



**Four Point Action to Expand Uganda's  
Tourism Revenue from Current USD \$1.9  
Billion to USD \$4B in 5 Years (2016 -2021)**

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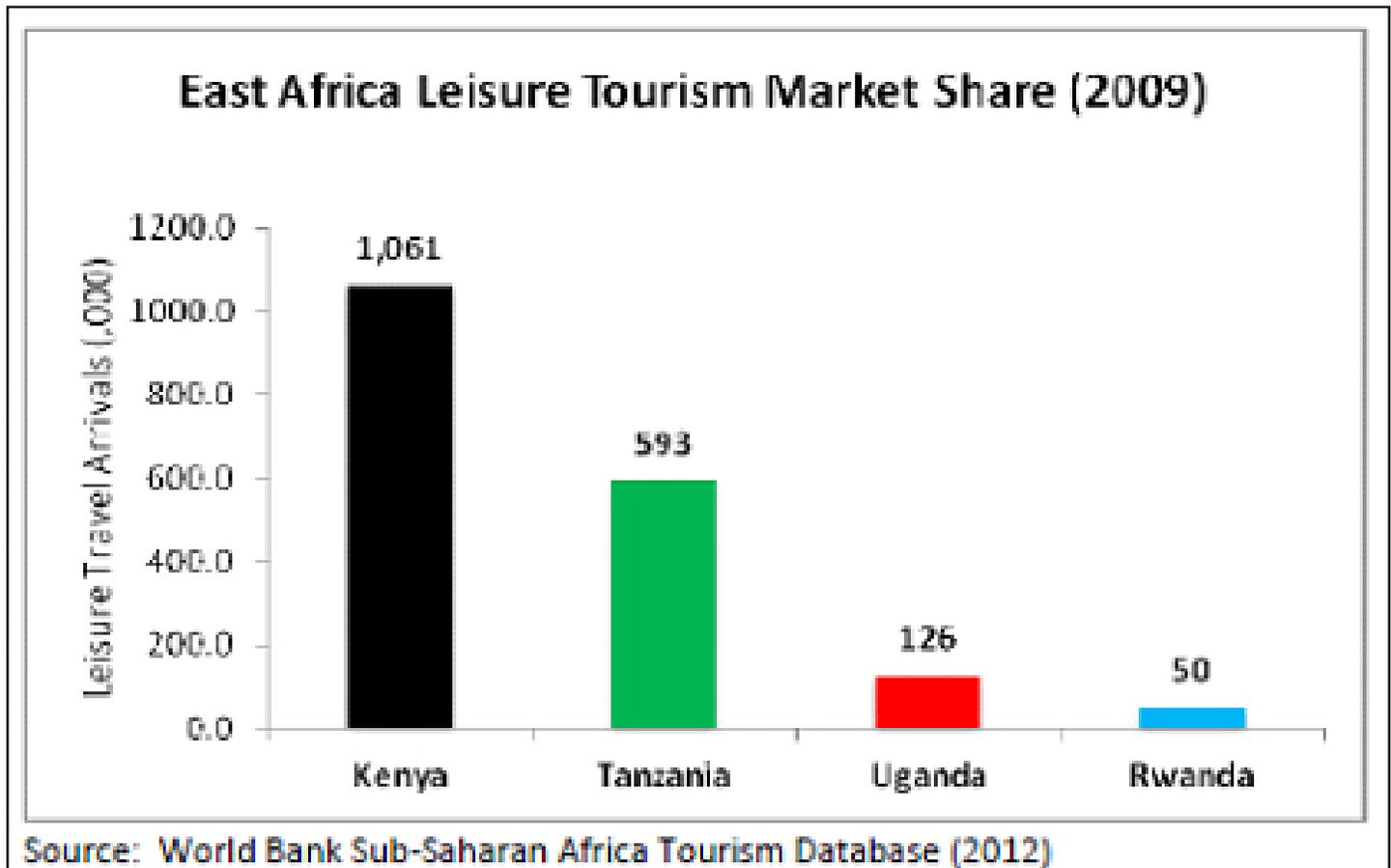
The tourism sector alone contributed 7.9% to Uganda's GDP in 2013 amounting to about shillings 5.5 trillion (USD \$1.9 billion) with as little investment of Uganda Shillings 800 million in the 2012/2013 financial year. This return on investment is high and clearly shows the tourism sector's exponential capability to create more revenue and jobs with more investment. If 5% of tourism revenue (reducing by 1% every 3 years and remaining at a constant 1% after 12 years) is invested in branding Uganda and specifically tourism marketing and promotion, by 2020, Uganda will achieve annual revenue mark of minimum USD \$4 Billion. This projection is based on return on investment trend analysis and attendant dividend that will accrue from aggressive promotion and marketing of Uganda as a premier tourist destination.

