Trade and sustainable tourism

What we did on our holidays

Sustainable tourism for sustainable development

Trade as a tool for reconciliation and peace
Sustainable tourism to sustain development

ARANCHA GONZÁLEZ, Executive Director, International Trade Centre

For many small developing countries, tourism is a major income earner. A growing number of the International Trade Centre’s (ITC) focus countries – small-island developing states, small vulnerable economies, and least developed countries – regard the tourism sector as an important contributor to GDP and job creation, and as a platform for better developing backward and forward linkages in their economies. After all, worldwide tourism accounts for close to 10% of GDP, equivalent to around US$7.5 trillion, and is responsible for one in 11 jobs.

The importance of tourism is also reflected in several of the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and recognized as a crucial tool in the global community’s effort to eliminate extreme poverty.

However, where tourism represents an important income earner, it can also expose countries to increased external risk. An economy can be severely hit by travel bans and travel warnings, and may become dependent on the whims and fancy of the increasingly discerning traveller. Tourism may also increase countries’ vulnerability to natural or man-made disasters if not properly managed.

Tourism is therefore not enough to sustain development. What is needed is sustainable tourism. An economy based on tourism needs to be carefully managed: finite resources must be protected and people employed in the tourism industry must be able to sustain their families. In this regard, future tourism offerings will be able to take advantage of an increased demand by consumers for tourism products that are ethically, socially and environmentally sensitive.

During my visits to projects in the field, I have been fortunate to experience some of the amazing tourism products on offer. From the beaches of Barbados to safari in Kenya and Cambodia’s ancient ruins. And let’s not forget the gorillas in Rwanda’s national parks, the mountains of Nepal and Costa Rica’s nature reserves.

I have also seen the vulnerability and negative ecological footprint in some other places. A hurricane can decimate annual incomes in a few hours and lapsed standards can erode – literally and figuratively – historical landmarks and destroy cultural heritage. This is why in all of ITC’s tourism projects sustainability plays a huge part.

In Myanmar, for example, ITC has been working for several years to support the building of a tourism industry in Kayah state (see Pages 30-32). In Liberia, ITC is working with the government to develop long-term plans for building soft infrastructure that will help bring back tourists to the unspoilt beaches of the West African country.

For both examples, it is about building long-term viability in the tourism industry that helps create jobs that respond to market needs and that goes hand-in-hand with protecting local culture and local wildlife. An award received at the ASEAN Tourism Forum for our work in Myanmar in the category ‘ASEAN Homestay and Community-Based Awards’ is one of the reflections of the success of ITC’s approach.

There are also a myriad of opportunities to create and deepen linkages within the economy. Tourism is not just an isolated sector. In fact, better linking tourism to the agri-processing, handicraft, textiles and wider services value chain can have exponential impacts on the economy.

In Saint Lucia, ITC works with the Saint Lucia Trade Export Promotion Agency (TEPA) to help create a ‘Taste of St. Lucia’ brand that offers much potential to catalyse these wider links for local SMEs operating in several areas, including the hospitality sector (see Pages 20-21).

Recognizing the importance of tourism for our focus countries, we recently entered into a strategic partnership with the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) that opened its Geneva offices at ITC’s premises in January 2017. At ITC we are therefore particularly proud to be supporting the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, led by our colleagues at the UNWTO. We look forward to working with other international agencies to ensure that tourism is built on principles that are fair, inclusive, sustainable and environmentally friendly.
ITC EMPLOYMENT

ITC is recruiting qualified professionals within different areas of expertise. If you would like to contribute your skills to increasing export competitiveness for developing economies, and are motivated to work in an international environment that promotes diversity, please check our jobs website, which is updated weekly:

www.intracen.org/about/jobs
WHAT WE DID ON OUR HOLIDAYS

What does it mean that tourism is sustainable? We asked ITC staff show is with their holiday snapshots.

PHOTO FEATURE

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World Export Development Forum 2017

The World Export Development Forum (WEDF), ITC’s flagship event, will be held in Budapest, Hungary, on 25-26 October 2017, hosted by Hungary’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

With a theme focused on ‘Trade – a Force for Good: Include, Innovate, Integrate’, the two-day event will explore how trade can be a driver of inclusive growth and job creation focusing on small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

ITC and the Government of Hungary attach significant importance to the role of SMEs in contributing to trade-led growth and job creation. In Hungary, as in most other economies, SMEs form the backbone of the economy, representing over 90% of all business and contributing to two-thirds of global employment. Enabling more SMEs to connect to international markets will ensure that the gains from trade are more broadly distributed.

The agreement to host WEDF 2017 in Budapest was signed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary Péter Szijjártó and Arancha González, Executive Director of the International Trade Centre, on 28 February 2017.

For further information about WEDF, please visit www.intracen.org/wedf

Trade Facilitation Agreement enters into force

A major milestone for the global trading system was reached on 22 February when World Trade Organization’s (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) entered into force. The TFA seeks to expedite the movement, release and clearance of goods across borders. Its entry into force launches a new phase for trade facilitation reforms all over the world and creates a significant boost for commerce and the multilateral trading system as a whole.

Full implementation of the TFA is forecast to slash WTO members’ trade costs by an average 14.3%, with developing countries having the most to gain, according to a 2015 study carried out by WTO economists. The TFA is also likely to reduce the time needed to import goods by over a day and a half and to export goods by almost two days, representing a reduction of 47% and 91% respectively over the current average.

UN designates 27 June as MSME Day

The United Nations General Assembly on 6 April adopted a resolution recognizing the crucial role Micro-, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It also designates 27 June 27 ‘Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Day’.

Following the International Council for Small Business (ICSB) 2016 World Conference Declaration on the urgent need to recognize MSMEs’ role in global development, the Permanent Mission of Argentina to the United Nations, with support from ICSB, authored the resolution that was presented to and negotiated with all UN member states. The resolution was co-sponsored by 45 member states, representing over 5 billion people.

Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, all countries have been working for its implementation, aiming to ensure that every actor can contribute in the best possible way. Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises have the potential to make a long-lasting positive impact on global development needs, since they are the engine for economic growth and job creation.
A new tool for measuring the e-commerce environment

Mukhisa Kituyi, the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development on 25 April unveiled the new eTrade for all platform. The new Etradeforall.org, which was presented during UNCTAD’s eCommerce week, is a new information hub that connects partners, beneficiaries and donors to ensure better and more inclusive e-commerce for developing countries.

The new platform provides easier access for developing countries to access resources that enables them to improve their e-commerce readiness. It also features upcoming news and events, substantive releases (data and research) on e-commerce and the digital economy, and offers increased learning opportunities through the sharing of best practices.

How the sharing economy will transform the electricity industry

A new report released by the World Economic Forum, The Future of Electricity: New Technologies Transforming the Grid Edge, finds that adoption of new grid-edge technologies in countries belonging to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development could bring more than $2.4 trillion of value creation for society and industry over the next 10 years. The additional value would come from new jobs and reduction of carbon emissions derived from increasing the efficiency of the overall system, optimizing capital allocation and creating new services for customers.

Rapidly falling costs of smart meters, connected devices and grid sensors will increase the efficiency of network management and, more importantly, allow customers to have real-time information about energy supply and demand across the system. In the same way that ride provider Uber and travel firm Airbnb have disrupted the transport and hospitality industries, respectively, grid-edge technologies could improve the utilization rate of electricity infrastructure.

Unemployment rises sharply in Latin America, Caribbean, ILO says

The unemployment rate in Latin America and the Caribbean reached 8.1% in 2016, the highest level in a decade, according to the International Labour Organization (ILO). It said in its annual report on the region’s labour market that the increase comes amid an economic contraction that has also affected the quality of employment.

That rate is 1.5 percentage points higher than in 2015, when it stood at 6.6%. This means some 5 million people joined the ranks of the unemployed, a figure that now stands at about 25 million workers according to the ‘2016 Labour Overview of Latin America and the Caribbean’ (‘Panorama Laboral 2016 de América Latina y el Caribe’).

