

Tourism must prepare both during and post COVID-19

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) corona virus situation report there are over 40 million cases and over 1 million deaths globally by mid-October, 2020. As COVID-19 reaches every corner of the world, both global North and South are racing to combat the challenge at hand. Since the outbreak of COVID-19 in Wuhan district of Hubei province, China, many economies thus far has faced an economic dive more especially due to measures that has seen partial or total closure of businesses. One of the most hit sectors includes aviation, tourism and hospitality industries. Whilst the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) had estimated a continuous growth of between 3-4% globally in the next decade, the year 2020 has already faced a nose dive of between 20-30% translating to USD 30 to 50 billion loss in international tourists spending

Covid-19 remains one of the greatest challenges facing the tourism and hospitality sector at large. Upon the first case of COVID-19 was established in Kenya, the government of Kenya came up with measures to contain the spread of the disease. Among them was the closure of hotels, restaurants, bars and all entertainment places across the country. This led to paralysis of hotel and restaurant operations in the country. The future of the sector became uncertain both in short and long term.

Currently, the COVID-19 cases have surpassed 45,000 and over 800 deaths by mid-October, 2020. Although the country is already expecting a second wave of the virus, destination managers, hotel keepers, operators, policy makers among other players must deal with post COVID-19 concerns. These issues are broken down as follows:

First is trying to fix the already disfranchised sector which was caused by international stress in the tourism industry. Considering the sector has already experienced a long period of loses there is a need for the sector to seek financial investment streams and more important the government intervention.

Secondly, reintegrating the sector and determining the best approach to regain economic contributions of tourism both locally and globally. The sector must regain its rightful place in its local and global social economic contribution in order to support sector's workforce, national income and global Gross Domestic Product. This can be achieved through policy intervention and more important through local and global leadership of the sector.

Thirdly, there is need to addressing transportation related COVID 19 issues, especially those of airlines, rail and cruise ships considering that they move mass travellers at one go and some move from different jurisdictions and borders where containment measures may be limited. Beside COVID 19 concerns there are other competing issues that the sector will have to tackle.

Other competing issues include: impacts of over tourism, climate change and related health concerns, Concern for safety, security, Need for increased local, regional, national, and

international leadership in tourism policy and strategic planning amid crisis, educating both consumers and suppliers application of new technologies in the tourism industry, maintaining a sustainable, engaged, skilled and experienced workforce in order to deliver quality tourism experiences, effect of natural and human-induced disasters, humanitarian crises and political disruptions and last but not least utilization of tourism as a vehicle for bringing indigenous and rural populations out of their state of oppression and marginalization

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