour agencies. The efforts mentioned above and others led to the increased number of tourists visiting the country annually as shown in Table 1.

Opportunities

Tanzania's volume of tourists by 2008 (in other words 770,380 tourists), as shown in Table 1, is more than double that of the 1990s (300,000 tourists). The increase in tourist arrivals has resulted in increased demand for quality accommodation, tourist facilities and improved infrastructure. This provides an opportunity for investment in the construction of high class lodges and other types of quality accommodation facilities as well as improved transportation. Also, there are tourism investment opportunities in areas such as tour operation services, manpower training and the provision of catering services.

Conclusion

Tanzania is encouraging and promoting environmentally friendly and sustainable investments in and outside the protected areas. Tourist developments should be done in such a way that they maintain the integrity of the landscape that will attract both national and international visitors. One of the main objectives for the country to support tourism developments outside the wildlife parks is to promote and improve the livelihoods of the communities through extending tourism benefits to them. In essence, this approach aims at encouraging the development of economic activities, which are more compatible to conservation and at the same time contribute to poverty alleviation. **F**

Table 1: Number of tourists who visited Tanzania and revenue collected from 2005 to 2008

Year	Number of Tourists (000)	Revenue from Tourism (US\$ mil.)
2005	613	823
2006	644.12	950
2007	719.03	1,198.76
2008	770.38	1,288.699