Of particular concern to the ILO is that if forecasts of slow growth for 2017 hold true, unemployment will increase again next year to 8.4%.

The ILO report noted that the increase in unemployment comes as an economic contraction of -0.6% or -0.9% is projected by the International Monetary Fund and the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, respectively, for 2016.
Our sustainable holidays

EKATERINA BAGLAEVA, Consultant, International Trade Centre

When not working to achieve ‘Trade for Good’, staff at ITC aim to achieve ‘Tourism for Good’

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization, more than 1.2 billion people travelled in 2015. A number that keeps growing. Whereas only a few decades ago, international tourism was largely reserved for the rich, travel has become ‘cheap’ and anyone can today board a plane to visit the Eiffel Tower in Paris, take a selfie on the Great Wall in Beijing, or eat Baklava in Istanbul’s Bazaar.

For the photo feature of this issue of International Trade Forum, we asked colleagues at the International Trade Centre to submit photos from their holidays and what sustainable tourism means to them. From mountaineering in Switzerland to encounters with indigenous people in the US, there is no one answer to what constitutes sustainable tourism. What the photos have in common is that they all – in different ways – show the need for tourism to go hand in hand with nature and people.

1. Dreamcatchers made by Navajo people hang in front of Monument Valley, Arizona, USA.
2. Classical cars line a street in Cuba’s capital, Havana.
3. A view from Dôme de Goûter towards Aiguille de Bionnasay, one of the satellite peaks of the Mont Blanc massif on the border between France and Italy.
4. The San Blas Islands outside Panama are regulated by the Kuna people who regulate and control the tourism on the islands. This allows them to preserve nature and life below water, and sustain their culture.
5. Fishermen return from sea with fresh catch in the village of Kuta in Bali, Indonesia.
6. Colourful prayer mats are laid out in front of the Waisr Khan Mosque in Lahore, Pakistan.
Ensuring economic growth for all

JEAN LEBEL, President, International Development Research Centre

GLOBAL VIEW

Women worldwide are missing out. This is how we can make economic growth equal for all

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laring gaps in prosperity worldwide have prompted a growing consensus that economic growth must benefit all socioeconomic segments of the population. Putting an end to inequality hinges on, in part, access to employment or business opportunities for the world’s poorest but achieving this goal is one of the biggest policy challenges facing governments, corporations and civil society leaders. Whether it is broadband access or daycare options, we need to identify the ideas that will achieve inclusive growth in the developing world.

Canada’s International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the World Economic Forum have partnered to help leaders move from well-meant objectives to concrete action. This partnership is building on the existing work of the forum to break new ground through The Inclusive Growth and Development Report.

The Forum’s IDRC-supported project is collecting case studies of inclusive growth successes to feature in a digital knowledge bank. This qualitative data will help to implement national inclusive growth strategies that make the most of public, private-sector and civil resources.

Inclusive growth is a strong current running through much of IDRC’s programming. These investments — including the ones highlighted below — are generating insights that feed into the broader discussion of solutions for inclusive growth, especially in regard to women.

In sub-Saharan Africa the majority of economically active women work in agriculture, constituting 43% of the global agriculture labour force. Reducing the drudgery of their work and linking women to markets is key to inclusive growth.

In sub-Saharan Africa the majority of economically active women work in agriculture, constituting 43% of the global agriculture labour force. Reducing the drudgery of their work and linking women to markets is key to inclusive growth.
WOMEN’S UNPAID BURDEN
One of the key barriers to women’s economic growth, as illustrated in the Forum’s Global Gender Gap Report, is the time they spend doing unpaid work caring for their families — an average of five hours a day compared to just one and a half hours for men.

The provision of daycare in low-income countries in Africa and Asia could reduce this imbalance and help unlock the full potential of women in the workforce.

Our work is contributing to the growing evidence on the economic returns of expanding affordable and quality childcare options for poor women. Finding sustainable financing models for low-income countries is critical to sustain these gains.

THE POWER OF LARGE BUYERS
Beyond the double burden of work and home responsibilities, women face many disadvantages gaining access to training, finance and markets. IDRC’s work with WEConnect International is proving that helping women to register their businesses can improve their market access. In a one-year pilot, 600 women-owned businesses in India registered and 60 obtained certification to supply large companies. The pilot helped generate additional revenues of C$170 million (US$126.8 million) and employ more than 4,600 people across India. There is scope to replicate this success in other countries.

BANKING FOR POOR WOMEN
The importance of increasing women’s and other marginalized people’s use of formal financial services and training is clear. Evidence from Proyecto Capital has proven that a savings account and financial education can improve the performance of small businesses by as much as 10% — and at a very low cost.

Their findings have helped convince governments in Latin America to adopt policies in support of financial intermediation solutions with a goal of ensuring that 10 million people living in poverty will have enhanced economic opportunities by 2020.

BOOSTING FARM INCOME
In sub-Saharan Africa the majority of economically active women work in agriculture, constituting 43% of the global agriculture labour force. Reducing the drudgery of their work and linking women to markets is key to inclusive growth.

In Kenya and Uganda, for example, a public-private partnership is encouraging the production and consumption of beans, a crop commonly grown by women. Developing pre-cooked bean products for low and middle-income households is helping to provide income for women growers and, at the same time, reducing the cooking time of beans from as long as three hours to just 15 minutes, thereby saving on energy costs. More than 20,000 smallholder farmers are supplying beans to a new factory and yields of beans have increased threefold, leading to higher incomes for producers.

BROADBAND ACCESS
Our thinking on inclusive growth also embraces the need for affordable access to information and communication technologies (ICTs). Given that the poor spend a greater proportion of their earnings on digital technologies than higher-income groups, better access would have an immediate impact on people’s lives.

A study in East Africa found that increased access to ICTs over a two-year period was associated with a 3.7% improvement in poverty status. The study showed that over the course of a decade the gains resulting from ICT access for the most vulnerable were twice that for the non-poor.

Similarly, a study in Latin America confirmed that broadband availability was associated with a rise in incomes of up to 7.5% over two years in Ecuador. According to this study, broadband can effectively contribute to economic and social development only when combined with investments in human capital, such as teacher training and digital literacy programmes for women.

EVIDENCE-DRIVEN SOLUTIONS
History shows that the poorest and most vulnerable do not benefit equally from economic growth, nor are they extended the opportunity to participate in and contribute to growth. Women’s access to daycare, big buyers, financial services, the agricultural processing industry and broadband are solutions that contribute to inclusive growth. The key is to generate solutions backed by solid evidence — evidence driven by people in developing countries and capable of reaching large populations across multiple socioeconomic segments.

These findings demonstrate the possibility of achieving economic growth that benefits all, not just the privileged few. We need more examples of ways we can make growth inclusive. By changing how the world envisions and promotes growth, we are working together to ensure that the historical pattern of economic growth will not be repeated.

This article first appeared on the World Economic Forum’s Agenda blog.

1. Better daycare opportunities could play a big part in unlocking the potential of Africa’s women.
What is the TFA and who will benefit?

FRANCESCA BIANCHI, Project Specialist; KIMBERLEY BOTWRIGHT, Policy Analyst;
SEAN DOHERTY, Head of International Trade and Investment, World Economic Forum

Against a backdrop of anti-globalization sentiment, shuttered regional trade pacts and shifting geopolitics, the World Trade Organization’s (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) flies in the face of the current news cycle. However, the global trade deal that went live 22 February will smooth customs procedures and cut related red tape. Here’s what is in the deal and what it means for you and for global trade.

Many people have not heard much about this TFA. On the web it was eclipsed by the Star Wars episode The Force Awakens, which has the same three-letter acronym.

Through the TFA, governments have agreed to publish a wide range of customs-specific information, including online where possible. This includes outlined measures to help speed up the processing and clearance of goods – such as procedures for accompanying documents to be processed ahead of the arrival of a package – and options for electronic payment of import or export duties. It also encouraged countries to use relevant international standards for import, export or transit formalities, helping to minimize the number of different procedures businesses might have to master to move goods between countries.

