

UN Tourism Commission for Africa69th Meeting

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**Report on the UN Tourism Affiliate Members' activities in Africa
for the period 2025-2026****1. Introduction**

This meeting of the UN Tourism Commission for Africa (CAF) provides a timely opportunity to reflect on the latest activities and strategic direction of the UN Tourism Affiliate Membership in the region.

The report outlines the main institutional developments and thematic contributions of Affiliate Members in Africa, providing insight into strategic objectives, implementation progress, Affiliate Membership status and trends, and upcoming opportunities.

2. Strategic objectives for the Affiliate Membership (2026–2027)

The work of the Organization in this area, carried out through its specialized structure, the Affiliate Members and Public-Private Collaboration (AM-PPC) Department, continues to focus on strengthening the Affiliate Membership.

The overall objective is to enhance the value of belonging to UN Tourism as an Affiliate Member, ensuring that each member feels part of a dynamic and relevant network that offers spaces for collaboration, visibility and engagement.

In this context, AM-PPC has prioritized efforts to support Affiliate Members in fully benefiting from their membership, while strengthening the capacity of the network to contribute to the Organization's agenda. This includes both a more effective engagement of existing members and a quality-driven expansion through the incorporation of strong new partners.

These strategic objectives aim to consolidate the Affiliate Membership as a key pillar of the Organization.

2.1 Enhancing the Value of Affiliate Membership

Consistent work is currently being done by the AM-PPC Department in order to (a) reach a more effective integration of the Affiliate Members in the Programme of Work, agenda of activities and main projects carried out by UN Tourism, and to (b) permanently improve the facilities and services offered by the Organization to Affiliate Members.

- a) During the reporting period the efforts to better integrate Affiliate Members into the technical and strategic work of UN Tourism have gained momentum.

This approach seeks to leverage the expertise of Affiliate Members while providing them with increased institutional visibility and opportunities for engagement. It reflects the core principles and lines of action established through the Legal Reform and new Expansion Strategy, aimed at strengthening governance and ensuring that Affiliate Members from diverse regions—particularly the less represented ones—play a more active role in shaping the global tourism agenda.

Affiliate Members from Africa have made notable contributions to the further development of the following thematic areas:

- **Audiovisual Tourism:** the **World Tourism Film Awards 2025** organized by the **International Committee of Tourism Film Festivals - CIFFT** (December 2025), recognized excellence in tourism storytelling and best tourism videos and destination campaigns.
- **Sports Tourism:** [1st edition of the UN Tourism Awards for Excellence in Sustainable Sports Tourism, powered by FIA](#) (March 2026): This global programme recognizes outstanding initiatives that position sport as a driving force for sustainable tourism development. The initiative further positioned UN Tourism as a leading global platform for promoting sustainable sports tourism and encouraged innovation and the exchange of best practices among destinations and industry stakeholders. In Africa, the initiative **WRC Safari Rally: The Kenya Experience, by the Affiliate Member Kenya Tourism Board** received a Special Recognition under the category “Outstanding Public–Private Partnership in Sports Tourism,” highlighting the region’s growing leadership in leveraging sport as a catalyst for sustainability, destination positioning, and inclusive economic development.
- **Thermal Tourism:** [The Thermal Congress 2025](#), held in June in Budapest, Hungary, brought together key stakeholders—including mayors, tourism professionals, and wellness experts—to explore the role of thermal destinations in sustainable development and health tourism. The event was organized by the Affiliate Member **European Historic Thermal Towns Association (EHTTA)**, with the participation of UN Tourism. From Africa, the Affiliate Member **Observatoire du Tourisme du Maroc** presented a segmentation of thermal tourists, ranging from regular wellness travellers and occasional users to senior visitors and high-end clients. These profiles help better understand and respond to emerging demand across various markets.
- **Tourism Investment:** The Affiliate Member **JLL** organized the [Africa Tourism Investment Conference](#), in the framework of WTM Africa, in Cape Town (April 2026). The event was supported by UN Tourism and featured high-level discussions on tourism performance, investment trends, and the role of public–private collaboration in advancing sustainable tourism development across the continent. Notable interventions included the Affiliate Member **Cape Town Tourism** in the

panel “Over-Tourism – Can There Be Too Much Investment?” and the Affiliate Member **Millat Group** in the panel “Fireside Chat - African Governments and an Enabling Environment for Tourism & Hospitality Investments.”

