



REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND ARTS

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON THE
PREPARATIONS
FOR THE CO-HOSTING OF THE
20TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
WORLD TOURISM ORGANISATION
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
IN 2013
PRESENTED ON FRIDAY
9TH NOVEMBER 2012**

Mr. Speaker,

I thank you for giving me this opportunity to give a statement on the preparations for the co-hosting of the 20th session of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) General Assembly in August 2013.

Government, through the Ministry of Tourism and Arts has partnered with the Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe, through the Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality Industry, to jointly host the 20th session of the next World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) General Assembly in August 2013 in Livingstone and Victoria Falls Town, citing the Mighty Victoria Falls as the destination.

Mr. Speaker,

As you know, the two countries proudly share the 'Mighty Victoria Falls', a renowned United Nations Education and Scientific Organisation (UNESCO) World Heritage Site, and one of the Seven Wonders of the World. The Victoria Falls is located on the Zambezi River, the fourth longest river in Africa and lies within the Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park in Zambia. The Victoria Falls stretches for 1,700m across the Zambezi River, of which 1,200m is on the Zambian side and 500m on the Zimbabwean side.

The event will be co-hosted at the prestigious Sun International Resort in Livingstone, which is located on the banks of Zambezi River and within the vicinity of the Victoria Falls. And in Zimbabwe, it will be at the Elephants Hills Resort in Victoria Falls Town. The event will be held next year from the 24th-29th August 2013.

Mr. Speaker,

The World Tourism Organisation is the United Nations agency responsible for the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism. The organisation was established in 1974, and Zambia became a member, a year later

in 1975. The UNWTO is the leading international organization in the field of tourism which promotes tourism as a driver of economic growth, inclusive development and environmental sustainability and offers leadership and support to the sector in advancing knowledge and tourism policies worldwide.

The UNWTO encourages the implementation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, to maximise tourism's socio-economic contribution while minimizing its possible negative impacts. The organisation is committed to promoting tourism as an instrument in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), geared towards reducing poverty and fostering sustainable development.

The August House may further wish to know that the UNWTO generates market knowledge, promotes competitive and sustainable tourism policies and instruments, fosters tourism education and training, and works to make tourism an effective tool for development through technical assistance projects in over a 100 countries around the world.

Mr. Speaker,

The main priorities of the UNWTO are:

- Mainstreaming tourism in the global agenda;
- Improving tourism competitiveness;
- Promoting sustainable tourism development;
- Advancing tourism's contribution to poverty reduction and development;
- Fostering knowledge, education and capacity building; and
- Building Partnerships.

Mr. Speaker,

On membership to the UNWTO; the UNWTO brings together the international tourism community, including all spheres of government, the private sector,

academia and civil society, to promote competitive and sustainable tourism development. As an intergovernmental organisation, the UNWTO has 155 member states, 7 territories, 2 permanent observers, and over 400 Affiliate members from the tourism private sector.

Full membership is open to all sovereign states and Associate membership is open to all territories not responsible for their external relations. In recognition of the role of the non-governmental sector in driving tourism growth, the UNWTO membership is also open to a wide range of organisations and companies working in tourism. This structure is unique within the United Nations system.

Any company (public or private), non-governmental sector, educational institution of entity involved in tourism activities can become a UNWTO affiliate member. Members currently include major airlines, travel agents, regional or local promotion boards, hotel groups, universities, business schools, trade unions, technology companies, training centres and research companies among others.

Mr. Speaker,

Membership to the UNWTO carries benefits and a wide variety of services including access to UNWTO Market Intelligence, e-library, UNWTO Publications and priority invitations to UNWTO events, among other possibilities. Most importantly, members have an opportunity to achieve strategic partnerships between the public and private sector through the various platforms provided by the organisation.

Mr. Speaker,

The UNWTO General Assembly is the supreme organ of the Organization. It consists of six regional commissions namely:

1. Regional Commission for Americas;
2. Regional Commission for Europe;

3. Regional Commission for South Asia;
4. Regional Commission for Africa;
5. Regional Commission for East Asia and the Pacific; and the
6. Regional Commission for Middle East.

The general assembly holds its ordinary sessions every two years. The general assembly brings together all the members of the organisation, to debate and approve the bi-annual programme of work and budget of the organisation, and review issues of particular importance to the tourism sector.

It is the most important and high profile meeting of Ministers, high-level government officials, senior representatives from the United Nations and prominent leaders from the corporate world. Other international organizations participate as observers and most countries travel with their media delegates drawing to the General Assembly host country over 1, 000 visitors.

Hosting of the General Assembly rotates among the six regions. Nineteen General Assemblies have been held since the UNWTO was established in 1974, and of these, only two have previously been held in Africa, namely Egypt in North Africa in 1995, and Senegal in West Africa in 2005.

Zambia and Zimbabwe decided to present a joint bid in which they demonstrated the two countries' commitment and readiness to host the 20th session of the UNWTO General Assembly in 2013. The House may also wish to know that SADC, through its Ministers responsible for Tourism endorsed the joint bid at the SADC Minister's of Tourism Meeting in June 2011 in Livingstone, for submission to the UNWTO General Assembly. The 19th session of the UNWTO General Assembly, which was held in Gyeongju, South Korea unanimously, accepted the joint bid.