The deal even includes a specific provision on perishable goods. It encourages countries to adopt procedures to clear such items as quickly as possible while meeting all relevant domestic requirements and ensuring that importers can properly store these items pending their release. This could be a boon for the world’s rural poor, who are often exporters of perishable agriculture products.

In sum, the TFA basically tackles unintentional barriers to trade and issues that exist due to outdated customs systems.

It has not always been easy to actually get products across borders. Paperwork, complexity, delays and uncertainty have discouraged all but the biggest and bravest.
A FAIR DEAL
Earlier trade deals have typically been about setting the duties on buying or selling in other countries’ markets or determining how to write national rules, such as regulations and procedures, which treat all products equally regardless of where they are made.

However, it has not always been easy to actually get products across borders. Paperwork, complexity, delays and uncertainty have discouraged all but the biggest and bravest. Ignoring the rules or giving up has often been the approach taken by smaller business.

By cutting transaction costs and improving transparency, the TFA stands to deliver gains to smaller businesses, which can be held back from accessing global markets because of transaction costs and information asymmetry. The WTO estimates that TFA implementation could create some 20 million new jobs, many if not most of which, would be in smaller entrepreneurial enterprises.

The new system is unique in other ways. The TFA allows developing economies to determine when they will implement individual provisions and to clearly identify where they need technical assistance or capacity building. In other words, countries have not bargained for lower standards to avoid legal threats if they are not ready or consider themselves unready. Instead, the same good governance standards will be used for everyone, though some may take longer or need more help to get things working.

Trade facilitation can also have positive effects for the world’s poorest countries because border delays may choke export and economic growth opportunities. Some studies have found that countries requiring reams of paperwork for imports are more likely to have a higher poverty rate or higher inequality rate.

The TFA can also help fight corruption, with customs automation leaving less room for corrupt practices that remain rife in some developing countries and act as a significant drag on trade and investment.

ECONOMIC PRAGMATISM
Trade facilitation is very pragmatic. It does not involve more trade liberalization or market-opening and it’s not generally a political football. All told, the WTO estimates that the TFA could boost export gains by up to and beyond $1 trillion per annum. TFA implementation could reduce trade costs in WTO members by an average of 14.3% and the most significant cost reductions will be in least developed countries.

Developed-country businesses and governments, including in the United States of America, have also been big supporters, seeing the promise of efficiencies at home and abroad.

WORKING TOGETHER
Just as writing a short letter is often harder than writing a long one, making border crossing cheap and simple takes hard work. That work carries on. The TFA can have great strides in putting customs procedures online, letting paperwork precede and following the actual movement of goods and so on.

The people who know the ins and outs of getting goods across borders are generally those who are trying to do so most often. But dedicating time to the common good is draining, even for the most community-spirited. Hybrid partnerships such as the Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation, which bring together donor funding with business priorities and expertise, can help to get reforms moving.

THE FUTURE IS NOW
Now that the deal is in play, a series of institutional arrangements will be activated to help support its implementation. The WTO will house a Committee on Trade Facilitation, which will provide a space for information and exchange with other international organizations such as the World Customs Organization (WCO) and allow countries to regularly review progress in TFA operation and implementation.

One important question looking ahead is how governments and stakeholders might build on the agreement. The TFA mainly tackles goods moving across borders, so one obvious approach would be to copy the model for other types of trade. A similar logic could be applied to investment, helping to tackle some of the barriers foreign investors might have to investing in the critical infrastructure needed for sustainable development. Trade in services and e-commerce might also benefit from such an approach.

Maybe the Star Wars comparison is not so far off the mark: tractor-like beams carrying fast-growing digital data flows now enable vast amounts of trade and business activity, from more efficient value chains to new online platforms connecting businesses with consumers. What the TFA shows us is that the physical world may finally be catching up.

This is an updated version of an article that first appeared on the World Economic Forum’s Agenda blog.
Tourism, the SDGs and ITC

MARION JANSEN, Chief Economist, International Trade Centre

A growing tourism industry can contribute to sustainable development goals and ITC aims to make it happen

Tourism is the fastest-growing and one of the most dynamic economic sectors worldwide, accounting for roughly 30% of global trade in services. It ranked third as a worldwide export category in 2015, after fuels and chemicals and ahead of food and automotive products.

For many developing countries, tourism constitutes the single largest foreign exchange earner. Tourism is a sector predominantly driven by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and is particularly valuable as an agent for development and as a driver for socio-economic progress. Tourism value chains encompass a wide range of goods and services and generate multiplier effects across many sub-activities, producing trickle-down effects that benefit local and marginalized communities. As a leading employment sector, tourism offers one of the most effective viable tools for poverty alleviation and sustainable development.

For these reasons, tourism is repeatedly mentioned in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – also known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Goals 8, 12 and 14 highlight the sector’s potential to contribute to economic growth, social inclusion and environmental preservation. By scaling up job creation in the tourism sector, society can benefit from improved skills and professional development, and especially women and youth. The tourism sector...
ITC has developed and implemented tourism projects worldwide providing local communities with invaluable opportunities for sustainable growth through tourism.

Therefore has the potential to address the persistent youth unemployment problems and to narrow the gender gap, especially in developing countries. The International Trade Centre (ITC) is committed to harnessing tourism potential for women and youth by facilitating their access to jobs and participation in international value chains, which leads to wealth creation and inclusive growth.

TOURISM POLICY

ITC offers integrated solutions by building institutional, managerial and entrepreneurial capacities simultaneously at government, institutional and enterprise levels.

ITC works with governments and trade and investment support institutions (TISIs) on creating conducive policy environments and with SME beneficiaries on enhancing export capacity.

Raising awareness of the importance of the tourism sector for sustainable development and facilitating exchange of best practices reflect the policy segment of ITC’s work in tourism. As part of ITC’s mandate to foster sustainable development through increased trade opportunities, the Trade Development Strategy programme offers a suite of strategic solutions to maximize the development payoffs from trade. ITC facilitated trade-development strategies and roadmaps can be tailored to specific sectors, including the tourism sector, as reflected in our recent work in Liberia.

In 2016, the Liberian government and ITC, with funding from the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF), developed and launched a strategy for the tourism sector to attract more tourists and investment to Liberia with a view on generating inclusive growth and jobs. This national export strategy for tourism outlines a road map that identifies six key areas of engagement: reviewing policies; tackling infrastructure issues; training and skills building; engaging local communities; strengthening institutional capacities; and better branding and marketing of Liberia’s tourism offerings.

More than 120 concrete project activities have been identified to redress bottlenecks in the development of the tourism sector in Liberia.

PRIVATE-SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

ITC’s specific competence also lies in its trade orientation and its mandate to work with the private sector, especially for SME internationalization.

ITC has developed and implemented tourism projects worldwide providing local communities with invaluable opportunities to grow through tourism.

Countries in which ITC has intervened include Benin, Bolivia, Brazil, El Salvador, Kyrgyzstan, Lao PDR, Mozambique, Myanmar, Tajikistan and Viet Nam. For example, ITC’s tourism project in Myanmar aims to enhance trade competitiveness of the tourism sector in Kayah state. This is being achieved by integrating local producers and service providers into the tourism value chains on one hand, while on the other hand helping inbound tour operators in Myanmar to develop inclusive tourism tours in Kayah state and promoting the region in international markets (see Pages 30-32).

The Myanmar project delivers impacts through increased export capacity of tour operators and tourism-related suppliers; increased capacity of tourism associations to provide sector development services; and enhanced business linkages and partnerships for SMEs in the international market. The project addresses the whole tourism value chain by overcoming bottlenecks at each point from product development over market linkages to destination branding, bringing all players together in moving towards sustainable tourism.

