

Tourism is Africa's most promising sector - Minister



ACCRA, Ghana, August 07, 2015 (GNA) -- Mrs Elizabeth Ofosu Adjare, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Creative Arts, said on Thursday that Africa has a major opportunity to harness the potential of tourism.

This, she, said would foster development, increase its participation in the global economy and generate revenue for investments.

She said tourism is one of Africa's most promising sectors in terms of development and it creates opportunities for millions of host communities in Africa and provides revenue for environmental development.

Mrs Ofosu Adjare was briefing the press in Accra on the upcoming United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) Conference to be held in the capital city.

She said Africa's tourism and the capacity of the tourism sector to contribute to the development of the continent is often hindered by the negative perception of Africa and the generalisation of crises situations in countries for the whole region.

She, however, noted that there are numerous positive stories of Africa that did not manage to reach the global audience and impact on the perception of the region.

She said the conference which is scheduled for August 17 to August 19, at the La Palm Royal Beach Hotel is on the theme: "Enhancing Brand Africa, Fostering Tourism Development."

The sector Minister said the conference among other things would analyse the situation of Brand Africa and its impact on tourism on the continent as well as identify challenges facing

African countries and exchange national experience on country branding and tourism branding.

Mrs Ofosu Adjare noted that Africa in 2014 received 56 million international tourist up from 26 million in 2000, out of which Ghana had one million.

She said the international tourism receipt in Africa amounted to \$ 36 billion of seven per cent of all export on the continent.

She said the UNWTO conference therefore aims at building the capacity in Africa for the realisation of a strong image and brand which is fundamental to achieving a resilient tourism sector.

“The brand Africa conference 2015 aims at bringing together a number of Tourism Ministers to set a common action plan to advance Africa’s image and brand as the preferred tourism destination,” she added.

She noted that among the areas of discussion at the forthcoming conference would be positioning, branding, e-communications and media relations. Other areas include crises communication, public private partnership as well as resource and capacity building.

Mrs Ofosu Adjare said presentation from global experts would be complemented by experience of practitioners from other African countries, adding that the conference would help strike a balance between National tourism organisations and private sector operators.

“Participants would be drawn from tourism private sector players, the media, and communication organisations.

Others are incentive travel agencies, airlines, tour organisers, resorts, hotels, national tourism organisations, tourism ministries and representatives from other sectors whose interest contributes to branding Africa and its overall development”.

She said delegates for the conference are expected to arrive in Accra from Friday 14 August, and the UNWTO Secretary General is expected to arrive on Saturday, August 15.

She said activities lined up for the conference would begin with a tour to Akosombo by the UNWTO Secretary General in the company of Tourism Ministers.

The official opening of the conference would be on August 17, by President John Dramani Mahama, after which technical sessions would follow.

On Tuesday August 18, the UNWTO Secretary General would pay a courtesy call on resident in the company of African Ministers.

A technical tour to the Central Region would be organised for delegates to visit the Kakum National Park and Canopy Walkway and the Cape Coast Castle on August 19.

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