Mr. Speaker,

It is now therefore, that Southern Africa has attained this once in a lifetime opportunity to bring the 20th session of the UNWTO General Assembly to its region, riding on the successes of the mega international events such as the 2010 World Cup and 2011 All Africa Games. It is our intention and goal, to position, not only Zambia and Zimbabwe, but the whole of Southern Africa as a tourism destination of note. Indeed, the two countries have been given an opportunity to show that the world can use tourism to build bridges and create a global village.

Mr. Speaker,

The two governments signed a Memorandum of Understanding which outlines the framework for cooperation in May 2012. The terms of the bilateral co-hosting agreement include a division of the meetings to be held in either country during those five days. Therefore, Zimbabwe will host:

1. The Opening Ceremony;
2. Plenary Sessions;
3. Cocktail;
4. Council Session;
5. Regional Commission for Africa;
6. Regional Commission for East Asia and the Pacific;
7. Regional Commission for the Middle East;
8. General Meeting of Affiliate Members;
9. Luncheon for Heads of Delegations; and
10. Workshops.

While Zambia will host:

1. The Ministerial Round Table;
2. Plenary Session;
3. Joint Meeting of the Committee on the Budget and Finance and the

- Programme Committee;
4. Regional Commission for Europe;
 5. Regional Commission for the Americas;
 6. Regional Commission for South Asia;
 7. Affiliate Members Board Meeting;
 8. Gala Dinner;
 9. Closing Ceremony; and
 10. Workshops

The two countries have opportunities to organise side meetings that will take place during the course of the five days. It is our expectation that our private sector will rise up to the challenge, and use the social events as an opportunity for showcasing the tourism product and to foster the African tourism agenda. The House may further be informed that the two countries have also been given the opportunity to provide pre and post conference tour packages, which will be sent out together with the information note to member states on the general assembly. This is a targeted marketing strategy which will be at no cost to the host governments.

Mr. Speaker,

A trilateral hosting agreement which sets out the responsibilities of the host countries and those of the UNWTO in respect of the conference was signed among the three parties on 29th May, 2012 by the two Heads of States, His Excellency Mr. Michael Chilufya Sata, President of the Republic of Zambia and His counterpart from Zimbabwe His Excellency Comrade Robert Gabriel Mugabe and the UNWTO Secretary General Mr. Taleb Rifai, on the Victoria Falls Bridge on "no man's land". The historic signing of the trilateral agreement was given further prominence, by the two Excellences' signing an agreement to promote sustainable development of tourism in their respective countries.

Mr. Speaker,

Zambia has been provided with a unique opportunity to leverage its tourism resources to promote the country as a key tourism destination within the Southern African region. Co-hosting the 20th Session of the UNWTO General Assembly will enable the country expand its Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) markets in both regional and international markets. This will be achieved through the networks and strategic partnerships that will be established and enhanced during the event.

Mr. Speaker,

The showcasing of Zambia and Livingstone in particular, as a successful host of such a prestigious event will unlock tourism opportunities for Zambia and create a platform for sustained growth and development through increased Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions tourism development and access to the global markets.

The August House may wish to know that conference tourism is a very lucrative product that is not easily prone to shocks, such as the economic recession still being experienced in major tourism generating countries and which has directly impacted leisure tourism for many tourism destinations. This is because business tourists, unlike their leisure counterparts, are more resilient and tend to travel even during periods of recession because their expenses are borne by their organisations, rather than by themselves. During periods of economic decline, leisure tourists rather than put off travel completely due to competing needs, prefer to visit tourism destinations within their own countries or destinations closer to home.

Another important characteristic of business travellers is their ability to return to the destination after the event with their families for leisure activities. We expect

therefore that a good percentage of the delegates to the 20th session of the UNWTO general assembly will find Zambia appealing enough to warrant their return for many years to come.

Mr. Speaker,

The co-hosting of the 20th session of the World Tourism Organisation general assembly in August next year, is a strategy to draw attention to Zambia's destination appeal, as well as its ability and capability to host international events of such magnitude. It provides business opportunities for the locals to derive direct benefits in areas such as employment creation, entrepreneurship, creative industries and overall, stimulate economic activity in Livingstone and through multiplier effects, to the rest of the country. It is an important milestone in attaining the vision to enhance the status of Livingstone as Zambia tourist capital.

Mr. Speaker,

Preparations for the event next year are happening at two levels, bilaterally with Zimbabwe, and at a national level, through the ministry responsible for tourism and Arts.

On a bilateral level, we have two committees, the Ministerial headed by the two ministers and the technical committee consisting of permanent secretaries and technical officers.

At a national level, the institutional framework to manage the preparatory activities for the co-hosting of the 20th session of the 2013 UNWTO General Assembly has now been put in place, in line with Government's decision to declare the co-hosting a national event. A national committee structure has been established to ensure that all the resources of Government are leveraged towards the successful co-hosting of the event.

