

# **Sustainable Tourism Development and Trade Facilitation in Nigeria and the Caribbean**

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## **Abstract**

The study discussed about the link between sustainable tourism development (dimensioned by both socio-cultural sustainability and Policy & Institutional framework) and Trade Facilitation (proxied by tourism trade Linkages) in Nigeria and the Caribbean. The Leiper's theory was behind the study whereas the philosophical posture was positivism. The ex post facto research design was adopted and the secondary data collected from published reports, government statistics and databases in industry formed the basis of the analysis of the tourism and economic indicators across the two countries- Nigeria and the Caribbean. The study found out that socio-cultural sustainability was significantly linked with tourism trade linkages thus indicating that well-targeted festivals and cultural exchange efforts contributed towards trade facilitation. Policy & Institutional framework support was also positively and significantly related to tourism trade linkages, indicating that increased policies were associated with sustainable development of tourism and trade facilitation. There was a stronger policy-driven dimension to trade conversion in the Caribbean region compared to the infrastructure-led trade flows limited by the weak institutional facilitation of trade in Nigeria. The results of the study offer the conclusion that aligned tourism systems, proposed by Leiper, improve trade spillover effects and regional integration in emerging tourism economies. Therefore, as postulated by several researchers, it is recommended that policymakers and tourism managers enhance the enhancement of tourism driven trade through proper coordinated sustainable cultural integration including heritage music diplomacy. Songs such as "Swing low, sweet chariot." Based on a common African-Caribbean slave past, it should be a core built-in into tourism festivals and heritage routes, establish a common Joint Nigeria Caribbean Trade Facilitation Desk within the structure of AfCTFA and CARICOM to harmonise policies and institutions, prioritise connectivity infrastructure, move from community-based tourism to inclusive tourism and focus on income-generating backward links. These combined strategies will contribute effectively to creation of corporate linkages on local and international level to the achieve a win-win situation and effective tourism trade linkages.

**Keywords:** Leiper's Tourism Systems Theory; Sustainable Tourism Development; Trade Facilitation; Policy & Institutional Framework; Tourism Trade Linkages, Government Policy & Diplomatic Relations

## **1.0 Introduction**

Sustainable tourism is defined by the UN Environment Program and UN World Tourism Organization as tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities. Additionally, it refers to the environmental, economic and socio-cultural dimensions of tourism development, and a proper balance must be achieved between these three dimensions" in order to ensure its long-term sustainability. Shekhar (2024) postulated that Sustainable tourism development is a key nexus between economic development and environmental conservation that requires a delicate balance in the need to sustain the longevity of the tourism industry and the conservation of natural ecosystems.

In the same vein, OECD (2025) conjectured that Trade facilitation refers to the measures that streamline and simplify the technical and legal procedures for the products in the border. Furthermore, Kwaku et. al (2019) postulated that Institutional trade barriers are significant constraints to number of exports and imports. These barriers are multidimensional and they hamper the trade flows and trade performance of many developing countries, including the African countries (Olulu-Briggs & Sunday, 2021a; Olulu-Briggs & Sunday, 2021b). Therefore, the sustainable development of tourism has become a strategic strategy for economic restructuring, cultural reintegration, as well as integrating trade between Nigeria and the Caribbean. Building on the Afri-Caribbean Trade and Investment Forum held in Grenada in 2025, this study is aimed at examining the role that sustainable tourism development can play in facilitating the outcomes of the trade and deepen regional economic linkages in Nigeria and selected countries in the Caribbean. Specifically, the study aims to evaluate the role of socio-cultural sustainability, together with policy & institutional framework, in the tourism trade linkages in the regional value chain.

Similarly, Sonuc et.al (2020) in their research postulated that, the relationship of culture, tourism, and sustainability in other words, social or socio-cultural sustainability of tourism including sustainable cultural heritage management for tourism is basically constructed upon the vulnerable and sensitive issues related to people: their values, their history,

identity and living styles, their behaviours, attitudes, perceptions; their acceptance or rejection levels; and their emotions towards tourism. The socio-culturally sustainable tourism system is comprised of all these "people" issues given priority while ensuring the "well-being" and "quality of life" of all stakeholders being involved to some extent, in the exchange of tourism products and services. Airey et al. as cited in John (2019)'s study suggests that a policy can be described as a set of interrelated decisions (or in decisions) and actions (or inactions) formulated and implemented by the government and public authorities to deal with public problems, concerns, and opportunities. Furthermore, Malesi (2024) in her research postulated that the review has emphasised the importance of tourism policy & institutional framework for promoting sustainable tourism. The review highlights that the tourism and hospitality policy defines a decision-making process where every country has its unique set of policies with different sets of objectives, from which governance can be realised.

