

ABIDJAN APRIL 22 nd 2008

Dear Mr Secretary General,

I have been visiting Cote d'Ivoire immediately before you, meeting with President Laurent Gbagbo, Prime Minister Guillaume Soro, Tourism Minister Sidiki Konate, the tourism community and the U.N office.

As we did recently for Algeria and as we shall be continuing in the coming days with countries such as Mauritania and Kenya, UNWTO is providing its support to destinations which suffered recently from internal crisis or terrorist attacks and which, from our point of view, have the capacity to renew with their tourism development.

Surprisingly, tourism in Subsaharian Africa is performing well, with a growth rate significantly above the world average. A country like Cote d'Ivoire, with a strong potential in business tourism, beach tourism, eco tourism and handicrafts, which used to be in advance compared to its regional neighbors, should not miss the chance to be part of such a trend.

The recent political developments, with a date now fixed for the Presidential election, encourage us to act without waiting. We have agreed with the authorities of the country that UNWTO will:

- Organise in September a major Conference for investors, tourism stakeholders, airlines, but also parliamentarians and local authorities, with the support of international experts, in order to raise the awareness on the opportunities arising in this sector;
- Contribute to entrance the image of Cote d'Ivoire as a quiet, safe and secure destination and assist the country in resuming its promotional activities on foreign tourism markets;
- Act, in accordance with the provisions of the Global Code of Ethics for tourism, in order to eliminate unfair and outdated travel advisories discouraging tourists to visit the country;
- Support government efforts in developing handicrafts production, as part of the UNWTO STEP Initiative;
- Facilitate the full reintegration of Cote d'Ivoire in the global tourism community and the return to an important role within the World Tourism Organisation.

These activities are aimed at contributing to the quick reconstruction of the economic and social fabric of the country, but also at supporting the peace process and the internal dialogue between the various groups and communities especially in providing jobs and opportunities to those who have been engaged as soldiers or militants in the conflict.

The support of other UN agencies (such as UNIDO for the activity related to handicrafts) and of the UNDP will be important for the success of such initiatives.

Looking forward to see you next week at the CEB,

Yours sincerely,

Francesco Frangiali.



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Received from
Mr. Frangialli.
(WNTU)