

Economic Contribution, Challenges and Way Forward for Wildlife-Based Tourism Industry in Eastern African Countries

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Abstract

Many East African countries have nature – based tourism revenue as a pillar of future economic development of their respective countries. In the Vision 2030 for Kenya, tourism development is not only envisaged as a key pillar for national development, but also relied upon as a mechanism to alleviate poverty, generate foreign revenue for the government and contribute to wildlife conservation, a key support base for tourism activities. There are similar strategies for Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi. Unlike Kenya and Tanzania which has also a well-developed coast tourism, some of these countries are landlocked and do not have ocean coastline to provide for snorkeling, sandy beaches or marine – based tourism. Yet tourism is envisaged as a key contributor to transforming these countries to middle income economies in years to come. While this is a sound strategy for Eastern Africa countries, most tourism revenue has been based on narrow tourism products such as wildlife and national parks, and further, on a few species (the so called big five and the gorillas). Such strategy has exerted pressure on certain species (some endangered and endemic) and few parks thus thereby providing only a narrow tourism product and leaving out potential attractions (such as culture, physical features, events tourism, scenic landscapes and some unique ecological phenomena). Other challenges are political stability and governance issues, economic management, infrastructure development and various issues around capacity in the industry. In this paper, I elaborate the state of tourism in Eastern Africa countries and the envisaged role in their socio – economic development, and elaborate the main challenges to this role as well as existing potential of the tourism industry in the region.

Keywords: Burundi; Challenges to tourism; East Africa; Kenya; Rwanda; Tanzania; Tourism Uganda; Wildlife conservation

Introduction

Tourism is now one of the largest and lucrative industries in the world, contributing significant revenue and job creation to the global economy [1,2]. Generally, the world tourism industry is important as it contributes 9% of global GDP, provides 1 in every 11 jobs globally, and generates USD 1.3 trillion in world exports that accounts for 6% of the world's exports [1]. Despite occasional shocks, international tourism industry have shown a consistent growth since 1950 which recorded a 25 million tourist travel globally to 278 million in 1980, 528 million record in 1995, 995 million in 2011, and in 2012 exceeded the billion tourist travel mark when 1,035 tourists globally were recorded [1]. This generated USD1, 075 billion in tourist receipts compared to USD 1,042 billion tourist receipts generated in 2011. In fact the UNWTO (2013) has predicted that the global international tourism industry will grow by an average of 3.3% between 2010 and 2030 with about 1.8 billion tourists recorded for 2030 [1].

The global tourism industry has remained steadfast even in the face of international challenges such as disease outbreak, security concerns, international financial crisis, international conflicts and infrastructure constraints. For example, in 2009, the industry generated USD 852 billion in export earnings worldwide, accommodated more than 800 Million tourists around the globe, and accounted for more than 255 million jobs or nearly 11% of the global workforce [2]. The overall global export income chain generated by inbound tourism, including passenger transport, exceeded US\$1 trillion in 2009, or close to US\$3 billion a day. This makes the industry a major driver for employment, economic growth and development in many countries. Despite the impressive performance of the industry in 2009, it was also adversely affected in that same year by the global financial crisis and the avian A (H1N1) influenza pandemic [3].

In 2009, The UNWTO forecasted a return of consumer confidence

in global tourism and expected a growth of 3% to 4% in tourism arrivals in 2010, compared with a decline of 4% in 2009. In 2010, Asia showed the strongest growth while Europe and America showed a moderate growth, while Africa (especially southern Africa) got an extra boost from the 2010 World Cup. This was largely due to various stimulus packages enforced by various countries and measures instituted to improve efficiency by the service providers. Actions which have been taken to mitigate the effects of the global perturbations to tourism travel continued in order to foster a sustainable future in the industry. As recommended by UNWTO [3], such measures included: Close monitoring of the changing market trends and early reaction to maintain competitiveness; Boost Public and Private sector Partnership to increase productivity and focusing on job retention especially through the recognition of small to medium enterprises; Strengthen regional cooperation to ease the movement of tourists between countries; and enhancing better value by embracing the consumer preferences towards the internet and multimedia infrastructure [4].

Despite tourism being a large and expanding global industry, it has also has also been and remains inequitable [5-9]. Most of the poor countries have none or a small market share of international tourism. This suggests that there is still room to make the industry grow further, as well as contribute more positively to global economies of countries

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whose livelihood and economic empowerment is low, especially in Africa. In 2007, Africa had a global tourism market share of only 5% of tourist arrivals at about 44 million generating only US \$28 billion in receipts [3]. Despite having a small global tourism market share, it has been increasing consistently. In 1900, Africa recorded only 14.8 million recorded, but started to pick up. In 1995, it recorded 18.8 million tourists; 26.2 million recorded in 2000; 34.8 million recorded in 2005; 49.9 million recorded in 2010; 49.4 million recorded in 2011, and in 2012, it set a new record of 50.4 million tourists [1]. In 2009, growth in Africa's tourism industry continued to be robust despite the effect of the global financial crisis. The number of international tourist arrivals to Africa increased by 5% in 2009, compared to a growth rate of 4% recorded in 2008 [3]. In 2012, the African tourism market share grew by 6% and for the first time, went beyond the 50 million tourist mark [1].

There are many challenges to the growth and stability of this industry in Africa. This paper discusses the economic role of the industry, the challenges facing it, and existing opportunities in relation to the envisaged key role in socio – economic development in Eastern Africa countries (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi), one of the strongest hubs of global tourism being in Eastern Africa.

Importance and performance of the tourism sector in Eastern Africa

The East African Community partner states (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi, and recently South Sudan) have continued to strengthen their cooperation in Tourism and Wildlife sectors. The Meeting of the Sectorial Committee on Tourism and Wildlife Management of the EAC [10] approved the establishment of the East African Tourism Wildlife Coordination Agency (EATWCA). In addition, task forces have been formed to develop a work plan for the study and piloting of a single tourist visa, a comprehensive roadmap for developing a brand strategy to promote East Africa as a single tourist destination and harmonization of policies and laws in tourism and Wildlife Management in the East Africa Community. But there are still challenges on standardization, implementation and adherence to the collective agreements [11].

Furthermore, the partner states are conducting Hotel Classification exercises using the common EAC criteria. It is important to note that the Protocol on the Establishment of The East African Community Common Market has already been signed and so there is now a more easy flow of people, goods and services across the Eastern African countries. This is expected to boost tourism in the region and benefit individual states and the region collectively as tourists from Europe, America and Asia visiting are expected to visit all the countries in a single trip to Eastern Africa [11,12].

Tourism industry importance and potential in Kenya

In general, the tourism sector contributes more than 10% of Kenya's GDP from multiple economic value chain analysis, making it the third largest contributor to GDP after agriculture and manufacturing, and Kenya's third largest foreign exchange earner after tea and horticulture [11,12]. The tourism sector has been identified as one of the sectors that will contribute significantly towards socio – economic development and poverty alleviation in Kenya [13]. The number of tourist numbers have been growing in Kenya since the 1990's peaking in 2007 to just below two million tourists just before the post – election violence (Kenya's worst political instability since independence).