According to the United Nation Tourism Conference at Geneva (2013), there are many sectors in an economy that can be incorporated in the tourism value chain. Its promotion will require the building and management of hotels, restaurants, and other tourism-related facilities through backward linkages and the provision of basic services of the infrastructure, such as energy, telecommunications, and environmental services; agriculture, manufacture, and other support services. It can also establish a wide range of forward linkages with sectors which supply services to the tourists. These include financial, telecommunications, retail, recreational, cultural, personal, hospitality, security and health services. In addition, countries that are interested to boost their tourism industry will have to develop other tourism-supporting infrastructure like airports, proper roads, ports, hospitals, and banks that are necessary for providing access to high-quality services to make the tourism destination competitive.

Similarly, Ongutu (2023) treated the topic of tourism policy, planning and development with special attention on the issues of sustainability and inclusiveness and the fitting of regulations to the Kenya's tourism sector. Her work had to draw attention on persistent challenges including infrastructure deficits, weak institutional capacity, poor investment flows and socio-environmental issues on destination competitiveness. Despite these limitations, she highlighted that a set of well-structured tourism policies and strategic planning with models such as Sustainable Tourism Development Framework, Resource-Based View (RBV), Destination Marketing and Management (DMM) Model can lead to leap in tourism spurring economic growth, community participation, as well as preserving cultural and natural heritage. In a related perspective, Zakari et al. (2021) focused on analysing the expenditures by foreign resident and foreign tourist visitor to a nature-based destination in order to identify the differences in expenditure behaviour for the two groups and across peak or off-peak seasons based on individual socio-demographic profile, travel characteristic and perceived importance of the destination, where it was found that during peak season there are significant difference in the trend of expenditure behaviour, thus the segmentation of visitor and seasonal variations appear to have a huge influence in expenditure behaviour.

This study, therefore, aims at exploring the sustainable linkages of sustainable tourism development and trade facilitation in Nigeria and the Caribbean in providing insights into the roles and relevance of collaborative policies as well as socio-cultural sustainability directed at preserving cultural heritage and improving community participation in tourism investment and effective destination management in increasing economic growth, optimal visitor experience and enhancement of economic growth as well as bilateral trade and investment opportunities between the regions of the World.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the increasing recognition of tourism as a major driver of economic growth and trade in Nigeria and the Caribbean as well as their deeply rooted historical ties, the empirical understanding on how sustainable tourism development can be effectively linked with trade facilitation to maximally maximise economic benefits for the region as a whole is still poor. Challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, weak policy coordination, limited market information, weak destination campaign, as well as seasonal fluctuations in tourist flows continue to prevent the potential of tourism to boost trade, investment and sustainable development. Moreover, the variation in visitor behaviour, expenditure patterns and perceptions according to different regions point towards the need for tailored strategies that address both investment growth and optimization of trade taking place at the same time. This gap highlights the need for a systematic study of the processes by which tourism and trade can be integrated to promote mutually-beneficial interactions for the sake of Nigeria and the Caribbean.

## 1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study is designed to empirically examine the following in Nigeria and the Caribbean.

1. To review how socio-cultural sustainability shapes tourism–trade linkages.
2. To examine how policy and institutional frameworks enable tourism trade linkages.
3. To integrate theoretical perspectives explaining how sustainable tourism underpins cross-regional trade facilitation.

4. To examine the moderating role of Government policy & diplomatic relations on the relationship between sustainable tourism development and trade facilitation.