To maximize impact of technical assistance in tourism, ITC and the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) have entered into a strategic partnership to aggregate their resources and competencies, and to share perspectives in the process of rethinking a joint approach to Aid for Trade in tourism. The partnership also aims at having a more integrated and innovative approach to tourism development for inclusive growth.

Among the first steps are the development of a joint ITC-UNWTO offering for national tourism export strategies and the collaboration with UNWTO in projects that ITC is leading in Asia and the Pacific.

This collaboration reflects ITC’s vision that increased coordination among donors and implementing agencies can help create comprehensive tourism projects that are more effective in enhancing tourism’s contribution to sustainable development.

Please visit www.intracen.org/itc/sectors/services/tourism to learn more about ITC’s work on tourism.

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1. Yesterday’s trade routes are today’s tourist attractions.
2. Built to keep foreigners away, China’s Great Wall is today one of the country’s main tourism draws.
Tourism can show the way forward in achieving Global Goals

TALEB RIFAI, Secretary-General, World Tourism Organization

The International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development is an opportunity to advance the contribution of tourism to inclusive and sustainable growth

We definitely live in the ‘Era of Travel’, a time in which tourism has become a pillar of our economies and our societies. International tourist arrivals reached a new record in 2016: 1.2 billion. Back in 1950 only 25 million people were travelling internationally. By the year 2030 we will register around 1.8 billion international tourist arrivals.

The tourism sector has continued to grow over recent decades despite challenges, including the global economic crisis; safety and security challenges; health pandemics; and natural disasters. It creates jobs, fosters investment and generates foreign exchange for an increasing number of countries.

In fact, tourism generates, directly and indirectly, one in 11 jobs worldwide while contributing to 10% of global GDP and 7% of global trade. Accounting for $1.474 billion, tourism is today the third-biggest export category at global level after chemicals and fuels and the first in many developing countries.

Meanwhile, overall employment continues to be an issue. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), the number of unemployed persons globally in 2017 is forecast to stand at just over 201 million – with an additional rise of 2.7 million expected in 2018 – as the pace of labour force growth outstrips job creation.
Equitable employment is integral to increasing sustained economic growth, social inclusion, peace and security. As such, job creation should be a priority for all and the potential of every economic sector to provide decent jobs and foster inclusive growth should be utilized to its fullest.

TOURISM AND AGENDA 2030
At the end of 2015 the global community agreed on 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). With its crosscutting, nature tourism can contribute to all 17 Goals – from poverty elimination to gender equality and the fight against climate change. Yet its role is specially included in this people-centred universal agenda as a target in three of the SDGs: Goal 8 on decent work and economic growth; Goal 12 on responsible production and consumption, and; Goal 14 on protecting life under water.

Tourism creates jobs for millions at a time when the failure to provide hope for a better future to people of all regions is one of our biggest global challenges. The sector’s wide reach also stimulates entrepreneurship and growth of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). MSMEs are the sector’s major job creators, innovators and sources of economic diversification.

With technology and innovation propelling new platform tourism services or the so-called sharing economy, there are also many new employment opportunities in tourism that – if regulated to safeguard quality, a level playing-field and the rights of consumers and employees – can make a large contribution to job creation.

PEOPLE-CENTRED AGENDA
Target 9 of SDG 8 sets a clear objective: ‘By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products.’ Yet to take full advantage of tourism’s capacity to create jobs we must invest more in tourism education and training; build public policies that stimulate job creation and include MSMEs in tourism value chains; and bring closer together the public sector, companies and educational institutions.

Today the tourism sector is still suffering from a gap between education and the skills and knowledge needs. The resulting shortages of labour with future-proof skills continue to dent economies and harm job-creation prospects.

INTERNATIONAL YEAR
Recognizing the value and potential of tourism to contribute to the 2030 Agenda, the United Nations General Assembly has declared 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development.

This is an excellent opportunity to advance the contribution of tourism to inclusive and sustainable growth, which maximizes the contribution of our sector to a more equitable society. An opportunity to promote the contribution of tourism to achieving the future we want – and also to determine, together, the exact role we will have tourism play in the sustainable development agenda up to and beyond 2030.

Join us in celebrating the International Year and help make a difference in building a more sustainable tourism sector.
Branding Norway with sustainable tourism

ANITA KROHN TRAASETH, Chief Executive Officer, Innovation Norway

Green tourism plays a central role in reflecting Norwegian values and giving visitors a glimpse into what sustainability really means for people and business.

Norway has in recent years taken a range of steps towards building a more sustainable tourism industry and at Innovation Norway we are proud to take part in the United Nations’ 2017 International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development as one of its Gold Partners.

‘Norway – powered by nature’ is the message for our tourism brand. It clearly reflects what we aim to achieve, which is sustainability in a long-term perspective. Tourism in Norway provides enriching experiences presenting a unique nature, rich history, local cultures and food experiences. As the main agency supporting the Norwegian tourism sector, Innovation Norway and its subsidiary Visit Norway seek to help develop world-class sustainable solutions for the country’s tourism operators. This approach goes hand in hand with the conservation of nature and culture, which play a vital role for local value creation and development.

Norway is not only rich in nature and natural resources, but also has high ambitions on reducing its footprints in areas important for future generations.
The United Nations has for several years ranked Norway as one of the best countries to live in. Recently it was also ranked as having one of the world’s happiest populations, according to the UN’s World Happiness Report 2017. Norway is not only rich in nature and natural resources, but also has high ambitions on reducing its footprints in areas important for future generations. As such, innovation and investments are based on highly commended Norwegian values, including closeness and care for nature, social welfare, inclusiveness, and green growth. This effort to create a sustainable society is also reflected in Norway’s tourism offerings, which introduce guests to a rich specter of soft and hard adventures, culture, food experiences, city life and nature activities.

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

Destination development is a multi-tasking activity. It combines planning, development, performance and profiling activities while including a wide range of stakeholders and interests. Together with the tourism industry, Innovation Norway has developed the certification system and development process ‘Sustainable Destination’, assisting local and regional destinations to target sustainability issues and work in a systematic, strategic and operational way. All of this comes with the goal of aiming to achieve increased sustainability in the tourism sector. Through this sustainability certification system the various destinations gather information, involve stakeholders, plan and implement actions, and monitor their own progress. In addition, the branded destinations monitor improvement on a broad specter of areas, helping them prioritize actions and work towards long-term goals.

Destinations already branded as sustainable through Innovation Norway are national pioneers when it comes to running strategic and dedicated local processes, with the goal of achieving increased sustainability. Well-known Norwegian tourist destinations such as Røros, Lærdal, Vega, Geilo, Trysil, Setesdal, Inderøy and Svalbard are on the list. These destinations plan and implement actions, such as enhancing local food and culture, reduce emissions by providing better energy solutions and transport. They also help increase the responsibility for local environmental challenges and engage the local community in tourism activities. An example of the latter is how the destinations organize waste disposal – and waste sorting systems – at places used by tourists.

Norway tourism in numbers

There was a total of 31.6 million guest nights in commercial accommodation in 2015, an increase of 4% from the previous year. The number of international tourist arrivals at Norwegian hotels in 2015 rose 12% from 2014 levels to 3.6 million. Holiday and leisure overnight stays at commercial accommodations increased by 7% from 2014 levels to 21.1 million.

1. Kayaking around the Lofoten Islands in Norway’s north can be a thrilling and sustainable experience.
2. The Aksla viewpoint above Ålesund, in western Norway, a city known for its art nouveau architectural style.
Striking a balance with the future

JACQUELINE EMMANUEL-FLOOD, Chief Executive Officer, Saint Lucia Trade Export Promotion Agency

Saint Lucia’s tourism success is interwoven with economic development and environmental protection

Sustainable tourism is about re-focusing and adapting in the quest to strike a balance between limits and usage. This requires long-term thinking, often over decades, and realizing that change is often cumulative, gradual and irreversible.