In 2007, tourism contributed directly about 3.65% to Kenya's

GDP; 3.00% in 2010 and 3.60% in 2012 (Table 1). Both the country's GDP, tourism direct revenue receipts have been growing steadily. At the end of 2007, the country experienced serious political instability following a contested presidential election. This led a sharp decline in tourism numbers (and revenue) from the peak of 1,817,000 in 2007 to the lowest in 2009 of 952,481, and peaked again to 1,265,136 in 2011 after the country recovered from that instability and instituted aggressive international marketing and investment in the tourism sector. The uncertainty of the next 2012 elections slowed tourism again, with recorded numbers dropping slightly by 2.78% in 2012 (Table 1) after restraint in the outcomes of that election. The number of tourists indicated may be a conservative figure [12] as it excludes the cross border tourists' arrivals which could add up to another approximately 700,000 tourists [3] in the last 3 years. The tourism trend has been on the rise since, often coming close to 2 million international tourists that has been the government's target since 2012 [12]. The potential to achieve this target remains determined by political stability, aggressive marketing and investment, and improving general security and international public image of Kenya as a safe destination.

United Kingdom has been the leading source market for Kenyan tourism followed by United States, Italy and Germany. Uganda topped the African market followed by South Africa and Tanzania. From Asian markets, India led followed by China and UAE 14,874. However, there has been a decline in the cruise tourism which recorded only 508 arrivals in 2012 as compared to 12,096 received in 2009 [1]. This decline can be attributed to sporadic insecurity and terrorism along the Indian Ocean coastline [13].

The tourism sector is a major source of employment, as it currently employs approximately over 219,000. This figure represents about 11% of the total workforce in the country [12]. The sector is also a major source of Government Revenue in the form of taxes, duties, license fees, entry fees, etc., that increase the tourism value chain and receipts in the economy. Given that the necessary infrastructure and superstructure are already largely in place in Kenya due to many years of tourism development [14,15] tourism has the potential to continue to expand rapidly in Kenya, making it a market share leader among the Eastern Africa countries [2,11]. In addition, tourism through its multiplier chain effect has promoted regional development, created new commercial and industrial enterprises, stimulated demand for locally-produced goods and services, and provided a market for agricultural products, hence benefitting many associated sectors in Kenya [6,13].

The tourism industry in Kenya is mainly wildlife – based [7,16,17] Since the first national park establishment in 1948, there have been a steady increase bringing to the current 53 public and many privately owned conservation areas. The tourism goes beyond the traditional big five large mammals to scenic landscapes, physical features and unique culture and cultural activities [17]. But wildlife is still the main source of tourism satisfaction and revenue [18,19]. For example, it has been estimated that an adult male lion in Amboseli Game Reserve, Kenya will during its lifetime earn US \$515,000 in foreign exchange [20]. It is estimated that one lion is worth \$7000 per year in income from tourism and an elephant herd can be valued at \$610,000 annually [21] in Kenya. A Safari is such a popular product that has enabled the country to continue recording remarkable growth in the volume of tourists [11,22-24].

Kenya is endowed with a unique combination of tourist attractions, comprising tropical beaches, abundant wildlife in natural habitats, scenic beauty and a geographically diverse landscape (Table 1). The

Country	Year	GDP (USD billion)	Tourism revenue, USD billions (% GDP)	Tourism numbers growth rate (%)	Tourism trends and key nature -based attractions
Kenya	2004	14.900	0.480 (3.22)	1,360,700	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> World class diverse protected areas Beach and resorts Charismatic large mammal species Rich cultural tourism Diverse landscapes and physical features Trend depends on stability, but positive
	2005	16.100	0.610 (3.79)	1,478,900 (8.69)	
	2006	18.700	0.710 (3.80)	1,600,000 (8.19)	
	2007	22.500	0.820 (3.65)	1,817,000 (13.56)	
	2008	27.360	0.660 (2.41)	1,203,200 (-33.78)	
	2009	30.460	0.780 (2.85)	952,481 (-20.84)	
	2010	30.580	0.920 (3.00)	1,095,945 (15.06)	
	2011	32.190	1.230 (3.82)	1,265,136 (15.44)	
Uganda	2004	6.340	-	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diverse protected areas Mountain gorilla Charismatic large mammal species Rich cultures Diverse landscapes and physical features Trend in tourism numbers stagnant or increasing very slowly
	2005	7.940	0.330 (4.16)	468,000	
	2006	9.240	0.380 (3.82)	539,000 (15.17)	
	2007	9.980	0.450 (4.51)	642,000 (19.11)	
	2008	11.920	0.590 (4.95)	844,000 (31.46)	
	2009	14.440	0.560 (3.88)	806,000 (-4.50)	
	2010	15.800	0.660 (4.18)	946,000 (17.37)	
	2011	17.200	0.800 (4.65)	1,151,356 (21.71)	
Tanzania	2004	10.280	0.760 (7.41)	566,667	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> World class diverse protected areas Beach and resorts Charismatic large mammal species Mt. Kilimanjaro Rich cultural tourism Diverse landscapes and physical features Trend increasing slowly
	2005	11.350	0.820 (7.22)	590,000 (4.12)	
	2006	14.140	0.990 (7.00)	622,500 (5.51)	
	2007	14.330	1.120 (7.82)	745,000 (19.68)	
	2008	16.830	1.290 (7.66)	750,000 (0.67)	
	2009	20.730	1.200 (5.79)	712,500 (-5.00)	
	2010	21.370	1.260 (5.90)	783,000 (9.89)	
	2011	22.910	1.400 (6.11)	867,994 (23.63)	
Rwanda	2004	1.800	0.044 (2.44)	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Few world class diverse protected areas Gorilla tourism Charismatic large mammal species Historical sites tourism Land of thousand hills Trend in tourism numbers increasing
	2005	2.000	0.049 (2.45)	-	
	2006	2.400	0.031 (1.29)	-	
	2007	3.110	0.065 (2.09)	710,000	
	2008	3.740	0.202 (5.40)	765,000 (7.75)	
	2009	4.170	0.218 (5.23)	700,000 (-8.50)	
	2010	5.260	0.227 (4.32)	665,000 (-5.26)	
	2011	5.630	0.252 (4.47)	1,089,000 (63.76)	
Burundi	2004	0.664	0.0018 (0.27)	133,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Few world class diverse protected areas Few charismatic large mammal species Lake Tanganyika Trend in tourism numbers stagnant to declining
	2005	0.801	0.0019 (0.24)	148,000 (11.28)	
	2006	0.919	0.0016 (0.21)	214,000 (44.59)	
	2007	0.975	0.0023(0.24)	192,000 (-10.28)	
	2008	1.097	0.0016 (0.15)	202,000 (5.21)	
	2009	1.378	0.0017 (0.12)	212,000(4.95)	
	2010	2.395	0.0021 (0.09)	142,000(-33.09)	
	2011	2.030	0.0037 (0.18)	-	
2012	2.350	-	-		

Sources: Government ministry in charge of Tourism of each country, National bureau of statics of each country; Tourism Boards of each country; World Bank records; UN World Tourism Organization, tourism websites such as: special reports such Netherlands African Business Council, NABC 2010, Republic of Uganda / World Bank 2012, World Travel and tourism council 2012; Wane, 2013, websites accessed in October 2013: www.tradingeconomics.com/country/gdp; www.tradingeconomics.com/country/intern; www.indexmundi.com/facts/country/intern;

Table 1: Tourism and economic trends and performance of East African countries since 2004.

diversity of Kenya's habitat is equaled by the remarkable variety of flora and world famous wildlife heritage. Kenya's cultural history stretches back over 4.5 million years, with some of the oldest known evidence of early man. Thus, Kenya has been for long truly be promoted as a destination that offers the visitor - whether foreign or domestic - an unparalleled variety of travel experiences [13,15].