The framework comprises: a Committee of Ministers, consisting of relevant line ministries and chaired by the Vice President to provide policy direction over the preparations for the hosting; a Ministerial Committee which is an internal committee to provide leadership and guidance over the preparations for the co-hosting; a National Steering Committee to provide oversight on the preparations; a Local Organising Committee based in Livingstone, to implement the programmes and activities of the national steering committee; and two dedicated secretariats in both Lusaka and Livingstone to provide administrative support and coordinate the work of the Committees.

Mr. Speaker,

The following are the sub-committees chaired by the relevant Permanent Secretaries:

- Tourism, Arts and Culture
- Conference, Events & Protocol
- Transport, Logistics and Infrastructure
- Information, Communication & Publicity
- Health and Green Issues
- Investment Opportunities
- Finance, Budgets and Procurement
- Local Organising Committee

Mr. Speaker,

Hosting a meeting of such magnitude requires improved facilities ranging from accommodation, roads, public amenities, border facilities and procedures, security, health services, transport and logistics and ICT just to mention a few.

It is in this regard that I am pleased Mr. Speaker, to inform the House that through the co-hosting of the upcoming event, Government is undertaking infrastructural development projects in preparation for the co-hosting:

- Construction of an intercity bus terminus at Villa Grounds, a modern market at the city center (Zimbabwe Market), and three public ablution blocks within town.
- To improve tourist flow, the three land border posts, Victoria Falls, Kazungula and Katima Mulilo are being computerised.
- Improvement of facilities at Harry Mwaanga Nkhumbula and Kenneth Kaunda International Airports.
- Improvement of infrastructure at the Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park and Victoria Falls.
- Improvement of the Livingstone Museum.
- Improvement of facilities at Victoria Falls and Kazungula border posts.
- Construction of an arts gallery, Cultural Villages and identification of creative industries.
- Enhancing the tourism marketing by construction of permanent tourist information kiosks at Kenneth Kaunda and Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula International Airports, semi-permanent kiosk at Victoria Falls Border Post and mobile kiosks at Simon Mwanza Kapwepwe International Airport and Kazungula Border Post.

Mr. Speaker,

These projects were costed by the relevant departments and Government has since approved supplementary funding of K150bn for capital projects, out of which K40bn has since been released in the month of October. Our plan is to complete all these works by June 2013. To show commitment, Government also

provided K5.8bn in the 2012 Yellow Book, and K15bn is provided in the 2013 budget estimates.

Mr. Speaker,

In an effort to create awareness of the up-coming event and involvement of the local community in Livingstone, meetings were held with various stakeholder groups. These included street vendors, taxi operators, tour operators, hotels, lodges and guesthouse operators, marketeers, various groups in the Arts fraternity and community-based organisations.

A count-down to mark 365 days till the event was launched at the One-Stop-Shop in Livingstone on the eve of the 24th August 2012, to create local awareness and foster destination participation.

Tourism investment promotions were conducted in collaboration with other stakeholders in Livingstone, Copperbelt, New York, Tokyo and Seoul, to create awareness on the tourism potential and existing investment opportunities. Livingstone will also be host to an international investment forum on 29th and 30th November 2012, organised by the Ministry of Commerce, Trade and industry.

We undertook a visit to the UNWTO Secretariat in Madrid, Spain to strengthen bilateral relations between Zambia and the UNWTO, participated at the UNWTO Executive Council Meeting, held in Mexico as well as the World Travel Market Tourism Fair in London, United Kingdom.

Mr. Speaker,

In order to upgrade the standards of our accommodation service providers in Livingstone, an inspection exercise was commenced, which will be completed by end of November 2012 as a first step in preparation for classification and grading. The target is to ensure that a minimum of 50 establishments are assessed and meet

the minimum standards of operation in their categories, and graded by the first quarter of 2013. This will give establishments which fail to meet minimum standards some time to rehabilitate and upgrade their facilities before the UNWTO event is held next year.

Government has also provided tax incentives to the private sector by suspending the customs and excise regulations for licensed tourism enterprises from October 2012 to 31st December 2013.

These incentives are open not only to Livingstone operators, but to the rest of the country and have further provided an opportunity for entrepreneurs to establish tourism enterprises and take advantage of the tax relief. The onus is now on the Zambian people, to use this avenue to create wealth and employment through tourism.

Mr. Speaker,

The preparatory activities that we are undertaking are assessed by the UNWTO Secretariat on a regular basis, and I am pleased to inform the House that two preliminary visits have been hosted successfully.

The House may also wish to know that 2013 UNWTO general assembly will be hosted on a free visa basis and security officials are working on providing express transfer of delegates between the two countries. The House may also wish to know that the two borders will be open for 24hours during the event.

The two countries have come up with a common logo and mascot, a drum with the slogan, "the beat is here". These will be used in all promotional materials.

Mr. Speaker,

I wish to end by stating that our legacy to the people of Livingstone, and indeed the national as a whole, will be to transform the city into an internationally renowned tourism flagship destination with all the complementary services that will attract other sectors such as sports, to host their events in Livingstone.