Socioeconomic and environmental aspects of sustainable development must include the interests of all stakeholders, including local communities, visitors, industry and government. A very important stakeholder not always included in those plans is the one who is not yet born. Indeed, as defined by the 1987 Brundtland Commission and its report, ‘Our Common Future’, sustainable development is that which ‘meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’.

Sustainable tourism is inextricably linked with sustainable land use, a reality that is critical for small-island developing states (SIDS). One such example is the Caribbean island of Saint Lucia, where the destination experience is defined predominantly by natural and marine aspects and by a cultural product interwoven with the physical landscape and environment. With economic security so heavily reliant on a fragile natural resource base, economic development and environmental protection should not be seen as opposing forces, but pursued hand in hand as aspirations that can be mutually reinforcing. Policies and actions must aim to strengthen the benefits and reduce the costs of tourism.
Policies and practices must be focused on the survival of businesses, sectors, economies and most importantly, people.

BOOSTING EXPORTS

The Trade Export Promotion Agency (TEPA) is Saint Lucia’s national agency mandated to spearhead the island’s export development effort. It works to increase aggregate volume and value of exports from Saint Lucia; promote and expand business in international markets; and help businesses improve profitability and long-term sustainability. These outcomes are pursued through sectoral representation on business and trade policy. In addition, information services keep the sector abreast of global trade trends, trade facilitation and promotion and, marketing support to penetrate new and existing markets.

The inescapable interdependencies that exist between our clients and the environmentally reliant tourism sector underpins the rationale for the deliberate alignment of the work of the agency mandated to market Saint Lucia as a tourist destination – the Saint Lucia Tourism Authority (formerly the Saint Lucia Tourist Board). A priority for TEPA has therefore been to ensure that small producers who use raw materials in environmentally sustainable proportions have a secure place in the manufacturing and tourism value chains.

One such example is a collaboration between these sister agencies for the staging of the annual Love Elevated Wedding Symposium, taking advantage of the island’s standing as an a favourite location for weddings. TEPA’s input was the production and launch of a Simply Beautiful Weddings. An online catalogue the gave suppliers – florists, venue operators, producers of unique gifts, handcrafted jewelry, fashion and mementos – year-round worldwide visibility in an ever-evolving and expanding wedding industry.

PARTNERSHIPS

TEPA is also pursuing these objectives through partnerships with other business facilitation agencies like the Saint Lucia Bureau of Standards and Saint Lucia Coalition of Service Industries (SLCSI), which works to organize service producers. SLCSI boasts 13 groupings under its umbrella including travel consultants, architects, creative producers, realtors and florists – sectors whose operations have environmental impact. This facilitates synergies and economies in the area of capacity building for small producers in the context of quality management systems and information technology to be able to meet benchmarks for trading.

TEPA is justly proud of the success of a pilot intervention with Saint Lucia’s largest agro-processor, Baron Foods to strengthen local value chains. This project enabled the successful penetration of the firm’s line of gourmet sauces into new European markets in 2015. Fusing the taste of the Caribbean from strictly local raw materials, each product’s core ingredient is supplied by a single Saint Lucian farmer who is tasked to ensure product availability year-round. In effect, Baron is successfully establishing market differentiation, consistency in distribution and supply at the market end while guaranteeing markets to small farm holdings across rural Saint Lucia, whose operations facilitate sustainable agriculture.

In 2016, TEPA held a private business-to-business exhibition for Saint Lucia’s largest tourist retailer, Sea Island Cotton Shop, and with five local manufacturers of primarily aromatherapy and herbal products as well as high-end chocolates. All five exhibitors were selected to be retailed. This pilot serves as a model to migrate other suppliers into the tourism value chain.

Value chains, backward and forward linkages, cottage industries and renewable energy all have one thing in common: synergy. This is why policies and practices must be focused on the survival of businesses, sectors, economies and most importantly, people. TEPA remains committed to pioneering initiatives and pursing strategic partnerships that directly or indirectly foster Saint Lucia’s sustainable development goals.

1. Thanks to TEPA, Baron Foods’ Caribbean line is now on sale in European shops.

1. A view on Saint Lucia’s Pitons, two volcano plugs.
Placing conservation at the heart of sustainable tourism

CLARE AKAMANZI, Chief Executive Officer, Rwanda Development Board

In Rwanda, a partnership with nature has led to booming tourism sector

It was the National Geographic’s Wild channel that first brought the world close to the lion kings of Akagera National Park with a compelling tale of survival and territory. Through television sets, people from Norway to Thailand got to witness Rwanda’s ground-breaking conservation success story: the return of lions to the verdant lands after a 15-year absence, with their numbers doubling in number in just one year.

In Rwanda, the term ‘conservation’ is not new. For example, the annual Kwita Izina, during which new-born mountain gorillas are named, provides a unique platform to raise awareness of the importance of biodiversity from the community to the international level.

Since the inception of the Kwita Izina in 2005, prominent global conservation stakeholders have so far named 238 gorilla infants. Towards the end of 2017 over 1,000 international guests will again convene at the foothills of the Virunga Mountains for the 13th edition of the event.
Community involvement has really worked in Rwanda in ensuring that conservation efforts are sustainable. It also goes to show how conservation has played a major role in making tourism a major driver of economic growth for Rwanda.

PARTNERSHIPS

Mountain gorillas, one of the world’s most endangered species, are only found in three countries: Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Uganda. However, with the involvement of stakeholders, including veterinarians, the story is changing with global conservation efforts to which Rwanda is fully committed.

In partnership with its neighbouring countries, Burundi, DRC and Uganda, an electric fence was built around the Akagera National Park to better protect the region’s wildlife. In addition, Rwanda has been working to complement these trans-national efforts with its own domestic solutions.

Community involvement has really worked in Rwanda in ensuring that conservation efforts are sustainable. It also goes to show how conservation has played a major role in making tourism a major driver of economic growth for Rwanda.

FUTURE GENERATIONS

The Government of Rwanda has for many years enforced stringent policies with a special focus on investing in future generations by instilling a culture of responsible tourism. One major achievement is the establishment of Kitabi College of Conservation and Environmental Management (KCCEM), an academic institution set up to develop the capacity of youth in maintaining sustainable tourism in Rwanda and in neighbouring countries.

The demand for Rwanda as a travel destination has grown in parallel to increased government spending dedicated to the development of the hospitality sector and the opening up of international borders. In fact, tourism is one of the main foreign-exchange earners for Rwanda, with indirect contribution to GDP currently standing at close to 10%. This underlines why sustainable tourism plays an essential role in promoting and achieving the goals of Rwanda’s long-term development strategy, Vision 2020.

MUTUAL SURVIVAL

For the Rwanda Development Board, which I head, the tourism-revenue sharing policy of Rwanda’s national park has become crucial, simply because it sets the stage for mutual survival of humans and wildlife in the country.

How it works is simple yet effective in promoting sustainable tourism. The government allocates 5% of tourism revenue to community projects as an incentive for conservation. The initiative has implemented over 400 community projects worth about $2.5 million.

Infrastructural amenities, agricultural projects such as seed production and storage, water supply projects and establishment of small and medium-sized enterprises are just a portion of the community empowerment projects that have benefited populations around parks.

Rwanda’s success story in combining conservation and tourism is set to take an outstanding turn with the return of the rhinoceros in 2017, part of a larger plan to restore the land of a thousand hills as home to the famous ‘big five’: the African lion, the African elephant, the Cape buffalo, the African leopard, and the rhinoceros.

PARTNERSHIP WITH NATURE

There is no doubt that the focus on sustainable tourism inspires affection and pride among most Rwandans. And the idea of naming new-born gorillas and lions create a sense of ownership and entitlement among Rwandans to protect endangered species. Moreover, the naming of wildlife has become vital to Rwanda’s conservation success, aiding game rangers and park management to monitor these species in their habitat and ensure their survival.

At RDB we will continue to leverage the benefits of conservation to strengthen Rwanda’s sustainable tourism sector. It is only by working together – and in partnership with nature – that we can create a future that is truly sustainable for future generations: for humans and animals alike.