Tourism industry importance and potential in Uganda

Uganda used to be a top African tourist destination in the 1960s, but declined following political instability of many years. In the late 1960s, Uganda had a prosperous tourist industry with 100,000 visitors each year [11, 23-25]. Tourism was the country's fourth largest earner

of foreign exchange. The tourist industry ended in the early 1970s because of political instability. By the late 1980s, Uganda's political climate had stabilized and conditions were suitable for reinvestment in the country's tourist industry. The country is now re-awakening up again in tourism activities, especially as it marks its 50 years of independence.

Tourism in Uganda is an important generator of foreign exchange, employment, and investment, with developments in adventure tourism, ecotourism and cultural tourism. Generally, the tourist numbers (and revenue) has been increasing in Uganda (Table 1), peaking in 2008 with 844,000 tourists recorded as a benefit from the overflow of those tourists that would have visited Kenya following its political instability at end of 2007 / beginning of 2008. As Kenya recovered from that instability and claimed its tourism market share, tourism in Uganda dropped by a 4.5% in 2009, but started to rise again until it peaked by over a million tourists (1,151,356 tourists being an increase of 21.71% in 2011). The number declined again to below one million in 2012 (986,000) following another election in Kenya and declined tourism activity in East Africa because of that uncertainty (Table 1). It seems that Uganda can either benefit or loose depending on its marketing strategy whenever events change in Kenya which is transit route to landlocked Uganda and a leading tourism market and distribution points for tourists in the Eastern Africa region. It seems that the trend in tourism in Uganda is generally upwards, but the increment is slowly

About three-quarters of Uganda's tourists are from other African countries. Kenya, which borders Uganda, is the biggest source of tourists to Uganda, making up almost half of all arrivals into the country. The number of visitors from Tanzania, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Sudan is quite low. As Uganda is a landlocked country, it is very dependent on connections through Kenya for most of its transport. International travelers sometimes prefer to fly into Nairobi before connecting to Uganda's capital Kampala as this is often cheaper [11,26].

As a result, the tourism sector in Uganda makes a major contribution to employment, revenue generation, and foreign exchange earnings, and has become a basis for government future plans for socio-economic transformation of the country [24]. The tourism sector has now been prioritized as a primary growth sector in the 2010/11-2014/15 National Development Plan (NDP), and has its own fully fledged Ministry to promote and develop its potential. The improvement in the tourism sector has mainly been due to conference business, and private investments in the tourist accommodation facilities. There has also been resurgence in the numbers of wildlife owing to the high conservation initiatives and protection measures following the last 15 years relative political stability. These are all indicators of a vibrant sector on a strong growth path for Uganda, thereby receiving the tourism awards from the Lonely Planet and National Geographic as a "must-see- places globally for 2012 [3].

Tourism in Uganda is focused on the landscape and wildlife. Uganda has a very diverse culture, landscape, flora, and fauna. However, the loss of charismatic wildlife in during war years in previously popular safari parks such as Murchison Falls National Park and Queen Elizabeth National Park prevented these parks from competing with similar tourist attractions in neighboring Kenya and Tanzania. Uganda's tourist industry instead promoted its tropical forests. The keystone of the new industry became Bwindi Impenetrable National Park. With more than 300 Mountain Gorillas, Bwindi Impenetrable National Park has approximately half of the world's population of Mountain Gorillas [11,26]. Uganda is one of only three countries in

Africa where it is possible to visit the endangered mountain gorillas. The other countries are Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Mountain gorillas have been Uganda's prime tourist attraction since 1993 [27]. The majority of gorillas are found in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, with a few in Mgahinga National Park, both in southwestern Uganda.

Queen Elizabeth National Park is remains a key attraction based on its history as a leading park destination in Uganda, but also as a home to the tree climbing lions. Lions do not normally climb trees, except when chased by another lion group or wild buffalo. However the tree climbing lions found in Queen Elizabeth National Park intentionally climb trees and rest on them in the afternoon, when the sun is high. This is a truly unique phenomenon. There have only been rare similar sightings of this in Lake Manyara National Park of Tanzania, and recently in Lake Nakuru National Park in Kenya.

Tourism industry importance and potential in Tanzania

Currently, Tanzania is one of the fastest growing tourist destinations in Africa and the world. It is enjoying a healthy growth rate of about 30% per annum in tourism. Tourism development has remained strong and accounts for more than 14% of the Tanzania's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and is expected to grow by more than 5 percent a year in real terms through 2020. Hotels play a major crucial role in promoting tourism in Tanzania and determining the price value of its tourism. But the country has much more potential than its realized growth rate, which has not been consistent since 2004 (Table 1). The growth remained minimal between 2004 and 2006 with slightly above half a million tourists, and for the next 3 years until 2009, it maintained tourist numbers at about 700, 000. A significant growth has been seen in the last 3 years with tourist's numbers climbing from 783,000 in 2010 to 867,994 in 2011 and peaking at beyond a million tourists (1,077,058) last year 2012. Despite a stagnant country GDP, the tourism revenue and contribution to the GDP has been steadily rising since 2008 (Table 1).

In 1990, Tanzania's foreign exchange from tourism was only US \$65 million, but it shot up to US \$739 million within a space of ten years, almost 100% increase [3,11,27,28,30] Tanzania has multiple attractions over land and at the coast and island of Zanzibar. For example, Tanzania Earned USD 1,159.8 million from Tourism Activities in 2009, out of which Zanzibar earned USD 104.3 million. Given these reasons, its size and landscape diversity compared to Kenya and Uganda, and its relatively stable political stability, Tanzania is expected to lead these countries in tourism numbers, but this has not been so. For example in 2010, Tanzania attracted only 783,000 tourists compared to Kenya's 1,095,945 and Uganda's 946,000 in 2010. Tourism also generated about 250,000 direct jobs in Tanzania (less than 2% of the labor force) while in Kenya, the industry accounts for well over 483,000 jobs. Taking the Mara and Serengeti as another example, Mara is only about a tenth of the size of the magnificent Serengeti, but yet the Mara in Kenya attracts 10 times more visitors than the Serengeti in Tanzania. In 2008, Tanzania received only 0.017 visitors per inhabitant, the 17th lowest out of 147 countries [2].

