

2nd UN Tourism/ICAO Ministerial Conference

On Tourism and Air Transport in Africa

Luanda, Republic of Angola

22-24 July 2025

Key Takeaways of the Expert's workshop(22 July): Consolidated

1. The very fruitful discussions held today highlighted the critical interdependence between the aviation and tourism sectors as powerful engines for economic growth and regional integration in Africa.
2. Speakers across all sessions emphasized that air transport is essential for enabling tourism, while a vibrant tourism sector strengthens the business case for expanded air services. Together, these sectors contribute significantly to **job creation, GDP growth, and regional integration**—particularly when supported by coherent and aligned strategies and plans that target intra-African travel and the promotion of Africa as a unified destination.
3. A recurring theme was the **transformative potential of innovation and technology** in driving progress in both aviation and tourism sectors. From smart airport infrastructure and digital identity solutions to route optimization and integrated tourism platforms, panelists demonstrated how new technologies are reshaping travelers' experiences, increasing operational efficiency, and making the sectors more resilient. Leveraging innovation was not just seen as an opportunity, but a necessity for Africa to compete globally and to meet the demands of a growing, youthful, and increasingly mobile population.
4. The sessions also underscored the **need for robust, and coherent policy frameworks** supported by strong regional and international cooperation. Regulatory fragmentation, high costs, and lack of policy alignment between tourism and aviation authorities were cited as persistent barriers. However, frameworks such as the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) were identified as critical tools for unlocking seamless mobility, trade, and investment across borders.

5. We have also pinpointed harmonizing standards, and improving visa facilitation as key issues for enhance air connectivity and growth of tourism in the Continent.
6. Finally, panelists across all sessions stressed that none of these ambitions can be realized without **significant and sustained investment in infrastructure, capacity building, and technology**. From airport modernization and accessible infrastructure to digital systems and workforce development, Africa's tourism and air transport sectors require targeted financing to scale. Public-private partnerships, innovative funding mechanisms, and clearer investment narratives were highlighted as essential to attract capital and drive long-term infrastructure development. The call to action was clear: African states must strategically include tourism and aviation sectors as part of their key national development plan.