

**WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION (WIPO), NIGERIA OFFICE**  
**TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR NIGERIA**  
**BY FRIDAY. O. ANUMBA, DIRECTOR SPECIAL DUTIES, NIGERIAN TOURISM**  
**DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (NTDA)**

Distinguished Participants,

It is both an honour and a privilege for me to speak to us today on behalf of the Nigerian Tourism Development Authority — the apex body mandated with the development, regulation, and promotion of tourism in Nigeria.

We gather at a time when Nigeria is strategically repositioning tourism not just as a leisure activity, but as a powerful tool for economic diversification, job creation, social cohesion, and global engagement.

### **The State of Tourism in Nigeria**

Nigeria is a country of extraordinary potential. With over 250 ethnic groups, rich cultural expressions, historical landmarks, vibrant festivals, and diverse landscapes - we possess every ingredient required for a thriving tourism industry.

While tourism in Nigeria currently contributes modestly to our GDP, we are witnessing a gradual shift. Domestic tourism is on the rise, particularly among youth and middle-class Nigerians. Destinations like Obudu Mountain Resort, Ikogosi warm spring, Erin Ijesha Waterfalls, the Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove, and the Lagos nightlife scene are gaining attention both locally and internationally.

Yet, our full potential remains largely untapped.

### **Recent Developments and Reforms**

In response to this, the NTDA, following the amendment of the NTDC Act has restructured its approach to tourism development.

We have implemented digital innovation in tourism promotion, strengthened our Zonal Coordination framework, and enhanced collaboration with State Governments, Private Sector players, and International Development Agencies.

Our digital tourism strategy is in full swing. The “Let’s Go Nigeria” app serves as a one-stop platform showcasing Nigeria’s people, places, culture, history, flora, fauna, hotels, and events - with the aim of boosting destination awareness and easing travel planning.

## **Challenges and Limitations**

However, we are not blind to the challenges confronting us.

Infrastructural gaps, especially access roads to tourist sites, remain a concern. Insecurity in select regions, limited tourism data, and weak international marketing are additional hurdles.

But these are not insurmountable. In fact, they present clear areas where partnerships, investments, and innovation can make a measurable impact.

## **Opportunities for Growth**

Now, let me turn our attention to the opportunities - because there are many.

Nigeria is fertile ground for eco-tourism, heritage tourism, religious tourism (From Redeem Camp to annual Shiloh of Living Faith Church), film tourism (Nollywood), and music tourism – Burnaboy, Davido, Wizkid, Asake, Ayra Star, Tiwa Savage are shutting down Arena in UK, USA, Asia etc. From the Nok culture in Kaduna to the historic Kingdom of Benin, from pilgrimage centres in Nasarawa and Ekiti to Nollywood film sets in Enugu.

Our Nigerian Jollof has grown beyond being just a local dish. It has become a symbol of pride, identity and cultural diplomacy. So popular is our jollof rice that it has sparked friendly culinary rivalries, particularly with countries like Ghana, each claiming theirs is the best. This global attention underscores the potential of Nigerian cuisine to become an anchor for gastronomy tourism; attracting visitors who come to taste, learn and celebrate our rich culinary heritage

Nigerian fashion stands out as a living expression of our culture. Fabrics like Adire from the Yoruba people, Aso Oke worn for weddings and festivals like the Ojude Oba festival and the regal Isi Agu cherished in the East, each tells stories of heritage, craftsmanship and identity. Today, Nigerian fashion designers are blending these traditional textiles with modern trends, gaining international recognition at fashion weeks and on global runways — the opportunities are vast.

We are calling on the private sector to invest in:

- Modern resorts and eco-lodges,
- Tour operations and transportation networks,
- Digital platforms that enhance tourist experience,
- Content creation to tell authentic Nigerian stories.

We also encourage diaspora tourism - inviting Nigerians in the diaspora to rediscover their heritage, invest in homegrown destinations, and become ambassadors of Nigeria's cultural identity – Detty December.

## **NTDA's Strategic Direction**

At the NTDA, we are doing things differently.

We are actively building the capacity of local tourism operators, promoting sustainable practices, and creating enabling environments through regulation and advocacy.

We are working closely with Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) to unlock financing for tourism-related projects - MSMEs

We are also engaging with the creative industry, influencers, and media platforms to amplify Nigeria's image and attractions.

## **Call to Action**

So, what do we need?

- To governments at all levels: Prioritize tourism infrastructure and security.
- To investors: Explore the untapped value chain within Nigeria's tourism sector.
- To local communities: Safeguard and celebrate your cultural and natural heritage.
- To the media and creative minds: Let's tell compelling stories about Nigeria's beauty, diversity, and hospitality.
- To every Nigerian: Travel Nigeria first. Promote local Tourism; Tour Nigeria. Domestic Tourism is 6 times International Tourism. The number of domestic trips (or the volume of domestic tourism activity) is roughly six times greater than the number of international tourists arrivals into the country

## **Conclusion**

Distinguished Participants,

The future of Nigeria's tourism is not a distant hope - it is a present responsibility. With the right investment, the right partnerships, and the right narrative, we can transform tourism into one of Nigeria's strongest economic pillars.

Tourism is no longer mere leisure, it is now business that can sustain the economy when properly harnessed.

The Nigerian Tourism Development Authority remains committed to this vision. Together, let us unlock the beauty, the value, and the promise of Nigerian tourism.

Thank you.