Tanzania, like other developing countries, aims at accomplishing a high economic growth and poverty reduction going forward. Progress to this end has been recorded in sectors such as tourism, where increased investments particularly in accommodation facilities have been registered [11,30]. The improved performance of the tourism industry is also attributable to the joint efforts taken by the Tanzanian Government and the private sector in developing the industry

and marketing the country as a unique tourist destination. From a foreign exchange earning point of view, tourism has the potential of beating other industries in Tanzania. Tanzanian Tourism sector has enormous growth potential despite some constraints on the part of its development [11,30].

The majority of visitors to Tanzania come from Italy (15.8%), followed by those from the United Kingdom (15.1%), United States of America came third (12.5%), Germany (7.7%), and Spain (5.0%). A 2008 survey indicate that Switzerland, Ireland and the United Arab Emirates are new entrants in the fifteen top source markets, whereas South Africa, Zambia and Norway dropped out of the list [30]. The European market continued to dominate as the most important source market to the Tanzanian Mainland [30]. This implies that there is a need for more concerted efforts in maintaining the quality of the tourist products if this market is to be sustained. However, the dependence on single market bloc has significant adverse effects particularly during times of economic and financial crisis since travel tends to fall. There is a need to intensify marketing in order to establish new source markets for Tanzania [19] Furthermore, given that majority of visitors to Tanzania come for wildlife tourism, it is important to diversify tourism products through aggressive promotion of other forms like culture and mountain tourism [19,22].

In terms of its natural resources, Tanzania is uniquely endowed with practically all the key attractions necessary for development of any successfully tourism industry. The attractions range from beautiful beaches, national parks and game reserves, historical sites, culture and traditions to natural wonders and beautiful scenery. There are 15 national parks and 35 game reserves well-endowed with a wide range of flora and fauna. Other than the dominant "Northern Circuit", there is the less developed but with huge potential "Southern Circuit" which comprises the well-known Selous Game Reserve, The Mikumi and Ruaha National parks with abundant lions, and the under-utilized shores of Lake Malawi and Lake Tanganyika [29].

The scenery and the topography of Tanzania, including its very friendly people, harbors the growth of excellent cultural tourism, beach holidays, game hunting, historical and archaeological ventures and certainly the best wildlife photographic safaris on the continent. Tanzania is home to the leading wildlife reserves including the largest national park in the world, Serengeti and the second highest mountain in the world, Mt. Kilimanjaro. Other initiatives helping tourism sector growth in Tanzania includes encouragement of the private sector to participate in the development of tourism through encouraging investments by giving investment incentives [11,31].

Tourism industry importance and potential in Rwanda

Attracted in part by gorilla-viewing opportunities, a growing number of tourists started visiting Rwanda steadily in the 1980s. By 1990, approximately 22,000 people visited Rwanda's three national parks [32,33]. That was the peak before a steep downturn. Between 1994 and 1998, civil war, genocide, and intermittent periods of unrest brought tourism to a halt. Aside from the socio - economic effects of genocide on Rwanda, gorillas in the Virunga Mountains were severely threatened by conversion of their habitat to agricultural use and extraction of their resources for other mammals. Illegal hunting and trafficking by local communities further threatened the gorilla population [32]. Nevertheless, recent political and economic initiatives have brought the country back to its feet and all its societal and economic indicators of growth are on the increase. This is more so in the tourism industry growth and achievements [34].

Starting in 1994, the government of Rwanda put considerable effort into developing a clear tourism strategy. With private sector and UN input, the government successfully drafted a tourism strategy focusing on high-end tourism with conservation at the core of its plan [32]. The strategy also outlined the need for diversification of tourism to international conferencing, birding, and other animals [34]. An international marketing campaign was launched to improve the image of the country abroad, while a domestic campaign aimed to increase local acceptance of tourists. Several market-based reforms were also adopted—namely, near-complete privatization of the hotel and leisure sector.

In the last 3 years, the tourism industry has emerged as Rwanda's top foreign currency earner and export sector, ahead of the coffee and tea sectors. Tourism accounted for 23% of total exports over 2005–2008 years, while coffee and tea were 11% and 8% respectively, versus 37% and 11% a decade earlier. The number of visitors to Rwanda's national parks has increased exponentially from 417 in 1999 to 43,000 in 2008 [1,34]. But it is from 2010 that the tourism sector has clearly dominated Rwanda's exports with 25.5% over the total exports of 31.7% revenue into Rwanda's economy. In Rwanda, exports increased by 31.7%, from US \$564.6 million in 2010 to US \$743.5 million in 2011. This was mainly boosted by improvement in the mining, tea and coffee sectors, as well as receipts from tourism [11,34].

Since 2007, the GDP as well as tourism numbers (and revenue) in Rwanda has been steadily increasing. In 2007, there were 710,000 tourists generating close to USD 65 Million (Table 1). The numbers remained stagnant for about 4 years averaging at about 700,000 tourists until in shot in 2011 (1,089,000 tourists) and 2012 (1,199,000) with tourist numbers over the 1 million mark (a better performance than Uganda, Tanzania and Burundi, and closer only to Kenya). The revival of tourism has also expanded employment opportunities Rwandans, and a revenue-sharing program instituted in 2005 is injecting 5% of tourism revenues from national park fees into local community projects.

A recent rise in the population of Gorillas in the Virunga Mountains, which is home to half of the world's Gorilla Mountains, have boost Rwanda's revenue earnings from the tourism sector, together with the government efforts in recreating a new image of the country as a peaceful and business friendly investment hub in the Eastern Africa, 2000; [11,27,32,33]. A latest census put the number of Gorillas to 480 from 380 indicating a 26.3 percent increase in last seven years. Rwanda now boasts of 17 families beating its counterparts in Uganda and Congo. Currently, mountain gorillas contribute 90 percent of revenues accrued from national parks in tourism receipts, vindicating the country's heavy investment in the sector [33,35]. For Rwanda, mountain gorillas are not only a revenue mint for the country but also a driver to the rural economic and social empowerment [11,27,32,33] The challenge for Rwanda, however, is striving to compete with markets of diversified tourism products in Eastern Africa due to the dominance of gorilla as a single tourism product [11,33], and how to market and expose other attractions to tourist clientele coming to Rwanda. There is also need to continue to change the national image of Rwanda from the past and continue to invest in good governance, and stability in political, social and cultural spheres of Rwanda's society [34].

Tourism industry importance and potential in Burundi

Tourism is a relatively small industry in Burundi, accounting for only 3% of the country's GDP (Republic of Burundi, 2011). The tourist numbers (and revenue) trends increased slightly from 2004

when 133,000 tourists visited (generating USD 1.8 million) and peaked in 2006 with 214,000 visitors (generating USD 1.6 Million) before dropping in 2007. From then to 2012, there has been no meaningful increase with a downward trend (Table 1). Tourism therefore remains a small and undeveloped economic sector contributing less than a quarter of a percent to Burundi's economy (Table 1) compared to its Eastern Africa neighbors. However, it has great potential with the return of political stability and economic growth that seem to be picking up in terms of its GDP performance (Table 1).