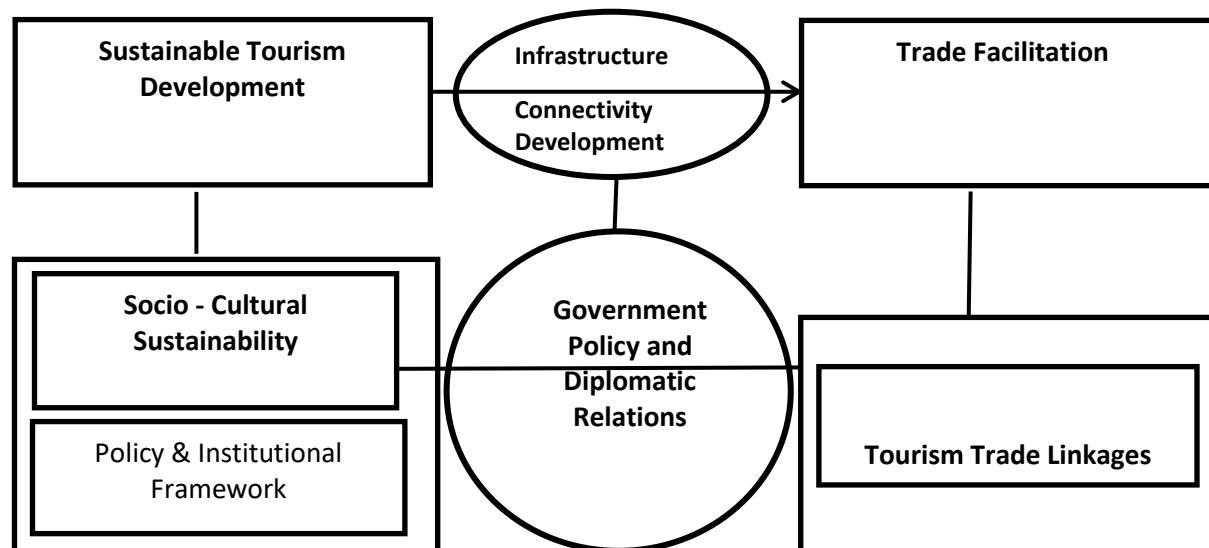
## 2.0 Literature Review

### 2.1 Theoretical Framework

This research is based on the Systems of Tourism by Leiper, which was propounded by Leiper Neil in the year 1979 is an Australian tourism scholar. Amayun (2025) postulates that Leiper defines tourism as a dynamic open system, which is made up of three major elements: tourist-generating region (TGR), transit route region (TRR) and the tourist destination region (TDR). Furthermore, Tandilo (2021) in his research posits that Leiper's tourism system is known as one of the simple systems and uses a geographical approach. In his system, Leiper identified the elements in a tourism system as follows: 1) a tourist; 2) a tourist destination area; 3) an area of origin of the traveller; 4) tourist transit routes between the tourist origin area and the tourist destination area; and 5) the travel and tourism industry (e.g. accommodations, transportation, agencies and organisations providing services and products for tourists).

Mcchercher (2021) in his research paper argues that, although Leiper's (1992) idea has been influential in the building of the various models of tourism, the authors feel that much of his work has not gained the attention due to it. One of the reasons is the fact that many of his ideas have not been backed by empirical evidence, with Hall and Page (2010) stating that empirical evidence is frequently drawn from observation/ personal experience. To date little or not empirical research has tested whether tourists indeed operate in unique tourism systems or show broadly similar behaviour patterns, especially as far as in-destination consumption is concerned. The combination of the theoretical lens of Leiper is fundamental to this research as it supports a systemic justification for modelling policy alignment and institutional support as causal factors to trade facilitation indicators. Therefore, Leiper's Tourism Systems Theory serves the purpose of supplying the philosophical basis and structural logic for analysing the association between sustainable tourism development and policy alignment in their impacts on tourism-driven trade growth and integration of regional value chains in Nigeria and the Caribbean.

### 2.2. Conceptual Framework



**Source:** The figure above shows the Conceptual framework of the relationship between Sustainable Tourism Development and Trade Facilitation in Nigeria and the Caribbean.

**Figure 2.1: Sustainable Tourism Development and Trade Facilitation in Nigeria and the Caribbean.**

## **2.2.1 Socio-Cultural Sustainability**

CESSE (2025) implies that Socio-cultural sustainability implies maintaining and promoting local cultures, such as beliefs, practises, and traditions that exist in the host destination. It also ensures that members of the host community have access to sufficient resources to ensure they can keep their families healthy and secure.

