

Urgent appeal to global community to support African tourism, travel

Five international air transport and tourism bodies have launched an appeal to international financial institutions, country development partners and international donors to support Africa's travel and tourism sector which employs some 24.6 million people on the African continent. Without urgent funding, the Covid-19 crisis could see a collapse of the sector in Africa, taking with it millions of jobs.



Image source: [Gallo/Getty](#)

The sector contributes \$169bn to Africa's economy combined, representing 7.1% of the continent's GDP.

The request is being made by the International Air Transport Association (IATA), the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), the African Airlines Association (AFRAA) and the Airlines Association of Southern Africa (AASA).

These organisations are jointly calling on international financial institutions, country development partners and international donors to **support** the African travel and tourism sector **through these tough times by providing:**

- \$10bn in relief to support the travel and tourism industry and help protect the livelihoods of those it supports directly and indirectly;

- Access to as much grant-type financing and cash flow assistance as possible to inject liquidity and provide targeted support to severely impacted countries;
- Financial measures that can help minimize disruptions to much-needed credit and liquidity for businesses. This includes the deferral of existing financial obligations or loan repayments; and,
- Ensuring that all funds flow down immediately to save the businesses that need them urgently, with minimal application processes and without impediment from normal lending considerations such as creditworthiness.

Some African governments are trying to provide targeted and temporary support for hard-hit sectors such as travel and tourism. However, many countries lack the necessary resources to help the industry and these livelihoods through this crisis.

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The situation is now critical. Airlines, hotels, guesthouses, lodges, restaurants, meeting venues and related businesses face mounting losses. Typically, travel and tourism comprises 80% of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). To preserve cash, many have already begun laying off or placing staff on unpaid leave.

"The impact of the Covid-19 outbreak is being felt across the whole travel and tourism value chain. The sector is particularly exposed to millions of livelihoods across the world, especially within vulnerable communities, supported by the sector. International financial support is key to ensuring that travel and tourism can lead to a wider economic and social recovery in these communities," said Zurab Pololikashvili, UNWTO Secretary-General.

“ Travel and tourism is the backbone of many economies across Africa and its collapse will lead to hundreds of millions of livelihoods being impacted and enormous financial pressure for years to come. ”

"Airlines are at the core of the Travel & Tourism value chain that has created quality jobs for 24.6 million people in Africa. Their livelihoods are at risk. Containing the pandemic is the top priority. But without a lifeline of funding to keep the travel and tourism sector alive, the economic devastation of Covid-19 could take Africa's development back a decade or more. Financial relief today is a critical investment in Africa's post-pandemic future for millions of Africans," said Alexandre de Juniac, IATA's director-general and CEO.

"The travel and tourism sector is in a fight for survival, with over 100 million jobs losses globally and nearly eight million in Africa alone due to the Covid-19 crisis. Travel and tourism is the backbone of many economies across Africa and its collapse will lead to hundreds of millions of livelihoods being impacted and enormous financial pressure for years to come.

"Now, more than ever, it is vital that governments work together on a global coordinated approach towards a swift recovery and ongoing support for travel and tourism. It is critical that the most vulnerable communities receive international help.

“ Air transport and tourism industries are among the worst impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. ”

"The speed and strength with which the international community comes together and responds through international financial institutions, country development partners and international donors will be paramount to provide support to the many millions of people whose livelihoods are heavily dependent on our sector," added Gloria Guevara, WTTC President and CEO.

"Air transport and tourism industries are among the worst impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Air transport is critical for the economic development and integration of the African continent. As such, support to the airline industry will aid in a faster economic recovery.



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"An end of operations by African airlines would trigger a host of serious financial consequences, while replacing the air service provided by the airlines would be a challenging and costly process. Urgent, immediate and consistent measures need to be taken for the survival and rebound of the industry," said Abdérahmane Berthé, AFRAA secretary-general.

"The impact of Covid-19 in Africa continues to be brutal. Air travel and tourism have essentially shut down. Now, more than ever, international countries need to come together to help those communities that are most vulnerable. The survival of our industry and its allied sectors has serious ramifications for Africa's entire air transport system," said Chris Zweigenthal, AASA CEO.

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