The geographical position of Burundi in the heart of Africa and its wonderful landscapes are making the country a real paradise which is sometimes called "The Switzerland in Africa." The soft and temperate climate in Burundi as well as the variety of its geographical structure are making the country the best place for holidays and relaxation, with a great tourism industry potential. However, Burundi is a landlocked, resource-poor country with an underdeveloped manufacturing sector [35]. The mainstay of the Burundian economy is agriculture, supporting more than 90% of the labour force, the majority of which consists of subsistence farmers. Although Burundi is potentially a self-sufficient in food production, subsistence economy has still been around 25% in recent years. The main industries comprise light consumer goods, such as blankets, shoes, soap, and assembly of imported components, public works construction and food processing [35].

Many of the tourist attractions in the country are in Bujumbura, which is the capital city. This includes the beach, which is popular with the tourists who visit the city. In addition to this, Lake Tanganyika is a popular tourist attraction. Burundi is a home to wildlife, and unique cultural practices in East Africa. The Kibira National Park is a huge cover of forestland, and it houses a good number of animal species like chimpanzees, the cercopithecus monkey, baboons, and the colobus. Ruvubu National Park is famous for its buffaloes and other animal species. Rusizi Natural Reserve that is known for its hippopotamuses, crocodiles, and antelopes. The Bururi National Park is a nice place to explore hundreds of bird species in the African continent, together with the Vyanda Natural Reserve [35,36].

Tourism in Development Visions of Eastern Africa Countries

Due to the high potential for tourism to generate foreign revenue for national developments in most Eastern Africa countries, all the countries economic road map described as visions for the future identifies tourism as a key pillar. Kenya developed Vision 2030 to run from 2008 to 2030 [37]. With almost same overall goals of improving people's socio-economic welfare and governance, Tanzania has vision 2025 [30], Uganda has vision 2040 [24], Rwanda has vision 2020 [34], while Burundi has vision 2035 [35,36].

But effective realization of the development visions in Eastern Africa countries hinges on its implementation. There are two key prerequisite for effective implementation of these development visions: good governance and competitiveness of the economy. It is obvious that these prerequisites need to be deliberately grown and nurtured, if there has to be a positive impact on the quality of life of the people. If the governance is good but the economy is weak, or the economy is competitive but the governance is weak governance, there may be some positive results but it will not be sustainable or effective in improving overall livelihoods. The Economy cannot be sustained if there is a weak leadership and governance structure; and the positive impact of good governance would not be realized in a declining economy. Sustainable realization of the economic development visions for these countries

therefore hinge on the combination of good governance and a strong, competitive economy grown consistently over time.

It is important to note that most African countries have had economic / development visions of some sort over the years, especially when they attained political independence from colonial masters. Therefore the current formal re-energized ones are not entirely new initiatives. Many of them failed or were eventually abandoned when dictated by socio-political realities and challenges set in. However, it is essential that the current leadership in these countries has a progressive mindset and be able to interpret and implement the current economic / development visions aspirations [37]. It is also essential for the leadership to have the capacity to build and support effective administrative system that would effectively follow-up and manage the implementation process. This also requires availability of a leadership which continuously learns, listens and which is tolerant to opposing social, economic and political views and opinions of various groups of the society [38]. In this regard, appropriate measures to prepare the leadership to adapt to this new framework have to be put in place or strengthened if already in existence. In addition to building capacities, it will be essential for the implementers to be of the same mind-set and vision as their leaders.

For these countries, in order to attain real economic recovery and surpass the levels of 1960s and 1970s, it is essential to ensure existence of a stable economy with a high rate of growth. What is required therefore is to build a strong and resilient economy that is capable of responding accordingly and capitalize on the benefits resulting from an increasingly competitive environment. The leadership and implementers will be expected to identify the appropriate policies and strategies that would enable these nations to attain such economic targets. In fact, in order to make a significant break from the past and deploy more appropriate driving forces to assure socio-economic progress for the future of Eastern African countries, four main impediments must be overcome: A donor dependency syndrome and a dependent and defeatist developmental mindset; A weak and low capacity for economic management; Failures in good governance and in the organization of production; and ineffective implementation syndrome [24].

Challenges and Opportunities to Tourism as an Engine of Economic Development in Eastern Africa

Despite a big tourism potential that exists in Eastern Africa, there are major challenges as well [6, 7,17,39]. The first is tourism's image as a luxury export completely dependent on external mainly clientele demands on which local planners have relatively little control [17]. International tourism revenues are not always assured [6,40]. Tourism is affected by political stability, perceptions of personal safety and security, and health [17]. Further, there are different tourist tastes, preferences, expectations, demands in terms of both goods and services that influence their level of satisfaction and loyalty to a destination [17]. Any of these factors can influence tourism numbers and revenues and paralyze planning strategies. Also, planning in tourism suffers from lack of detailed data. Standardized data on length and location of visits and expenditure patterns are lacking and there are no consistent studies and record keeping of these vital indicators [41]. Further, some critics have relentlessly pointed to the social and environmental costs of such tourism [21,23,41-49].

Some countries to date completely lack tourism sectorial planning blueprint. It is therefore difficult to compare the costs and benefits of tourism investment with alternative projects [45]. Neither is it

possible to argue whether the considerable resources put into tourism infrastructure have been utilized in an optimal way. The rationale for tourism planning is threefold: developing and managing tourism in an integrated, controlled and sustainable way; generating optimal benefits for the stakeholders; and minimizing environmental and socio-cultural problems [43,50]. Although many countries prepared tourism plans in the 1960s and 1970s it was not until the 1980s when international recognition was given to the role of tourism in development and the need to include tourism in national planning [43,45]. Some of the Eastern Africa countries are still struggling with such planning and or implementation of tourism protocols and roadmaps to success.

Therefore, the key constraints are, but not limited to: Actual and perceived concerns regarding safety and security, with resulting negative publicity in the international and local media; Negative travel advisories issued by the Governments in the main international source markets; Deterioration and near collapse of infrastructure in some in some countries, thus affecting access to tourist attractions; Lack of harmonization between national policies on land-use, wildlife and tourism, resulting in pervasive land-use and human-wildlife conflicts; Lack of a system to ensure equitable sharing of benefits and opportunities of tourism with local communities; Unplanned expansion of the accommodation sector in some localities of nations, resulting in over-supply of accommodation compared to the demand; pressure for lower contract rates from foreign tour operators; little or no surplus for re-investment in improvement, and a deterioration of the product; Lack of world - class accommodation and other facilities; Inadequate funding for sustained tourism marketing and promotion; Lack of product and market diversification to the exclusion of other potentially viable products; and overreliance on traditional source markets in Europe and North; Relative neglect of domestic and regional tourism; Lack of adequate training, examination, control and licensing of key operators in the industry; Relatively high cost and erratic supply of utilities, such as electricity and telecommunication services; and Cumbersome visitor entry formalities. Below is further examination of these issues and possible way forward:

Breakdown of the infrastructure

Although the term infrastructure refers to all resources required for the establishment of an organization, we use it here to refer to some components of the economic infrastructure. These are public works and transport, public utilities such as power, telecommunications, water, sanitation and sewage and solid waste collection and disposal [51]. Throughout the developing countries and especially Africa there is failure to maintain infrastructure adequately.