## **2.2.2 Trade Facilitation**

This is the set of policies, procedures and initiatives to facilitate, harmonise and quicken the movement of goods and services across borders. It means better customs practises, less bureaucratic bottlenecks, better infrastructure and logistics and more transparency to lower transaction costs and be more efficient in international trade. In relation to Nigeria and the Caribbean, trade facilitation aims to promote economic growth through enhancing trade flows, attracting investment, and providing a stronger connexion between the development of tourism and regional trade.

## **2.2.3 Tourism Trade Linkages**

Tourism trade linkages refer to the linkages between the tourism industry and other industries in the economy, and includes those referring to tourism industry's positive demand for goods and services from other industries (backward linkages) as well as to the provision of goods and services from the tourism industry to other industries (forward linkages). These linkages quantify the extent of spillover of tourist spending on the domestic economy that supports various sectors, such as agriculture, manufacturing, retail and transportation, and are critical for economic diversification and development.

## **2.2.4 Policy Coordination and Institutional Backup**

Refers to coordinated development and implementation of laws, regulations and strategies among the relevant government agencies, tourism authorities and institutions to ensure that objectives of tourism development and trade facilitation is successfully achieved. Policy alignment ensures alignment between national, regional and local tourism and trade policies and institutional support through the necessary governance structures, capacity and resources to implement the aforementioned policies in an efficient way. Together, they facilitate the development of sustainable tourism growth, support investment, improve trade opportunities, and contribute to the competitiveness of a set of destinations in general.

## **2.2.5 Sustainable Development of Tourism**

Sustainable tourism development is development of tourism in a way that satisfies the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to satisfy their own needs. It balances between economic growth, social equity and environmental protection by meeting the needs of visitors, the industry and host communities, and minimising negative impacts and utilising resources efficiently. The underlying principle is to ensure that in the long term tourism is beneficial and will continue to be viable in terms of protecting the environment, respecting local cultures and the support of local economies.

## **2.2.6 Government Policy and Diplomatic Relations**

Government policy is the whole strategy adopted in a country to direct its dealings with other countries, but diplomatic relations are the way in which this policy is conducted in practise through peaceful dialogue and negotiation and the work of diplomats. In short, the policy of government is to set the objectives and diplomacy is the main tool that is used to achieve the goals of policy.

## **2.3 Empirical Review**

### **Development of Tourism in the Caribbean**

Liew (2023) in his study claimed that most Caribbean countries are heavily dependent on tourism, and the travel and tourism industry has a substantial contribution of more than 39 billion US dollars towards the GDP region in 2021. However, the pandemic of coronavirus has given us a good lesson of the vulnerability of this sector. In 2020, the Caribbean lost a considerable share of its GDP as a result of the impact of the pandemic, and it was mainly due to the fact that tourism, which accounts for 14 percent of the GDP, plummeted by two-thirds. As a lifeline to many Caribbean countries, tourism is not just important to the nature of their economies but supports jobs as well as food and recreational opportunities. In fact, tourism represents a significant portion of the economies of many countries that make up the Caribbean, from 7 percent to a whopping 90 percent of GDP in some nations. It also creates direct employment for almost 12 percent of the population and indirectly in another 20 percent. Fortunately, we're seeing positive trends in the recovery of tourism with some Caribbean nations even exceeding their 2019 records. For instance, by the end of 2022, tourist visits to the Caribbean had a stellar growth of 50% compared to the other year 2021.

### **Development of Tourism in Nigeria**

In the same vein, the Nigerian Consulate Atlanta (2025) in their publication postulated that Nigeria is an amazing country that is rich in cultural heritage, natural beauty and exciting attractions. From teeming metropolitan cities to serene little villages, the country has a great variety of tourist locations. In its capital, Lagos, as the biggest city in Nigeria, you can find African markets and contemporary architecture, as well as diverse and rich nightlife. Abuja, the capital of the country, is impressed with its government buildings and cultural centres. For nature lovers, there are a number of national parks in Nigeria where you can witness different kinds of wild animals, as well as go on some exciting safaris. Yankari National Park and Olumo Rock Wildlife Sanctuary are places for ecotourism and watching the animals in their natural habitat.

Cultural tourism in Nigeria is also booming. Museums like the National museum in Lagos will take you way back in time into the country's rich history and art. Traditional festivals are held all over Nigeria that will make you touch the life and feel the criticism of the local people.