1. Community involvement is helping ensure the survival of Rwanda’s mountain gorillas.
2. A dance performance at the Kwita Izina, an annual ceremony to name new-born mountain gorillas.
Climate change could leave South African tourism high and dry

JENNIFER FITCHETT, Centre of Excellence in Palaeoscience Postdoctoral Fellow, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa, and GIJSBERT HOOGENDOORN, Associate Professor in Tourism Geography, University of Johannesburg

Towards the end of each year, hundreds of thousands of people escape dark, cold, rainy winters in Europe and North America for a break in sunny South Africa. Many are drawn by the country’s wide array of outdoor attractions: nature reserves, beaches and adventure activities like skydiving and water sports. All of these are reliant on prolonged pleasant weather conditions. For now, South Africa delivers just that. However, climate change could place the country’s booming tourism sector – which contributes more than 100 billion rand ($7.26 billion) to GDP each year – at risk.

A range of research we have conducted suggests that climate change will badly compromise the sector. In the Eastern Cape province, sea levels will rise so much by 2050 that properties in popular tourist haunts might be flooded if adaptation measures are not implemented.

South Africa and other countries on the African continent need to act urgently to navigate the choppy waters of climate change.
Climate change will not only shift seasons, changing the start date of spring and summer and extending the duration of summer. It will also alter rainfall patterns and daily temperatures.

INEVITABLE WEATHER CHANGES
The sub-Saharan region will likely be hit hard by climate change. It will experience temperature increases above the average global rate. Extreme weather events will become more common and the region’s rainfall patterns are set to change. Some areas will experience increased rainfall and a heightened flood risk, while others are projected to experience a decrease in rainfall and become more drought-prone.

South Africa and other countries on the continent such as Mozambique, Morocco and Egypt, whose tourism sectors also rely on good weather, need to act urgently to navigate the choppy waters of climate change.

MAPPING THE PROBLEM
These concerns led us to initiate a pilot study that explored climate change threats to the tourism sector in two small coastal Eastern Cape towns. The study used digital elevation models that map future sea levels relative to the land surface. These maps explored the potential impact of rising sea levels to the towns’ accommodation establishments by 2050 and then again by 2100.

Our results indicate that the worst effects will be experienced by 2050. The models suggest that 23 guesthouses that immediately border the coastline and one town’s canal will be flooded by this time.

We also calculated the Tourism Climatic Index scores for the two towns based on climate data from the past 30 years. The index incorporates a range of meteorological variables which influence human comfort and aesthetic pleasure. This serves as a measure of a location’s climatic suitability for tourism in future.

We also interviewed 52 tourists and 53 accommodation establishment owners. The owners expressed a significant concern for tourists’ comfort in changing climatic conditions. Many told us they had installed air conditioning units and organized indoor activities to deal with higher temperatures or rainfall. Rising sea levels were perceived as far too distant a problem to require immediate intervention. Many of the owners did not believe it would pose a threat within their lifetime.

WIDENING THE LENS
After we completed the pilot study we initiated a broad-based analysis of Tourism Climatic Index scores, which included 18 locations distributed relatively evenly across South Africa.

This study confirmed the widely held perception that South Africa has particularly suitable weather conditions for tourism. All of the locations returned annual scores within the international classification of ‘Excellent’ to ‘Ideal.’

For most locations, climates are most suitable in spring and autumn: winters are too cold and summers too hot. Cape Town is particularly suitable for summer tourism, which is confirmed by peak tourist numbers during this season. The scores were low in winter because of a combination of cold temperatures, persistent cloud cover and a high number of rainy days.

The study also explored the factors within the index, which contributed to lowering a location’s score. For all 18 locations the factor was either rainfall or thermal comfort – how hot or cold a place was.

Although this model confirms that the climate is currently suitable for tourism, projected changes in these meteorological variables are bad news for South Africa’s tourism sector. Climate change will not only shift seasons, changing the start date of spring and summer and extending the duration of summer. It will also alter rainfall patterns and daily temperatures. These factors will result in a reduced climate suitability for tourism.

So what can tourism bodies and individual establishments like hotels or guesthouses do to mitigate against these changes?

ROOM FOR ACTION
An improved understanding of how climate change threatens tourism is a good thing, no matter how gloomy our findings look. Understanding can improve the sector’s capacity for effective adaptation and mitigation.

Accurate, high-resolution forecasts of specific climate change threat allow for well-targeted measures that improve the chances of sustainable tourism – whether it is at the level of individual establishments or the whole sector nationally.

Individual establishments that operate from coastal premises could, for instance, build solid retaining walls, relocate to higher land and develop an emergency evacuation plan. They can also make improvements indoors to increase comfort during periods of bad weather, like installing air conditioning and organizing indoor entertainment.

Nationally, South Africa’s government could develop quicker responses to flood affected regions. This would allow tourism establishments to get back up and running quickly after a climatic event like a flood. Tourism authorities should work with forecasters to understand weather patterns better – then, armed with accurate scientific information, they can draw tourists to the most suitable locations for a particular time of year. ☎

1. Could cities like Cape Town soon be too affected by climate change to sustain tourism?
2. Cheetahs watch tourists in a South African game reserve.

This article first appeared on the Conversation (theconversation.com).
Small states, big trade challenges

SUZI NANDERA, Programme and Communications Analyst, the Commonwealth Secretariat

Innovative ideas will play a major part for small states to encourage resilience through diversified production and effective trade policies

Global trade is suffering due to a trade slowdown, political changes that no doubt we have all been following and an increase in anti-globalization measures, particularly those that inhibit trade.

The changing landscape of global trade challenges societies across the world. It is, however, particularly worrying for developing countries that in most cases do not have robust infrastructures to facilitate imports and exports. Of the 52 Commonwealth countries that work together to support democracy, good governance and development, 31 are small states ranging from coral archipelagos like the Solomon Islands to landlocked states like Swaziland, countries held back by their size and geographical location. In many cases they do not have national trade policies (NTPs). Without them, their capacity to import and export is constrained and development becomes difficult.

CHALLENGES

The small size of many countries in the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) group often means they cannot capitalize on economies of scale and end up depending heavily on tourism, fisheries and agricultural exports. Although they are open to trade, their remoteness from international markets increases the cost of trading goods and services. As a result, this group of states is often the most vulnerable to shocks and changes in world trade trends.

We often think that stunning Caribbean countries such as Belize and Barbados are awash with tourists supporting their respective GDPs. In fact, their small-sized economies and dependence on exports and imports puts them at risk of trade shocks. Kiribati, for example, is a country in the Pacific made up of 33 islands scattered across 5.2 million square kilometers of ocean with a population of just 110,000. For ease of doing business, the World Bank ranks it 149th out of 196 countries. With
few natural resources, Kiribati also runs a huge trade deficit, exporting $119 million in 2015 and importing more than $161 million. The country's widely dispersed population and dependence on imports will likely continue to hinder its economic development unless a practical solution is found.

Other islands in the region experience similar frustrations, including the Federated States of Micronesia. With trade identified as a significant enabler in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), several countries are slowly reaping the benefits of innovative ideas under the Hub and Spokes Programme. The Hub and Spokes Programme is a joint initiative of the European Union, the ACP Group Secretariat, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie. It provides trade experts to participating countries to help them develop their strategies in a way that reflects their national priorities to be effective in a global trading system. Enhancing trade capacity in the ACP region is more than implementing new trade policies and agreements. It involves listening to those at the grassroots level and ensuring that local producers are not left behind.

**IMPROVING THE SITUATION**

Although governments are tasked with improving trade at the national level, Micronesia is taking a unique approach by helping grassroots organizations reduce their vulnerability to shocks. Through identifying natural resources that have not been fully exploited, Micronesia’s Coffee Farmers Association has reintroduced coffee farming in Pohnpei and coffee has become an emerging product in the small state. Through the support of trade advisers, such innovative thinking can help many of the most remote nations diversify their export base.