All East African countries are now improving road and rail network, but there are still poor roads in most rural areas or places leading to main tourism destination. There major tarmac works on roads in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Rwanda, but more is needed. Further, new ICT infrastructure is needed to cater for the modern tourism. Without proper improved infrastructure of all types to provide world class holiday and vacation comfort, there is possibility that other world destinations such as Costa Rica and the Caribbean will out – compete Eastern Africa as tourism destinations of choice.

Environmental impacts

Although sometimes mass tourism leads to the overutilization of the extant resources, the problem is worsened by the geographical concentration of tourists in a few places [8]. In Kenya these concentrations are along the coast, Nairobi, Amboseli, Tsavo East, Tsavo West, and Lake Nakuru national parks; Maasai Mara, and the Nairobi

animal orphanage [17]. In Rwanda and Uganda, the concentration is in parks with gorillas [27,32] while in Tanzania, the northern circuit (Kilimanjaro, Manyara, Tarangire, Ngorongoro, Serengeti and Arusha) area [19,22]. This leads to congestion, animal harassment and environmental degradation. Further, tour drivers have chase selected wild animals especially the predators such as lions, leopards, and cheetahs, by off - road driving so as to satisfy their visitors' desire for close-up photographic opportunities [15]. As a result, lions are unable to mate, and cheetahs, which are diurnal hunters, cannot look for food. Besides, off - road driving tramples lion cubs and destroys vegetation. Overall, the quality of the parks is deteriorating. Alternative policies must be sought to provide for a wider dispersal of the tourist traffic to currently underutilized parks and reserves.

We need better trained, professional, equipped, and paid staff in conservation agencies across these countries to ensure that the natural resources which support tourism industry are professionally and scientifically managed. We need to encourage the culture of information – based management which has to be driven by proper research and planning. This will raise the practice and profile of the conservation agencies to world class and better equipped to provide a stable base for a thriving tourism industry. Most of the Eastern Africa countries have poor work conditions and terms for its resource management officers and personnel, and this need to be corrected to remove the temptation of the “keepers” turning against the resources the guard for economic reasons.

Cost of conservation and human-wildlife conflicts

Due to the carving out of land for the national parks and reserves, local communities lost invaluable herding resources and sometimes agricultural land in all the Eastern Africa countries. In this instance, local people bear the cost of conservation because of foregoing the opportunity to use their land. Further, the wild animals in the parks usually move in and out of neighboring land in response to spatial and temporal occurrence in the distribution of fodder and water. The lands outside the parks are crucial to wildlife; they serve as dispersal areas. These areas are threatened with increasing land sub-division, agricultural expansion and unplanned development of tourist accommodation, thus increasing human-wildlife conflicts [16,19,22,40]. In Kenya for example, it is alleged that over 70 percent of the wild animals live outside official protection areas. The wildlife causes an enormous loss to the people by destroying property and killing humans. This loss of income from death and injury and material losses is devastating to families. Wildlife-human conflict is most intense where agricultural land borders national parks, and during the dry season when pasture and other resources are competed for. These losses escalate the cost of conservation and entrenches rural poverty, while generating tourism income for the central governments and elite tourism investors and other stakeholders. If the ordinary people do not benefit from wildlife, they will have no reason to protect it or expose those who kill them or destroy their habitats. This will have negative ripple effect to wildlife – based tourism in Eastern Africa.

There is need for a new policy and legislation that is more people friendly in all the countries that departs from punitive and insensitive policies of the past in terms of local people's relationship with natural resources, parks and reserves. Most countries do not adequately and compensate for such losses, and where there are communal welfare benefits to the community, they are largely insignificant to household benefits [39]. Yet, it is at the household level where a conservation ethic needs to be cultivated in order to assure the survival of wildlife over the longer term. There are also penalties at minor resource use

by communities from most conservation areas. This makes parks irrelevant, burdensome and a play - ground for the rich and foreign in the local community eyes. This perception and cost makes it the one of the biggest threats to conservation in Africa and by extension, resource - based tourism. If there is no investment in and for the communities bearing the cost of conservation of resources that support tourism, it cannot be expected that tourism will continue to grow and drive economic growth of any of these countries.

Socio-cultural impacts and costs on nations and cultures

Socio - cultural impacts and costs need to be balanced against the need to grow and expand tourism activities. The subject of the socio-cultural impact of Western tourism on third world peoples has attracted much attention in the tourism literature [41,47,48,52]. Their main argument is that international tourism is controlled by European and American entrepreneurs and that the benefits that trickle down to local communities are meager. In addition, tourist lifestyles in their isolated enclaves tend to accentuate the dramatic differences between affluence and poverty. The differences may be perceptual or actual. There are also objections related to the superficial packaging of culture for tourist consumption, cultural erosion, and poor employment opportunities for the local people. In Kenya the socio-cultural impacts of tourism are most severe at the coast and in the large urban centers. Like in any other development undertaking, tourism activities must have some socio - economic and even environmental impacts. Some impacts can be tolerated but those that touch cultural and social exploitations (such as sex industry and moral decay) if negative, can be sensitive culturally sensitive and affect cohesion, moral and ethical fabric of a host society. Proper laws, information and safeguards need to be established so that interaction of people and tourists is ethical and acceptable to the host community.

Uneven distribution of tourism Benefits between local and international actors

Discrepancies in actual revenue distribution between local and international actors leads to less actual revenue for host country economies. The international distribution tourism revenue in most of these countries benefit is skewed to the advantage of multinational corporations in Western Europe and North America. These corporations own and manage airlines, tour firms, and accommodation facilities. For example, in the hotel sector which usually generates greater employment, has higher multiplier effects and investment potential, the most diversified concentration of investment capital, and therefore higher value added [53], an estimated 50% of Kenya's hotels are foreign-owned, controlled and managed [54]. For example in Kenya, tourism involves all-inclusive package tours which are pre-paid in the countries of origin [39]. Most of this money is not remitted to Kenya. Besides, tour firms negotiate with Kenyan hotels to take visitors at drastically reduced prices and pay in Kenya shillings [55]. Because of the fluctuations of the local currency, the country loses large amounts of foreign exchange earnings. Sometimes the leakages of total tourism revenues can be as high as 70% especially for beach only tourism [55]. There is need to have an honest and progressive discussions on the amount of tourism income that actually reaches and remains in the various countries in order to clearly project the value chain and contribution of tourism to national economies.

Competition between world class destinations for tourists

World tourist destinations compete for clients around the world. The competition has been increasing in intensity, specialization and diversification of tourism products and services globally over the years.