### **Sustainable Tourism Development**

The World Bank (2025) report evaluated the current performance of tourism in the Caribbean and in the light of the above new trends, identifies possible pathways and policies for sustainable growth over the future in 3 targeted segments. These segments were chosen to comprise the traditional markets of cruise and all-inclusive resort accommodation and new opportunities in the high-value segment of adventure tourism. Cruise and all-inclusive resorts remain priorities of governments as they offer jobs, attract foreign direct investment (FDI), and they are the biggest generators of regional demand (WTTC, 2022; CTO, 2020). However, influence and market power as well in these segments have also produced environmental and social risks and impaired tourism diversification. Adventure tourism provides a potential source to add-value and diversity to the rich endowment of natural and cultural assets and to increase the value proposition and local economic impact of the traditional markets. Additionally, it can build a new ecosystem of suppliers appealing to a completely different market segment of high-spending tourists. Selection of the segments was based on the analysis of the current impacts, growth projections, and scales of environmental and social externalities that examined the importance and value of the segments to the Caribbean. It also incorporated feedback from consultations with key stakeholders and correspondence to national policies and trends. Ajani et. al (2018) researched the demand of international tourism in Nigeria. The researcher investigated why Nigeria lacks behind other African countries, regardless of the possible embedded as a tourism hotspot. There is a need, therefore, for Nigeria to provide demand driven tourism products to ensure visitors will come to Nigeria for tourism offer.

### **Trade Facilitation**

The Afreximbank Communiqué and final remarks, 2025 mentioned successful wave of the Fourth AfriCaribbean Trade and Investment Forum (ACTIF2025), held in Grenada between 28-29 July 2025 around the theme "Resilience and Transformation - Enhancing Africa-Caribbean Economic Cooperation in an Era of Global Uncertainty", was reaffirming the historical, cultural and economic links between Africa and the Caribbean. The forum stressed on solving structural barriers in the form of poor connectivity, regulatory misalignments and finance accessibility to bolster trade, investment and cross-regional value chains in strategic sectors like tourism, agriculture, energy, infrastructure, manufacturing and the creative sectors. Key outcomes included the support of an Africa-Caribbean Free Trade Arrangement, efforts to forge direct air and maritime links and trade and investment deals worth more than US\$300 million. ACTIF2025 featured the role of SMEs, women and youth-led enterprises, and AfriCaribbean business council in facilitating sustainable business linkages, facilitating trade, and regional economic integration.

Nwokejiobi (2025) through a paper titled "Exploring Trade and Tourism: Impacts and Opportunities between Africa and the Caribbean", presented at the 4th AfriCaribbean Trade and Investment Forum (ACTIF2025) held in Grenada, explored the interaction between tourism as well as hospitality and flows of trade between Africa and the Caribbean. It indicated the demand for goods and services through tourism development, the investment generated, and the strengthening of cross-regional value chains in the tourism industry (including hospitality, transport, creative industries and agriculture). Using empirical understandings from the forum, such as trade deals worth over US\$300 million and programmes to improve connectivity and regulatory alignment showed the tangible links between tourism activities and trade facilitation. This evidence directly relates the relevance of sustainable tourism development as a catalyst for the promotion of regional economic integration, investment and sustainable growth, which directly relates to the objectives of this research on Nigeria-Caribbean economic cooperation.

### **Socio-Cultural Sustainability**

To further accentuate and highlight the potential tourist destinations and socio-cultural sustainability and tourist trades linkage in Nigeria, Pepple 2022 in her research postulated that Bonny is a tourist destination with beautiful tourist attractions and rich cultural heritage. Bonny was a heavy player in the Atlantic slave trade from the 16th to 19th Centuries due to its coastlines and location. Bonny is also known to have the British Consulate Building in Nigeria which is now rebuilt to be the Bonny Consulate. Some of the artefacts and tourist products in Bonny include: Canon guns, Proto-Cathedral in Nigeria (1889), Bishop Crowther's Chapel, Crowther's boat, the Holy Bible given by Queen Victoria England to the King of Bonny in 1861, Ancient wells, Bust of King William Dappa Pepple, Manilas (ancient currency), etc. Other tourist attractions include: Finima Nature Park, NLNG Ra Beach, Park Community and Light-house Beaches, Love Garden and Night Life in Bonny. Some of the seasonal activities which draw both tourists to the Island are: Bonny Fresh Fish Festival (Bonfest), Finima Beach Party, Bonny Cultural Carnival, Bonny Marathon and Christmas Funfair among others. These are tourist products which could be harnessed to a world standard to keep domestic tourism going.