- **Women’s Empowerment:** [The 2nd UN Tourism Regional Congress on Women’s Empowerment in Tourism in Africa](#), organized jointly by UN Tourism and the Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality Industry of the Republic of Zimbabwe, in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe (29 April - 1 May 2026), aimed to move beyond foundational empowerment towards leadership pathways and decisive institutional action. It focused on catalysing policies and partnerships that transform women from workforce participants into the primary architects and decision-makers of Africa’s tourism landscape. On this occasion, the Affiliate Member **Zambia Institute for Tourism & Hospitality Studies (ZITHS)** shared its experience and knowledge in the panel “The Women in Tourism Leadership Africa Committee’s (WITLAC) Dialogue: Strengthening the Women in Tourism Leadership Africa Committee’s advisory role.”
- b) AM-PPC Department has also continued to strengthen the services and facilities offered to Affiliate Members, with a particular focus on enhancing opportunities for networking, visibility, and institutional representation.

In this regard, Affiliate Members have been actively involved in UN Tourism’s statutory meetings and key events (Executive Council sessions, Regional Commissions and World Tourism Day). Additional visibility and engagement opportunities were provided through major international tourism fairs such as FITUR and ITB Berlin, notably through the Affiliate Members Corner — a dedicated platform for showcasing projects, exchanging ideas and strengthening public–private dialogue, such as:

- the Affiliate Members Corner “Disruptive Technologies in Tourism,” organized within the framework of the 26th UN Tourism General Assembly (November 2025), featuring case studies and insights on the adoption of technologies in tourism, including Artificial Intelligence, the Internet of Things, Virtual & Augmented Reality, and biometrics.
- FITUR (January 2026): [UN Tourism Affiliate Members Corner “Cross-Sector Value in Tourism,”](#) a session capturing key insights, case examples, and data on cross-sector collaboration in tourism, drawing on peer exchanges among selected Affiliate Members. The discussion highlighted the growing intersection of tourism with culture, music, sports, wellness, retail, hospitality, and urban development, with participation from the African Affiliate Member **Zanzibar Association of Tourism Investors** under the sector “Hospitality.”

These platforms provided excellent opportunities not only to showcase and highlight Affiliate Members’ work, but also to facilitate their engagement and collaboration with the governments of the Member States and many other relevant tourism stakeholders.

2.2 Quality-oriented expansion

A key priority remains ensuring a high-quality and committed Affiliate Membership.

Significant progress has been achieved in strengthening the rigor of the admission process, notably through the introduction of an **application fee** effective 1 January 2026. This measure reinforces the quality filters applied to new applications and contributes to ensuring that only entities with the capacity to add value are admitted. This mechanism was approved by the 123rd Executive Council and incorporated into the Charter of Affiliate Membership.

During the reporting period, 4 new Affiliate Members from Africa were admitted (2 from Nigeria and 2 from South Africa) out of approximately 22 applications received from the Region, reflecting a more selective process aligned with this quality-driven approach.

Africa currently accounts for 29 Affiliate Members, representing approximately 6% of the total network. While Africa's share of Affiliate Members remains smaller than other regions, it has increased significantly since 2023, rising from 4% to 6%.

At the same time, improved retention and membership stability have been observed, with a significant decrease in the number of members leaving due to arrears — from 97 in 2022 to 18 in 2025 — reflecting stronger engagement and the positive impact of recent measures.

3. Enhanced collaboration with the Board of Affiliate Members

The collaboration with the Board of Affiliate Members has continued to play a central institutional role.

The 2022-2025 mandate marked the first four-year mandate for the Board, aimed at strengthening institutional stability and aligning it with the mandate of the Secretary-General.

AM-PPC continued to support the Board of Affiliate Members in the organization of its meetings and related processes, to maintaining regular and constructive collaboration on the main issues on the agenda. The 62nd Meeting of the Board (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, November 2025) and the 63rd Meeting of the Board (Madrid, Spain, January 2026) focused, among others, on governance matters (election of the authorities of the Board), approval of the roadmap of participation of the Board in statutory meetings and the development of the Programme of Work.