Some of "niche" products linked to wildlife events, socio- cultural events or pristine coastal paradise to vacation and relax in own free time. Tourism in Eastern Africa has stiff competition with other African destinations such as southern Africa, and other destinations around the world such as North America, Europe, Costa Rica, Australia and New Zealand and the Caribbean. Eastern Africa countries therefore need to upgrade the quality of its tourism products, and conduct an aggressive promotional and marketing campaign overseas and to grow regional and domestic tourism among them. Eastern Africa countries can also make partnerships with private tour operators and travel agencies within and outside in the marketing campaigns. The private sector contributes 60% of the promotional costs of participating in international fairs, exhibitions, seminars, workshops, and road shows and the government meets the balance [56]. This marketing should be also by word of mouth and tourism offices abroad. This calls for investment in creative and informative messaging and campaigns in both traditional and new markets to increase visitation. In Eastern Africa countries, individual national parks, national conservation agencies, national tourism boards, national hospitality boards and promotion agencies all need to be coordinated in their campaigns and complement each other rather than to duplicate messages or target same regions or tourist segments in their campaigns.

There is need for East African countries to collaborate regionally and outside in tourism marketing. For example Kenya already has cooperation packages on tourism marketing and promotion with the Seychelles and Mauritius. In the past, regional tourism packages are hampered by immigration and customs regulations which make it difficult to move people and vehicles between countries; and remittances of proceeds by tour operators from one country to another [11,56,57]. But the new agreements in EAC is easing up this challenge and it is expected that shared marketing strategies for tourism and attraction of investments and common standards will present Eastern Africa as favorite destination in the world.

Poor development and activities in domestic and regional tourism

Domestic and regional tourism is small, less marketed and developed and highly seasonal in Eastern Africa countries. Most residents of Eastern Africa countries have not visited prime tourist destinations in their own countries, seen wild animals in their wild habitats or vacationed in comfort tourism destinations in their own countries [39,40]. The reasons may range from lack of disposable income, lack of free time, poor marketing to local people, foreign food types in hotels, lack of hospitable treatments of local tourists by tourism operators, lack of own transport and negative perceptions that tourist destinations are for the rich and foreign [40]. There is also a perception that local tourists are not bringing in hard foreign currency and are not big spenders, factors that increase economic importance of tourism in the economy of the countries. Therefore domestic and regional tourism is not developed in most Eastern Africa countries because tourism products, packages and marketing have not been well developed to meet local needs. Some countries have park entry fees that locals cannot afford or the hotel food is expensive in addition to not meeting local match local tastes.

Although domestic tourism is supported for a variety of reasons (national cohesion and national pride), the central objective is to even out the seasonality pattern thereby preserving jobs year round. Some East African countries are having domestic tourism councils to graft and implement strategies to increase domestic tourism, but they are inactive, poorly manned and funded and have no strategic plan and

targets. They also lack information specific to each country on why domestic tourism has not improved as in developed nations. More research is needed in this area in Eastern Africa countries so as to have specific actions that address key constraints to domestic and regional tourism growth to compliment international tourism especially in low season and at times when for one reason or another, tourists from international markets cannot come [40].

Increased insularization of, poor resource management of, threats to and conflicts in protected areas and its biodiversity

Many protected areas in Eastern Africa are poorly managed and funded. Other than not handling well issues of human – wildlife conflicts [16,58,59], there is common poaching (commercial and for bush meat) in most of the countries such that all wildlife populations are generally declining in size and future viability is questionable. This is so for charismatic species that attracts tourists such as the big five large mammals (lions, leopards, elephants, rhinoceros, and buffalo). But for other additional reasons such as human encroachment, climate change, destruction of habitats, conversion of former ranges, competition for critical resources (water, pasture, space and salt licks), and wildlife in Eastern Africa countries is truly under siege [60-62]. Most wildlife populations will continue to shrink, range conditions deteriorate and dispersal areas shrink in size. The end results seems that wildlife will only be confined to a few national parks (those that are large enough) but those in smaller parks and outside the network of protected areas will be wiped out gradually with time unless community conservation, community tourism and associated benefits spur local communities to tolerate and expand range for wildlife outside protected areas. If wildlife base will be destroyed, then the engine of tourism industry in East Africa will also stop and the sector may greatly decline.

Recent increase of rhinoceros and elephant poaching in Kenya and other countries is a blow to tourism growth. Cats such as lions are also declining and the population status of many other wildlife populations are poorly known or monitored by scientists or conservation agencies in Eastern Africa. It is critical that resource ecology and management of wildlife and other resource habitats and ecosystems continue to generate relevant information that will inform modern and appropriate management for purposes of posterity of these natural resources, in addition to supporting tourism.

Unpredictable, unstable and unaccountable economic and political management

In Eastern Africa countries, lasting and predictable political and economic stability is one of the greatest stumbling blocks to tourism and economic growth. Poor governance, transparent and working political institutions, prudent financial management and development of these nations devoid of corruption, nepotism and tribalism could really boost their political and investment image. For example, every recent general election in Kenya brings fear and uncertainty to both tourists and investors and this affects tourism growth. Tourism development requires much effort and investment to establish, but single events such as political and economic turmoil, especially if persistent, will crush it back to nothing and take long time, fresh effort in building trust and confidence to recover.

And even if tourism generated lots of revenue for economic development, it is publicly known that in some Eastern African countries, about 40% of public funds and annual budget is lost through corruption in socio – economic and political networks of impunity. Therefore funds from economic generating sectors, including tourism,

and tax payers never completely benefit national economic growth and public investment or critical issues of national importance. This is an aspect that the political leadership led by the presidents themselves must lead by example and free Eastern Africa from the yoke of political and economic mismanagement and instability, to spearhead the transformation of their respective nations.

Control of powerful actor networks and interests

Just as above, there are also actor networks that can frustrate a potential benefit system at the local level. Corruption and impunity also prevent local communities where wildlife – based tourism investment (community tourism and community conservation) can potentially benefit local communities directly and significantly. There is always an influential elder, local politician, local rich opinion shaper, a local or international tourism investor or conservation non – governmental organization or economic developers who have interests that are not necessarily of greater local community good. Such players will stifle a good idea, a good innovation, adoption of good practice, a good empowerment project of great economic and social good to society fail or not reach its potential for a variety of reasons. Mostly, the motivation is either control, manipulation for personal gain or hold on public influence. It is important that these networks and their associated interests in the context of greater local and national good be assessed and understood to ensure that narrow personal or group interests do overwrite what is of greater public good.

For example in Kenya, a few Maasai and other local and national elites and influential personalities in the Maasai Mara, (and also being observed in Amboseli) have been reported to heighten intrigues about critical socio – economic initiatives that would benefit the general Maasai people in the area by influencing, manipulating or stifling many tourism benefits systems and investments that arise from their rich wildlife heritage, cultural practices and scenic landscape for sometimes unclear reasons [63]. This local phenomena and events may be occurring in many areas where socio – economic activities get planned and in many different sectors, only that it has not been clearly studied and reported. Dismantling or curtailing such retrogressive actor networks, or just identifying and managing (if not shaming) them, might just begin to free not only local community from stagnation, but also allow them to significantly benefit from various capitals (physical, financial, natural, human and social) available to them.