According to the study that identified cultural resources in the Caribbean to boost sustainable tourism, it states that among the resources identified in the study are the crafts and folk art of the village of Noailles in Croix de Bouquets in Haiti; the mayan archaeological site of Caracol which was once the largest of the Maya centres in Belize; the music festivals in Santo Domingo; the Shirley Heights lookout nature trail which overlooks the harbours of English and Falmouth in Antigua and Barbuda; the colourful masked ball in Montserrat with rituals dating back to the mid-nineteenth century; or the Culturama Nevis Festival in Saint

The study recognises the potential of these and other cultural resources to boost sustainable tourism in the Caribbean and contribute to the economic growth of countries whose economies highly depend on the development of this sector. Meaning integrating culture into the tourism offer, the report argues, not only promotes the long-term preservation of the Caribbean heritage, but can also create an attractive and sustainable destination for future generations.

### **Policy and Institutional Setting**

Bello & Bello, (2017) in his study postulated that, major among factors identified by experts to have been responsible ranges from Nigeria's underdeveloped tourism infrastructure, weak tourism policy thrust and institutions, currency volatility, terrorism, climate change, the current state of the Nigeria tourism resources and its development variance at the various destinations, and low human capital capabilities on tourism issues. Empirical evidence highlights the vital nexuses between the sustainable development of tourism and trade facilitation to improve regional economic integration and economic growth. Studies like Hassan Zakari et al. (2021) show that visitor spending patterns, driven by sociodemographic and travel characteristics, differ between peak and off-peak seasons, signalling the need for the use of specific tourism strategies.

### **3.0 Methodology**

The present study adopted an Ex Post Facto research design and secondary data collected from published reports, government statistics and industries database formed the basis of analysis. The data collected included destination promotion effectiveness, international tourist arrivals, Contribution to GDP, employment and tourism export receipts in Nigeria and other African Countries from the database of the World Bank, World Travel and Tourism Council, WTTC, United Nation's World Tourism Organisation, UNWTO, and, the World Economic Forum, WEF. The descriptive statistical tools such as tables were used to present the data collected. Further data was collected from World Bank records to cover Tourism Driven Trade Expansion in select of Caribbean States, mostly impacted during the period of the Covid Pandemic. The ex post facto is congruent to the positivist research philosophy. The positivist research paradigm is characterised by a reliance on deductive reasoning.

The population of the study was select Countries in Africa and select states in the Caribbean.

**4.0 ANALYSIS AND RESULTS****Table 1**

**Effectiveness of Marketing, International Tourist Arrivals, International Inbound Receipts, Contribution of Tourism to GDP and Employment per annual for African countries in 2017**

Country	Effectiveness of Marketing	International tourist arrivals	International inbound receipts(\$m)	Contribution of tourism to GDP (\$)	Contribution of tourism to employment
Morocco	4.8	10,176,762	5,852.80	7,735.40	731,525
Egypt	3.5	9,139,104	6,065.10	14,482.80	1,110,550
Tunisia	3.6	5,359,309	1,380.80	2,524.50	185,290
Algeria	2.7	1,710,000	307.7	5,887.40	327,306
South Africa	4.9	8,903,773	8,234.70	9,339.90	702,824
Namibia	5.2	1,388,000	378	373.9	28,792
Botswana	5	1,528,000	948.3	619.1	28,399
Zambia	4.1	932,000	660.1	627.3	94,213
Zimbabwe	3.4	2,056,588	886	703	180,028
Lesotho	5.5	320,000	34.4	114.9	34,402
Mauritius	5.5	1,151,252	1,431.70	1,321.00	58,641
Kenya	5.2	1,114,100	723	2,296.00	592,300
Tanzania	4.4	1,104,000	2,230.60	1,906.10	386,427
Rwanda	5.9	987,000	317.8	261.3	59,036
Uganda	4.1	1,303,000	1,149.00	920	464,305
Ethiopia	3.9	864,000	394.9	2,504.20	1,013,860
Madagascar	3.9	244,321	574	548	208,360
Mozambique	3.6	1,525,000	192.8	469.7	280,408
Malawi	3	805,000	36.8	230.7	205,034
Congo, DR	2.1	191,000	0.1	236.2	78,319
Burundi	3.2	131,000	2.2	68.9	37,829
Cape Verde	4.4	519,722	351.3	275.5	33,741
Cote d' Ivoire	4.4	1,441,000	184.2	707.3	100,813
Senegal	3.7	1,006,600	423	756.6	274,451
Gambia	4.8	135,000	120	69.2	49,063
Gabon	2.6	187,332	9	142.3	3,943
Ghana	3.7	879,000	818.8	1,189.40	292,042
Cameroun	3.1	812,000	450	899.1	141,724
Benin	2.7	255,000	154	204.6	53,552
Nigeria	2.4	1,255,000	403.9	8,282.80	650,836
Mali	4.6	159,000	212	441.4	78,335
Sierra Leone	3.1	23,798	23	81.1	18,866
Mauritania	3.9	30,000	29	0	0
Chad	2.7	120,000	25.2	156.2	20,468

