

TOURISM IN SENEGAL - THE GREAT LEAP FORWARD



Placing Senegal among the top 5 African tourist destinations with 3 million visitors per year by 2023 is the government's objective. The authorities are more than ever focused on tourism in Senegal (10% of GDP and 9% of total employment in the country) to maintain a sustained level of growth (7%) and a healthy economy.

Over the past four years, the country has been experiencing growth rates of over 6.5% per year - a dynamic that is expected to continue in the coming years.

According to the Minister of Tourism, the government is preparing to launch "a call for investment in about ten major tourist sites". Among them: the megalithic circles of Senegambia (South), the Monument of the African Renaissance or the brand-new Museum of Black Civilizations in Dakar.

These investments imply an increase in foreign direct investment (FDI) in Senegal, currently limited mainly to agribusiness and processing of fishery products. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), between 2012 and 2014, FDI has already risen from US\$276 million to US\$343 million, a very good increase (+80%) in two years. This increase was made possible by the development of infrastructure in the capital (motorways, airport, conference center, etc.). This makes the country and the offer of tourism in Senegal much more attractive.

According to a detailed analysis conducted by Horwath HTL, the hotel, tourism and leisure consulting, Senegal could see its hotel potential skyrocket in the coming years. "We believe that Senegal has a diversified hotel development potential in the medium term," Philippe Doizelet, associate director of Horwath HTL, said earlier. In fact, the country is seeing the release of many infrastructures designed to accommodate holidaymakers. In the "new city" of Diamniadio, about thirty kilometers from Dakar, a hotel offering 460 rooms built by the Accor group is expected to open in 2020. In the medium term, the government hopes to offer some 5,000 new rooms to tourists.

Last October, the Senegalese President emphasized that more than an economic asset, tourism in Senegal had a much broader "contribution", "in job creation, in social ties, in the preservation of our nature and the enhancement of our heritage, for the quality of our exchanges. Tourism is a guarantee of stability," he said. Macky Sall seems more than ever determined to lead the country's "big leap forward", to use the title of a tourism development program, which he launched when he took office in 2012.

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