Lack of proper legal advice and partnership benefit system between tourism investments and local communities

There are prime scenic landscapes rich in culture and wildlife in community and private lands in Eastern African countries. In Kenya, the Maasai Mara, Amboseli, Tsavo, Samburu and Laikipia comes to mind. There are many such areas in other countries labeled variously as wildlife management areas, group ranches, community lands etc. These areas have witnessed prime tourism investments over the years. Most of the time, it is the scenic landscape and its biodiversity, a scenic coastal area, a beautiful lake shore, hilly areas or scenic valleys that have attracted both local and international investors. In such areas, a lodge or campsite or tourist cottages get established as a collaborative venture with the community, in a sold off area within the community, in a community area or in a privately owned land within the community. Such ventures have succeeded and some have had great potential to succeed if controversy or rights and responsibilities have not been clearly agreed upon and accepted by all partners. There always seems to arise, in the course of the partnership, concerns from either partner whether the agreement entered was balanced and fair in practice to all,

if there is equitable sharing of all benefits among partners, and the all obligations and responsibilities to the partnership and investment is adhered and practiced in good faith by all the partners.

For example, there are incidences where local community or land owners raise new demands outside the contract once an investor has heavily invested and marketed the exclusive resort and eventually benefits are flowing in. Sometimes it is at the instigation of political operatives in the area who may feel envious of the success or unhappy that they are not benefiting enough personally. They then incite a local partner to cry foul unnecessarily, when even the terms of the contracts are attractive and mutually beneficial [21,53]. This often leads to prolonged court cases or generally the inability of the successful venture to continue with business. This then leads to great losses by the investor and discouraging more and future lucrative and beneficial investments in the industry and in the area. It also eventually destroys a revenue base for the land owner's in these locations as potential tourism investors begin to shy off. In some cases, the investor may actually use the legal ignorance and low intellectual capacity of local partner to properly negotiate rights and benefits, or fail to adequately elaborate these obligations with the investor to protect their rights and interests. In this way, especially where the local investor is in a hurry and does not want to consult legal and investment advice, there is likely a contest and dissatisfaction with the investment arrangement with time from the local investor. Sometimes both the investor and local partner may respect and adhere to the rules of the agreement, but the way the investor uses the land and other capitals is unacceptable especially if greater degradation and exploitation of the capitals (land and other natural resources) is heavy and jeopardizes the integrity of the capitals in the future and for posterity. This can lead to a breakdown in the agreement and the partnership and affect the viability and success of the investment.

Most of this investment plans also lack capacity and empowerment strategy of the community to ensure that with time, the project is owned or run mostly by the community in a clear future exit plan for the investor. This will help local community members who get relevant training do so and benefit from the investment as employees. For those who cannot get skilled jobs in the tourism investment project, they can be engaged to offer all unskilled job opportunities to enhance the flow of benefits to the local people. Where there are shares in the investment, it is a far long term strategy to allow the investor to have more shares at the beginning as he recovers the investment capital and marketing, but should agree to start gradually tilting the shares scales towards the local community and landowners partners in a clearly agreed legally sound and binding arrangement. Such clarity in contracts, future engagements, elaboration of land owner / local community rights and responsibilities will make viable tourism investments to stay and operate within communities and benefit on a long term basis community members and landowners and help transform local economies and rural livelihoods.

Continuously seeking and adopting good practices and innovations

The East African nations urgently need to learn to diversify their tourism products from wildlife to culture, landscapes, physical features, hosting of international events, cruise etc. There is a general over – reliance on wildlife, and even within wildlife, over – reliance on a few parks and a few large mammal and primate species. For example Kenya needs to expand tourism to its 53 or more protected areas by investing in them and the infrastructure and marketing them. Tanzania has some extra – ordinary parks in the east and other areas of the country and need

to expand the circuit away from the dominant Northern Circuit, review its pricing and competitiveness and aggressively market its untapped tourism potential. Rwanda and Uganda need to strongly develop other tourism products and experiences in other protected areas besides over – reliance on the gorilla tourism based tourism. Burundi needs to develop all sectors of its tourism industry and transform it into a meaningful contributor to national economy just like its neighbors in the partner states.

Eastern Africa countries must tell their true stories to the world in their own words and consistently to counteract sometimes biased and reporting of only and consistently negative events or perceptions of these countries by the international press and foreign media. A clear marketing and messaging approach for all Eastern Africa countries is critical to counteract the sometimes exaggerated and untrue negative international media coverage that discourages tourists to visit. Ensuring that messages of hope, progress, transformation and good practices being embraced in Eastern Africa be heard to moderate the negative messages outside. In doing this, Eastern Africa will begin to address and even change the bad and negative image of the past that discourages tourists to visit, and usher in new positive images that highlight positive and powerful initiatives of change and transformation in Eastern African nations and its leadership. But it in so doing, is very important that such marketing strategy is honest and truthful, and ensures that Eastern African countries are addressing all aspects that encourage tourists to visit, stay safely, leave satisfied with all goods and services, and return (high destination loyalty) back to visit in the future. This will release ripple effects of success in the sector as word of mouth from returning tourists become the most effective marketing tool.

Specifically, as Rwanda and Burundi comes out of the genocide image to a brand new “Germany” in Africa through improved political and economic stability the work on image and tourism enabled environment should continue strongly. But for Kenya, it is very important to carry out subsequent free and fair elections that will promote national cohesion and peace and fast – track its development as the economic and tourism powerhouse of East Africa. Kenya will need to transform its growing negative image of unsafe destination prone to terrorism and porous international borders that encourage external sporadic attacks and general insecurity even to tourists and residents alike. Uganda will need to maintain its improved image but deal with perceptions of lack of political tolerance and transformation. Tanzania needs to grow its tourism manpower and capacity, review its strategy of an expensive high – end tourism destination, shake the perceptions of unmotivated society that does not take national development, education and economic investment seriously, and focus on providing a world class experience to tourists. Tanzania will also need to review its marketing and target unexploited rich tourism circuits and destinations that still lie dormant and prevent it to surpass other Eastern African countries in tourism because it has the ability to do so. IN general, all Eastern Africa countries have specific areas of improvement to target to spur or maintain high tourism activities and make this a pillar in the socio – economic visions of future development and enjoy all the accruing benefits [11,64-68].

Conclusions

From the figures of tourism numbers and revenue, Africa gets a very small share of this global economic industry. In Eastern Africa, tourism is one of the leading foreign currently earner, except in Burundi where it is beginning to be developed after political and economic instability of the past. It is an important sector expected

to contribute to the transformation into a middle income or upper income society as envisaged in vision 2030 for Kenya, vision 2040 for Uganda, vision 2025 for Tanzania, vision 2020 for Rwanda, and vision 2025 for Burundi. Tourism revenues and number for the Eastern Africa countries is generally increasing, making the sector an important engine in future socio – economic transformation of the individual countries. However, there are major challenges ranging from image, narrow tourism products, poor marketing and investments, poor infrastructure, issues with political and economic management of the countries, costs of tourism and conservation to local communities, impacts on nation cultural and moral fabric and values, selfish interests of critical actors and individual networks from local to national level, and lack of benefits and compensation for local communities. It has been argued that these challenges need to be tackled properly, continuously, positively and consistently if tourism will be expected to play a role as an engine of economic and social transformation in the lives of the citizens of these countries to meet their stated respective national socio – economic development visions of the future.

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