The unique challenge of enhancing trade capacity in the Pacific requires a distinctive approach. The remote location of the Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI) means that marine, tourism and agricultural sectors are priorities in its national trade policy framework. To improve domestic competitiveness, the government initiated an innovative programme called ‘Be Marshallese, Buy Marshallese’ to encourage local branding. Brands exclusive to the Marshall Islands like Pandanus Juice are now successfully exported to New Zealand. The concept has been promoted on advertisements in the magazines of Nauru airlines and been popularised at festivals including the Guam Festival of Arts. Such strategies have proven successful in enticing the private sector to collaborate with development initiatives.

Another possibility comes from the Boosting Intra-Africa trade (BIAT) initiative that will encourage African countries to increase the volume of continental trade and deepen regional market integration. This initiative is designed to significantly improve the size and benefits of trade for the attainment of sustainable economic development and growth for the region. Advisers with the Africa Union Commission (AUC) are currently developing a capacity-building programme for AUC member states to strengthen government officials’ capacities to negotiate trade in services whilst supporting an important engine for growth on the continent.

There are no quick fixes in such challenging environments. However, many small states in the Hub and Spokes programme are receiving assistance to implement trade policies and facilitate trade. Fiji envisaged becoming a trade and investment hub for the region and the first-ever comprehensive Fiji Trade Policy Framework came into force in 2016. The framework has become a single reference point on issues of industrial development, implementation initiatives and trade facilitation. While trade frameworks have existed for years in many advanced economies, Fiji was held back due to limited capacities and knowledge. The Hub and Spokes programme, which strengthens trade capacity in the ACP region, is encouraging export diversification by helping countries to develop and implement policies and agreements that reflect their national priorities.

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1. Most SIDS do not have robust infrastructures to facilitate imports and exports.
2. Fishermen in Kiribati.
3. A market stall in Malu’u, the Solomon Islands.
Empowering youth in the Gambia

JARLE HETLAND, Editor, International Trade Forum

European Union and ITC team up to boost job creation and support long-term economic sustainability in the Gambia

Earlier this year the Gambia celebrated when a new, democratically elected government led by President Adama Barrow took power. This seismic shift brought with it hopes and optimism among Gambians for a better and more sustainable future. However, building the new Gambia will be an uphill task requiring international support. One key challenge is to re-connect the Gambia with international markets to ensure economic growth and create jobs, particularly for the youth that make up 60% of the population.

In response to these challenges, the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the Government of the Gambia launched a new initiative to support job creation and entrepreneurship for Gambian youth. The Gambia Youth Empowerment Project is a four-year project that will benefit from 11 million ($12.1 million) from the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa and strengthen the long-term competitiveness and viability of the country’s economy.

The launch of the Youth Empowerment Project marks another building block to the construction of the new Gambia, one that will have youth, job creation and trade as its core element.

‘This initiative funded under the EU Emergency Trust Fund for addressing root causes of instability and irregular migration in Africa will also give the opportunity to restore hope for members of
the diaspora and Gambians who migrated abroad,’ says Neven Mimica, European Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development.

‘In the past years, so many young Gambians have fled their country. Today the Gambia needs all of its sons and daughters to rebuild the country. And you need them in the Gambia, not abroad,’ Mimica says. ‘Pilot initiatives will be targeting the diaspora more specifically by addressing their needs and promoting inclusive entrepreneurship schemes along various value chains with high potential for exports.’

**INCLUSIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

‘The launch of the Youth Empowerment Project marks another building block to the construction of the new Gambia, one that will have youth, job creation and trade as its core element,’ says ITC Executive Director Arancha González.

‘Trade will play a crucial role in achieving this and ITC is looking forward to working with the Gambian government, businesses, trade and investment support institutions to ensure that more jobs and opportunities are created for youth and entrepreneurs – and especially companies run by women,’ Ms González says.

**UNLEASHING YOUTH POTENTIAL**

By fostering economic opportunities, the Gambia Youth Empowerment Project will help stem the flow of young people leaving the Gambia in search of jobs abroad. Irregular migration claims many Gambian lives and stifles the country’s socio-economic development.

‘The New Gambia dedicates itself to the battle against unemployment and creates the enabling environment for youths to unleash their potentials and together we shall succeed,’ says Isatou Touray, the Gambia’s Minister for Trade, Regional Integration and Employment.

Taking a market-driven approach, the Youth Empowerment Project will focus on building specific skills among youth in a number of traditional sectors such as agriculture and tourism. These sectors will continue to provide the bulk of economic development in the Gambia and must be recognized as the main drivers of socio-economic progress and job creation. The project aims to help diversify the Gambian economy by supporting the strengthening of business sectors including the creative and digital services industries.

As part of the initiative, ITC and the European Union will work with local, national and international partners to implement skills-building projects in urban and rural areas across the Gambia. Partners such as trade-support institutions, industry associations and entrepreneurship incubators will play a crucial role in achieving the inclusive and sustainability goals of the Youth Empowerment Project. Particularly important will be to strengthen existing technical and vocational skills programmes to better match the need of business and markets.

**FUTURE HOPES**

Muhammed Sanyang is one of the many Gambian entrepreneurs who are optimistic about the new project, not so much for himself but for his compatriots. At the age of 24 he has established himself as a leading poultry farmer. In fact, he started with five egg-laying chickens 10 years ago – today he has 11,000.

Sanyang is now supplying the local tourism industry with fresh eggs and employs several people. He is not afraid of more competitors joining his industry.

‘I want to be part of the Youth Empowerment Project to help create job opportunities,’ he says. ‘I would like to inspire and train other young people to start their business. Running a chicken farm is hard work but not difficult. I had my plan and I achieved my dream. I want others to reach their goals too.’

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1. Poultry entrepreneur Muhammed Sanyang is helping to drive his country forward.
2. Isatou Touray, the Gambia’s Minister for Trade, Regional Integration and Employment, Neven Mimica, European Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, and ITC Executive Director Arancha González at the launch of the Youth Empowerment Project.
In Myanmar’s Kayah state, the International Trade Centre is helping to strengthen a nascent tourism sector

One of the biggest sustainability challenges faced by a development project is how to facilitate the transfer of knowledge to stakeholders in the field so that initiatives can be continued and replicated post-project. Another challenge, particularly in post-conflict situations, is how to nurture trust.

An integrated approach to these two challenges has been piloted by the International Trade Centre’s (ITC) ‘NTF III Inclusive Tourism Focusing on Kayah State’ project in Myanmar through a Training of Trainers (ToT) process in cultural tourism product development. In Kayah state, ITC has been working alongside government officers, local tourism businesses and communities for over two years to develop creative and community-based tours.

As a result of this work, visitors to Kayah have new opportunities to experience its delete mosaic of authentic cultural expressions and pristine natural environment.

The innocuous return of peace and normality is one of the important contributions or achievements of ITC’s NTF III project.

HANDS-ON TOURISM
For example, in the state capital Loikaw visitors can try their hands at making traditional Kayah sausage. They can also explore local villages accompanied by trained community guides. In Hta Nee La Leh village, options...
for a community-based tour include visiting ancient animist sites, meeting musicians who still play traditional bamboo instruments, enjoying an oxcart ride to a lotus pond and tasting a Kayah barbecue in a local home or on the banks of the Seven Lakes. In Pan Pet village, visitors can enjoy an interpretive trek in forested hills, encounter the fabled long-neck women, and meet local artisans in their homes to learn textiles and bamboo weaving techniques.

To ensure that tourists enjoy the local food and cherish their visit, services providers were trained and coached to improve hygiene conditions and handling food safety. More than 300 food market vendors and two bottled water companies were trained to sustainability and hygiene measures. As part of the effort, a group of 10 young professionals were formed to further coach (against a small service fee) tour operators following the completion of the project.

Underpinning these activities is a robust, participatory process that includes community consultations; awareness raising; identifying special elements of local life which villagers feel proud and comfortable to share with guests. Trainings in hospitality, food hygiene, tour guiding skills, accounting and taking bookings are also available.