AM-PPC encouraged and supported the participation of the institutional representative of the Affiliate Members, designated by the Chair of the Board, in all UN Tourism's Statutory meetings celebrated lately (Executive Councils and Regional Commissions).

Particular emphasis has been placed on strengthening the dialogue between the Board and the **Committee on Matters Related to Affiliate Membership (CMAM)**, contributing to improved alignment, transparency, and governance.

4. Elections for the 2026–2029 Board of Affiliate Members

Affiliate Members have elected the members of the new Board for the 2026–2029 term. Preparations for the election took place between January and September 2025 and the elections were held between 1 and 22 October 2025 on a dedicated, secure online platform.

At the 62nd meeting of the Board, held in November 2025, its members elected NECSTouR - Network of European Regions for Competitive and Sustainable Tourism as its Chair, Saudi Tourism Authority as its First Vice-Chair and Cámara Argentina de Turismo as its Second Vice-Chair.

Among the other 20 Board Members, **Ethiopian Tour Operators Association - ETOA (Ethiopia)** and **Zanzibar Association of Tourism Investors - ZATI (United Republic of Tanzania)** represent the Affiliate Members from Africa.

The election process demonstrated the Organization's commitment to participatory governance and institutional legitimacy, as well as the increasing interest of the Affiliate Members to participate in the governance of the network, as reflected in the consistent number of candidatures registered. It is also worth noting that 64% of eligible voting members cast their ballots, which marked an important increase in the participation, compared to the previous elections for the Board, celebrated in 2021.

5. Affiliate Members Programme of Work 2026–2027

The Affiliate Members and Public-Private Collaboration Department elaborated its Programme of Work 2026–2027 in full alignment with the Organization's General Programme of Work 2026–2027. These two strategic instruments are distinct yet complementary:

- The **General Programme of Work of the Organization**, developed in consultation with Member States, outlines the Organization's institutional priorities and global strategic direction.
- The **Affiliate Members Programme of Work** translates those priorities into concrete initiatives, partnerships, and knowledge products driven by Affiliate Members.

To enhance participation and alignment, UN Tourism launched an open Call for Proposals, inviting Affiliate Members to contribute with proposals and initiatives supporting the Organization's priorities. This process aims to enhance engagement, foster integration into UN Tourism's workstreams, and enable Affiliate Members to fully benefit from their membership through increased visibility, collaboration, and impact.

The following proposals submitted by the Affiliate Members from the region are particularly noteworthy:

- Magical Kenya Youth Innovation Programme (MKYIP) by **Kenya Utalii College**—Capacity-building initiative designed to train and empower youth in sustainable tourism, digital innovation, and entrepreneurship. The pilot will be implemented in Kenya with plans for regional scaling through the East African Community.
- Greener Zanzibar Hospitality Sector Initiative by **Zanzibar Association of Tourism Investors (ZATI)** is a capacity-building program to reduce the environmental footprint of hotels and tourism operators in Zanzibar, combining training, efficiency pilots, and policy

dialogue, and culminating in global knowledge sharing that positions Zanzibar as a model for sustainable island tourism.

- Gastronomy and Hospitality Skills for Sustainable Growth – **Zambia by Zambia Institute for Tourism and Hospitality Studies (ZITHS)** is a one-year capacity-building initiative that strengthens livelihoods and preserves Zambia’s culinary heritage by training informal food vendors, certifying national trainers, documenting traditional recipes, and showcasing local cuisine through regional and national street food festivals. The project positions gastronomy tourism as a driver of inclusive and sustainable growth.

This process has strengthened engagement and enabled the development of new partnership formats, including the “Affiliate Members-Driven Services for UN Tourism” framework, designed to provide Member States with access to innovative tools, expertise, and services.

6. Conclusion

The UN Tourism Affiliate Membership continues to play a pivotal role in advancing innovation, dialogue, and sustainable development across the global tourism sector. In Africa, progress has been particularly significant—both in terms of membership growth and quality and thematic contributions to the global agenda. Looking ahead, the focus will remain on:

- Expanding and strengthening the network with high-value partners.
- Fostering active participation in UN Tourism programmes and events.
- Supporting the new Board of Affiliate Members as a strong and representative body.
- Ensuring continuous alignment with the values and goals of the Organization.

Through continued cooperation between Member States and Affiliate Members, the region is well-positioned to further strengthen its contribution to shaping the future of global tourism.