

# MADAGASCAR TOURISM FACES SUBSTANTIAL LOSSES



On the eve of the launch of the 2018 tourist season, which normally starts in April, Madagascar tourism sector is in the red. Tourism is suffering the full impact of bad weather with the destruction of road infrastructure.

The problem of domestic theft has darkened the already bleak picture of Madagascar tourism since the plague epidemic. This is the main concern that members of the Confederation of Tourism of Madagascar (CTM) share.

"There is general concern for tourism stakeholders. The last ITB trade fair in Berlin reassured tourists but showed that the partners are quite concerned about the situation on the Big Island. **Weather, unavailable road infrastructure, lack of transparency in air services, insecurity, as well as communication trails on the plague epidemic** are all indicators that demotivate tourists and push them to choose other destinations," explains Patrice Raoull, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the CTM.

Madagascar is one of the most expensive destinations in the world, the realities do not seem at all to encourage tourists to visit the country. A reluctance of requests and an increase in cancellations which run directly to losses have been recorded. "So far, 20% of tour operators and travel agencies have been cancelled," deplors the CTM's PCA. "Many of the services sold and signed had to be reimbursed for unsatisfied claims."

Madagascar tourism confederation is thus calling for much more consultation between tourism operators and the public sector and the public-private partnership. A dialogue open to different sectors of the tourism value chain in general. A consultation that will determine a reliable strategy in emergencies. A strategy taking into account the evolution of tourism.

It is still not possible to buy tickets directly at the airport. "In six months of existence, the CTM's eight trade colleges have not been consulted in major decisions affecting tourism," adds Tojo Razafimahefa, vice-chairman of the CTM's Board of Directors. **It illustrates this lack of consultation by the uncoordinated increase in visa fees and the abolition of certain air service points.** In the opinion of the CTM, actors from different fields, and not only tourism, must mobilize to find solutions to the current problems facing the sector. More than 250,000 tourists visited Madagascar in 2017.

Moreover, the losses of Madagascar tourism are reported also by the cruise sector. Cruise operators lost up to 70% of their sales. Although the ports of Nosy-be and Antsiranana have had some hits, operators are generating more loss than profit. Henintsoa Ravelonarivo, of the Nosy-be Regional Tourist Office, estimates a loss of 70% in turnover for excursionists, and 60% for other operators including craftsmen and car rental agencies. All these sectors were waiting for the profits of the ships. It is known that this is one of the sources of foreign currency for the host city.

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