Community members have already welcomed over 1,500 visitors on ITC’s new tours since the start of the project, with an increase of international tourists arrivals in Kayah of about 140%.

FIELD TRAINING
Learning from two decades of previous experiences in the region, ITC’s team engaged proactively with an emerging sector of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) ground-handlers in Loikaw, inviting managers and staff to visit the communities and participate in field training in partnership with the local government. This on-the-job training educated the ground-handlers and government representatives on how creative and community-based tours work while crafting trusting relationships among themselves, community members and the government, leading to better business and interpersonal relationships.

Community members have already welcomed over 1,500 visitors on new tours since the start of the project, with an increase of international tourists arrivals in Kayah of about 140%. According to Kayah state tourism operators, spending in the state had almost doubled since September 2014. New SME ground-handlers in Loikaw are now partners with over 30 professional, national-level tour operators.

Following the success of cultural tourism development in Hta Nee Le Leh and Pan Pet villages, ITC started working with two other villages in Kayah state, Htay Kho and Daw Ta Ma Gyi.

The process of identifying and training two new villages was viewed as a great opportunity to build hands-on tourism products or community based tourism (CBT) development skills among tourism professionals in Kayah. ITC invited local government, tour operators, tour guides and civil society organizations (CSOs) to join this ToT course.

The course led the trainees through each step of the process of developing and marketing CBT. Steps included identifying an appropriate destination using key success factor criteria; raising community members’ awareness about tourism; conducting a community study to learn about potentials and challenges in the new communities; organizing a study tour for new community members; and helping to conduct training on cultural tourism development and management.
‘Tourism can bring peace to Myanmar. ITC’s inclusive tourism project has stabilized peace for Kayah state,’ said Ohn Maung, Myanmar’s Minister for hotels and tourism.

KNOCK-ON EFFECT

The inclusive nature of the NTF III Myanmar project does not end in Kayah state, it has a knock-on effect throughout the tourism value chain, fostering collaboration and partnerships with national and international stakeholders.

In addition to the results achieved in Kayah state, 25 Myanmar tour operators based in Yangon were coached on export marketing and assisted to link up with international tour operators. Staff from national and local tourism associations were trained to deliver better services to clients. The project also published guidelines for developing better destination branding and promotional material.

International outbound tour operators are the drivers of tourism to Myanmar and ITC worked to promote Kayah state at major international tourism fairs such as the Berlin Internationale Tourismusbörse (ITB) and the World Travel Market in London. The development of national Code of Conducts for visiting ethnic minority areas have been facilitated by ITC with a wide range of tourism stakeholders, using the best practice example of Kayah.

RECONCILIATION

A key aspect of the training is that trainees represent all ethnic groups, including those that were previously pitted against one another in armed conflict. Trainees from the Kayah, Kayan and Kayaw ethnic groups have worked in teams alongside Burmese local government officials and become colleagues and friends. Staff of the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism worked alongside CSO staff, tour guides and ground-handlers to collect and analyze information, interview and train community members and present their work. Step by step, the project has had a powerful impact towards building the skills and stakeholder cooperation needed to develop a peaceful, sustainable and fun cultural tourism destination. The trainees discovered an important common ground they all shared: using tourism as a means for poverty reduction in Kayah.

‘The innocuous return to peace and normality is one of the important contributions or achievements of ITC’s NTF III project,’ said author Pascal Khoo Thwe of Myanmar.
### Agenda
from 19 May 2017

#### Upcoming events

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<td>19-25 June</td>
<td>World Refugee Week</td>
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<tr>
<td>27 June</td>
<td>International Day for Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises</td>
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<tr>
<td>7-8 July</td>
<td>G20 meeting, Hamburg, Germany</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 July</td>
<td>Meeting of ITC Joint Advisory Group, Geneva</td>
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<tr>
<td>11-13 July</td>
<td>Sixth Global Review of Aid for Trade, Geneva</td>
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<tr>
<td>10-19 July</td>
<td>Fifth High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, New York City</td>
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<td>19-21 July</td>
<td>YouthConnekt Africa Summit, Kigali</td>
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<td>11 September</td>
<td>Belt and Road Summit, Hong Kong</td>
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<td>12 September</td>
<td>72nd Regular Session of the United Nations General Assembly, New York City</td>
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<tr>
<td>17-18 September</td>
<td>United Nations Social Good Summit, New York City</td>
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<tr>
<td>26-28 September</td>
<td>World Trade Organization Public Forum, Geneva</td>
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<td>25 September</td>
<td>ITC’s Trade for Sustainable Development Forum, Geneva</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 October</td>
<td>United Nations Open Day, Geneva</td>
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<tr>
<td>9-20 October</td>
<td>World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC 17), Buenos Aires, Argentina</td>
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<tr>
<td>13-15 October</td>
<td>Annual meeting of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, Washington, DC, USA</td>
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<tr>
<td>25-26 October</td>
<td>ITC’s World Export Development Forum, Budapest, Hungary</td>
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<tr>
<td>6-11 November</td>
<td>Geneva Peace Week</td>
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<tr>
<td>6-17 November</td>
<td>23rd Conference of Parties to the UN Convention on Climate Change (COP 23), Bonn, Germany</td>
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<tr>
<td>11-14 December</td>
<td>11th WTO Ministerial Conference, Buenos Aires, Argentina</td>
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5. Enable. Market access
6. Unlock. Financial services
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DEMAND IN VIET NAM FOR RHINOCEROS HORN USED IN TRADITIONAL MEDICINE 01
Rhinos face extinction if current poaching rates continue. Viet Nam, a main market, uses horn in traditional Asian medicine. A survey of 1,000 consumers by the International Trade Centre (ITC) found they preferred rhino horn sourced in the wild in a non-lethal way. Under a legal trade scenario, the price would fall. While media campaigns and stiffer enforcement measures would reduce consumption, there is likely to remain a hard core of users, perhaps 30%.

MANAGING QUALITY IN EGYPT: A DIRECTORY OF SERVICES FOR SMES 02
Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Egypt can stay up to date with the country’s quality management services with this guide, available in English and Arabic. It provides an overview of national quality infrastructure with emphasis on food safety, animal and plant health and contacts for related service providers. The guide is a joint effort with the National German Metrology Institute (PTB), Egypt’s Organization for Standards and Quality, the Engineering Export Council of Egypt and ITC.
http://www.intracen.org/publication/Managing_quality_in_Egypt/

SME COMPETITIVENESS IN GHANA 03
Conditions keeping SMEs in Ghana from being competitive in international markets are often not of their own making, such as unreliable electricity and high interest rates. This report outlines findings from the SME Competitiveness Survey of 200 Ghanaian firms. The survey, analysis and recommendations were developed by an ITC-led Alliance for Action: the Association of Ghana Industries; the Ministry of Food and Agriculture; the Ministry of Trade and Industry; the Federation of Associations of Ghanaian Exporters; the Ghana National Chamber of Commerce; the Ghana Root Crops and Tubers Exporters Union; and the Ghana Export Promotion Authority.

NAVIGATING NON-TARIFF MEASURES: INSIGHTS FROM A BUSINESS SURVEY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION 04
Many European exporters have similar experiences with non-tariff measures (NTMs) as do those in developing countries, especially for procedures related to technical regulations, conformity assessment and rules of origin. An ITC-European Commission survey, based on 8,100 company interviews in all 28 European Union (EU) countries, reveals that more than a third of European exporters encounter burdensome NTMs both within their countries and in destination markets.
http://www.intracen.org/publication/EUNTMsurvey/
World Export Development Forum 2017
Trade – A force for good: Include, Innovate, Integrate

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- New regional trade routes
- Innovation for trade competitiveness
- Green means business

Business-to-business meetings
- Focus: agricultural technologies

How-to workshops
- Taking an idea global
- Expanding digital trade
- Moving from agriculture to agribusiness
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