As of 2014, 1.1 billion tourists took an international trip, making tourism an unstoppable force for global economic growth. Over the decades, tourism has experienced continued growth and deepened diversification to become one of the fastest growing economic sectors on earth. These dynamics have turned tourism into a key driver for jobs and socio-economic progress. Today, across the globe, the business volume of tourism equals or even surpasses that of oil exports, food products and automobiles. This growth goes hand in hand with an increasing diversification and competition among destinations.

In 2014, Africa welcomed 56 million international tourists representing an increase of 2% compared to 2013 and generating US\$ 34 billion in exports (7% of total exports in Africa). The next 20 years show clear signs of continued tourism growth for the African continent. Current tourist arrivals into Uganda have reached 1.4 million as of 2014 records and this is up from 600,000 in 2006. According to UN World Tourism Organization (WTO) forecasts, Africa will receive 134 million tourists by 2030. Tourism market share of emerging economies increased from 30% in 1980 to 45% in 2014, and is expected to reach 57% by 2030, equivalent to over 1 billion international tourist arrivals. China, the world's top tourism source market, has continued its exceptional pace of growth, increasing expenditure abroad by 27% in 2014 to reach a total of US\$ 165 billion. The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) estimates that the Ugandan tourism industry directly contributed 320,000 jobs in 2014, with this figure creating a total of 552,700 jobs when factoring in those indirectly supported by the industry. These figures represent 3.4% and 7.9% of Uganda's workforce, respectively.

In light of the foregoing, it is urgent that Uganda readies itself to harvest this projected tourism potential and dividend. Uganda is now at the brink of major tourism breakthrough and success. More than any time in history, Uganda has an opportunity to leverage its tourism potential and quickly drive the nation to prosperity. For example, more than any other country in East Africa, Uganda's risk profile is at the lowest. Uganda is fully secure (border to border). Uganda's security environment is admired in the whole region, rarely suffering any travel bans and travel advisories that have negatively impacted on tourism in some of our neighboring countries. Security challenges in the neighborhood also have negative spillover impacts on our tourism, therefore, regional security mechanisms are critical and we take pride that Uganda is taking a leading role. As President Museveni clearly articulated before, security and defense provide the umbrella for growth of any sector. Indeed security guarantees, constitute first consideration for any tourist world over who is browsing the world in search of tourism destination.

Whereas Uganda has been totally secure for a while, we have not, with complete deliberateness invested in promotion and exhibition of our vast tourism potential as a country. Even, when meaningful numbers of leisure tourists are visiting East African region and spending millions of dollars, Uganda gets a limited share as a leisure tourist destination. The East African Community single tourist visa and efforts to harmonize visa fees will ameliorate this problem. Leisure tourism excludes religious tourists, eco-tourists, sports and re-creation tourists, backpackers, business tourists, cultural tourists, incentive tourists and health tourist. This hereunder 2009-leisure tourists dataset has not meaningfully changed today.



What Uganda urgently needs is an ambitious branding and promotion strategy. Such a promotion strategy must be long term, fully funded and efficiently implemented. This has to be deliberately taken as a top priority by the government and immediate results will be achieved in the short term, medium term and long term. It is commendable, that the Ministry of ICT and National guidance has moved to put together a Government working committee for branding Uganda. This a positive step.

## Going forward, the following actions should be taken to promote Tourism in Uganda;

- **Invest 5% of tourism revenues** (reducing by 1% every 3 years, and staying at 1% after 12 years), **in marketing and promotion segment of Tourism Sector.** This should be done through national budget architecture. This should start with 2016/2017 financial year. This money should be spent to intensify Uganda's participation in all key tourism trade fairs with focus on powerful tourism source markets like China, United Kingdom, Germany, North America, Canada, Switzerland and Russia. Our Embassies in these tourism sources should have contract-based Tourism attachés equipped with clear targets and focused on aggressive marketing of Uganda, tracking number of tourists that visit Uganda, source feedback and keeping matrices of deliverables. As part of promotion, Uganda should leverage popular media channels and events. For example China Central Television's (CCTV) Spring Festival Gala has regularly attracted between 700 million to one billion viewers annually. The CCTV's main evening news broadcast Xinwen Lianbo has a daily audience of around 135 million people, and it is also one of the most expensive shows in the world per advertising spots, with its 2013 advertising slots selling for a record of 5.4 billion Yuan. In 2014 regular season for America's NFL Television viewership on NBC reached 202.3 million viewers.
- **Establish a Tourism infrastructure development Fund** for Government to finance public infrastructure, and specifically fund mapped tourist facilities that need to increase visitor capacity and infrastructure facilities that require development to facilitate tourism.
- **Extend tax and financial incentives to private investors and private homeowners** who want to upgrade their property to host tourists – beginning with homes and investments adjacent to rich tourist sites that meet set standards.
- **The Lake Victoria Tourism Hub.** Review land tenure around lake victoria. Establish a ring road and gazette space for eco friendly resorts and hotels and other tourism facilities. This will attract investors and promote water games and other water sports.





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