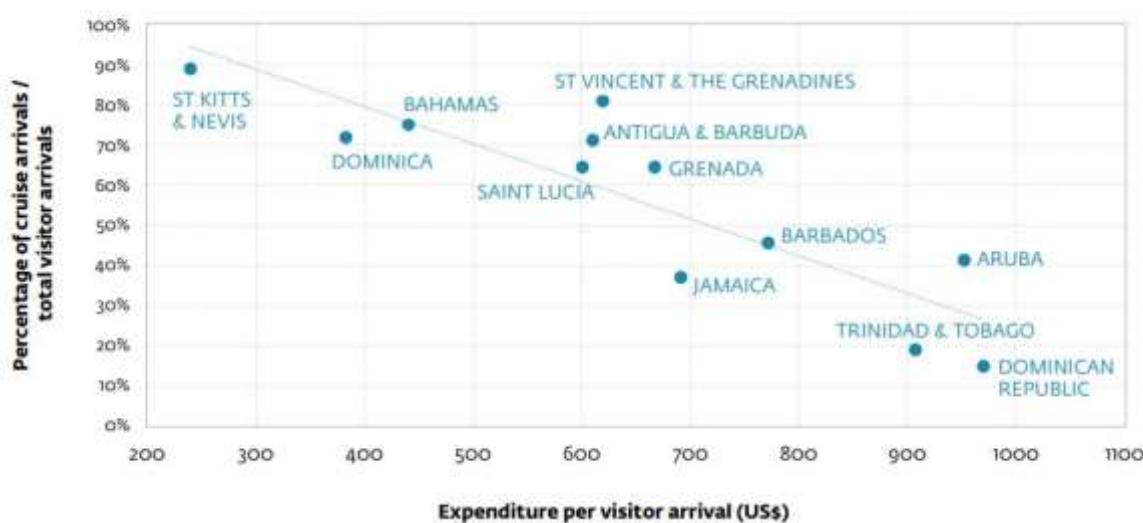
Source: World Economic Forum (2017) & World Bank (2017). The Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017. World Economic Forum Publications

Table 1 above indicates the value of effectiveness of marketing, international tourist arrival, international inbound receipt, contribution of tourism to GDP and employment annually for African countries by 2017 report of World Economic Forum. From the table, Nigeria do not score well in the effectiveness to market to attract tourist, with a score of 2.4 out of 7 which is below average mean and number 127th. Top ranked destinations in Africa had better performance than Nigeria as regards destination marketing to attract tourists to their destinations. The best ranked African countries in Global ranking in 2017 are Rwanda (5.9), Mauritius (5.5), Lesotho (5.5), Kenya (5.2), Namibia (5.2), Botswana (5.0), South Africa (4.9) and Morocco (4.8). The success of destination marketing in these countries has contributed to a positive impact on the number of arrivals to their countries, and also to an improvement of the tourism receipts and jobs.

