

# Nigeria: Successes and Challenges



The Nigerian economy has received tremendous boost in the last 9 years as a consequence of the democratic changes taking place in the country through the government. Nigeria is a developing nation with over 150 million people and 250 ethnic groups. Actually, it is a country with the largest and most populous concentration of black people in Africa and the world.

## Untapped Potential

Extensive foreign investments in the telecommunications industry, transport, oil, human resources developments, hospitality, etc. considerably helped the local economy. The influx of investment and people into the country reflects the country's untapped potential and safety. The improving economical situation increased the interest of the government Nigeria's tourism potential.

The country attracts tourists especially with its natural attractions like vast coastal sand beaches, mountain ranges, waterfall, parks, and forests with abundant fauna. Multi-cultural festivals and various carnivals however also lure numerous visitors. Currently Nigeria strives to become one of the top tourism destinations in the world. Regional governments thus intensively work on developing the area's tourism services as well as on encouraging investment in the travel sector. The tourism potential of the country has never been doubted. The problem is however how to harness and develop it to improve the number of tourists spending holidays in the region.



## Challenging Issues

Nigerian tourism has been greatly affected by negative news in both local and foreign media. Like any nation of the world the country has its share of problems. Nevertheless, it is necessary not to get misled by a series of negative articles not taking into account the achievements of the nation. Tourists traveling to the country are always encouraged to take precautions and respect the local culture as in any other part of the world.

Among other issues preventing more dynamic development of tourism industry and especially online travel services are problems with credit cards that cannot be always used in Nigeria. Travelers should be thus prepared that they might be required to pay through bank transfer or cash only.

Also, Nigeria's accommodation services are often regarded as quite costly when compared facilities of similar standard elsewhere. The reason for higher prices is the current economic environment increasing the costs of hotel owners (expensive electricity, water, road fees). However, the travelers often agree that the higher prices are certainly worth the friendly and hospitable services provided to the guests.



## **Dynamic Developments**

The Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC), the regulatory authority of the country's tourism recently launched Satellite Navigator and a mobile phone planner to facilitate domestic tourism as well as the travels inbound tourists.

Currently, extensive road reconstructions are on the way, especially in the Lagos state. The security at Nigerian airports also improved immensely as well as the provided services. The government has recognized tourism as a huge revenue source and employment generator and plans to emphasize the sector and its development even further. One of the first successes of the local travel trade is definitely the recently concluded FIFA U20 World Cup. The acclaimed event represented a good opportunity for the world globetrotters and sport fans to experience Nigerian hospitality and for the tour operators and service providers to show their skills.

By **Chukwuemeka Ikechukeu**

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