

62 million international arrivals in Africa in 2017

By Josephine Wawira

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According to the latest [UNWTO World Tourism Barometer](#), which categorises the tourism sector as a key driver in economic development, Africa reached a record of 62 million international arrivals, translating to a growth of 8%, with an arrival increase of 5% in sub-Saharan Africa and 13% in North Africa - the continental growth supersedes that of the international number, which stood at 7% in 2017 to reach 1,322 million.



In many destinations, 2017 was characterised by sustained growth, with the global economic upturn partly contributing to the strong performance. UNWTO expects the strong momentum to continue in 2018, with a projected rate of 4%-5% in international arrivals.

This is slightly above the 2010-2020 increase projection of 3.8% average by [UNWTO in its Tourism Towards 2030](#) long-term forecast. Africa is expected to grow by 5%-7% ahead of its counterparts, Asia and the Pacific by 5%-6%, the Middle East by 4%-6%, both Europe and the Americas by 3.5%-4.5% respectively.

Data from UNWTO also showed that 2017 performance in other regions, included Europe with 671 million (+8%) international tourist arrivals, followed by Asia and the Pacific (+6%) with 324 million in 2017. The Americas (+3%) welcomed 207 million international tourist arrivals, while Middle East (+5%) received 58 million arrivals.

The Kenyan case

Voted the World's Best Safari Destination in 2017, Kenya holds an integral position in the world's tourism landscape. "Despite a drop of approximately 30% in bookings during the election period, we ended the year on a high, with December recording 100% growth compared to the same period in 2016. I believe that 2018 holds great fortune, especially with KQ's direct flights to New York later this year," says Cyrus Onyiego, Jumia Travel Kenya country manager.

Statistics by the Kenya Tourism Board shows that tourist arrivals from the US increased from 82,363 visitors in 2016 to 95,771 between January and October 2017 in the same period. The long awaited direct flights between Kenya and the US are expected to further increase these arrivals this year.

ABOUT JOSEPHINE WAWIRA

Josephine Wawira is a consultant in communication and public relations with over six years of progressive writing and broadcast experience. She is currently a writer for Africa's online hotel booking portal, Jumia Travel, focusing in the areas of travel, tourism, and hospitality as it relates to Africa.

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