

SETTING THE SCENE

Shaping the Future of Africa's Tourism Talents

Panel 2: Next-Gen Talent – Driving a Digital
and Sustainable Tourism Sector

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Africa's tourism future is a talent question.

Not short of assets

Not short of demand

Short of the skills system
that keeps pace

The gap is widening between:

What the industry
requires



What the workforce
is equipped to
deliver

At a time when tourism itself is being reshaped by technology, sustainability, and globally benchmarked experience expectations.



01 | CHANGING DEMAND



The traveller has changed — and tourism jobs are changing with them.

Digitally connected

Uses mobile, social, reviews, and platforms as default travel infrastructure.

Experience-driven

Values authentic, local, seamless, and memorable moments over generic service.

Sustainability-conscious

Chooses operators that can evidence environmental and community responsibility.

Expecting personalisation

Expects tailored offers, rapid response, and continuity across the journey.

This shifts tourism roles from traditional service delivery to:

Data-enabled

Tech-supported

Globally benchmarked

Sustainability-driven





Move beyond jobs. Build skills ecosystems.

Tourism workforce development must behave like an adaptive system — not a one-time qualification pipeline.

01 Enable continuous learning

Short cycles of skills renewal as market needs change.

02 Support rapid reskilling

Fast pathways for employees, entrepreneurs and informal workers.

03 Bridge education and industry

Training designed around real operational standards and demand.

04 Recognise multiple pathways

Formal, informal and work-based learning with credible signals.

Skill systems must be portable, modular and demand-led.



MICRO-CREDENTIALIALS

The practical bridge between learning and mobility.

Micro-credentials can give Africa a common language for emerging tourism skills — fast, targeted and credible across borders.

- **Fast pathways** Targeted learning for specific industry capabilities.
- **Cross-border standards** Comparable skills signals across African markets.
- **Talent mobility** Easier movement between destinations and employers.
- **Emerging credibility** Clear validation for digital, AI and sustainability skills.



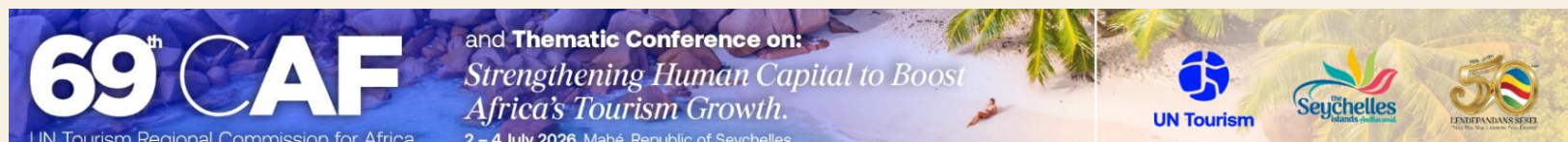


Digital skills are now operating capabilities.

Digital capability is no longer an IT function at the edge of tourism. It is becoming the core operating model for competitiveness.

- | | | |
|----|--|---|
| 01 | AI-enabled customer engagement | Personalised service, response speed and smarter guest journeys. |
| 02 | Data analytics & revenue management | Better forecasting, pricing, capacity decisions and performance visibility. |
| 03 | Digital marketing & distribution platforms | Direct demand generation, channel optimisation and market reach. |
| 04 | Smart destination systems | Integrated information, mobility, safety and visitor experience management. |

Future-ready tourism teams need comfort with data, platforms and AI-assisted service — at every level of the value chain.





Sustainability skills are becoming a licence to operate.

Sustainability is shifting from specialist compliance into daily operational competence across all tourism roles.

Resource efficiency & circular practices

Reduce waste, energy and water intensity across operations.

Climate resilience & adaptation

Equip destinations and enterprises to withstand disruption.

Community integration & inclusive tourism

Create shared value and local ownership in the visitor economy.

ESG reporting & accountability

Evidence impact, manage risk and meet investor-grade expectations.

These are no longer “nice to have.” They increasingly define market access, investor confidence and destination credibility.

A young continent can leapfrog into a tourism talent hub.

60%+

of Africa's population is under the age of 25

- 01 Leapfrog legacy systems
Adopt digital-first learning and delivery models.
- 02 Build digital fluency from the ground up
Prepare young people for platform, data and AI-enabled work.
- 03 Position Africa as a global talent hub
Export expertise, not only experiences.

But this will not happen organically. It requires intentional collaboration.





Three immediate priorities for the stakeholders in the room.

01

Co-create a Continental Skills Framework

Align government, industry and academia
Define standardised competencies and micro-credentials
Ensure portability across African markets

02

Strengthen Industry-Led Training Models

Expand work-integrated learning and apprenticeships
Incentivise private-sector investment in skills
Embed real-world experience into training

03

Accelerate Digital & Sustainability Upskilling

Scale short-form modular programmes
Use technology for accessible remote learning
Prioritise youth, women and rural communities

THE OUTCOME & IMPACT : Portable skills, stronger enterprise performance, inclusive tourism & hospitality employment and sustainability.





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Bridges policy, enterprise and skills ecosystems to help position Africa as a globally competitive tourism talent hub.



MODERATOR BRIDGE

Panel 2: Next-Gen Talent

Driving a Digital and Sustainable Tourism Sector

“We’ve established that the future of tourism is digital, sustainable and skills-driven.”

The question now is: how do we operationalise this across Africa?

