

EMERGING ECONOMIES ENTER THE TOURISM MARKET



Recent tourism surveys have revealed some positive news about the 'next wave' economies. These countries still fight their own domestic battles, however, tourists appear to be increasingly interested in less frequented, challenging countries.

The United Nations have been monitoring the emerging markets as well as countries which desperately need support in their fight against hunger, disease and lack of education. **The UN's list of LCDs (Least Developed Countries) includes 48 countries, mainly located in sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia.** Many of these countries possess natural riches which present a great opportunity; however, they are in no state to take full advantage of their potential. On the other hand, according to UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), **the number of tourists coming from emerging economies has increased by 10% since 2000**, accounting for nearly half of the 935 million tourists today.

Exotic destinations have recorded an increasing number of visitors and many of these would like to maximize their potential. The UNWTO is organizing an international conference in Dakar, Senegal in May 2011. **Its objective is to secure funds for sustainable tourism development project in natural parks of West Africa.** The project brings together eight West African emerging economies - Benin, Burkina Faso, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, and Sierra Leone - that wish to reinforce their integration and collaboration.

The parks present a fantastic opportunity to attract tourists and thus improve local economies. Promotion of the region is vital and requires investment which the countries hope to win during the conference. Their aim is to present diverse funding opportunities which will help push the region and its sustainable tourism plans further.

The UN is teaming up with many of its agencies and programmes in order to provide targeted and more effective assistance to emerging economies. Helping them take the first step toward developing local tourism will hopefully set the right course for helping them deal with other issues.

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