Nigeria attracted 1,255,000 tourists which is a sign of an increase from the previous years but not to be compared to top African countries who have articulated destination marketing programmes and proper packaging of their tourism industry like South Africa, Cape Verde, Uganda, Botswana, Namibia, Tunisia, Egypt and Algeria. On international inbound receipts, the only one recorded by Nigeria is \$403.9 million against the receipts of South Africa (\$8.2 billion), Egypt (\$6.0 billion), Morocco (\$5.8 billion), Mauritius (\$1.4 billion) and Tunisia (\$1.3 billion). This is an indication that a well-developed tourism sector could be an alternative source of revenue to a nation, especially developing countries like Nigeria, with various forms of economic problems, such as recession due to fluctuation of crude oil prices in the world market.

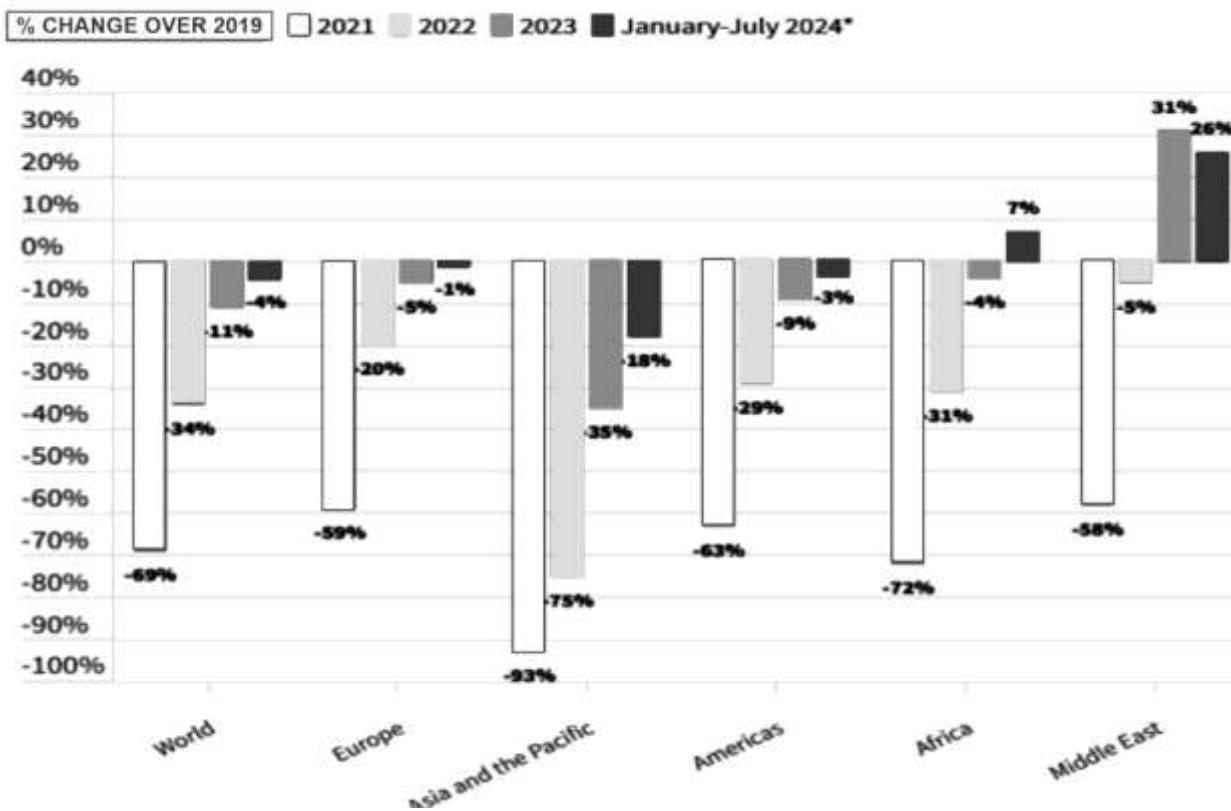
Tourism is an important source of employment generation in most developing countries. From table 1, it was noted that the tourism in Nigeria could contribute 650,836 jobs for the year 2017 in the area of tourism competitiveness value of Morocco (731,525), Egypt (1,100,550), South Africa (702,824) and Ethiopia (1,013,860). This shows that if the tourism sector in Nigeria is properly developed and harnessed, it would help in the reduction of the unemployment rate in Nigeria. Okocha et al. (2021).

**Figure 20. Relationship between Share of Cruise Visitors and Expenditure per Arrival<sup>121</sup>**



### Challenges Facing Tourism in SIDS

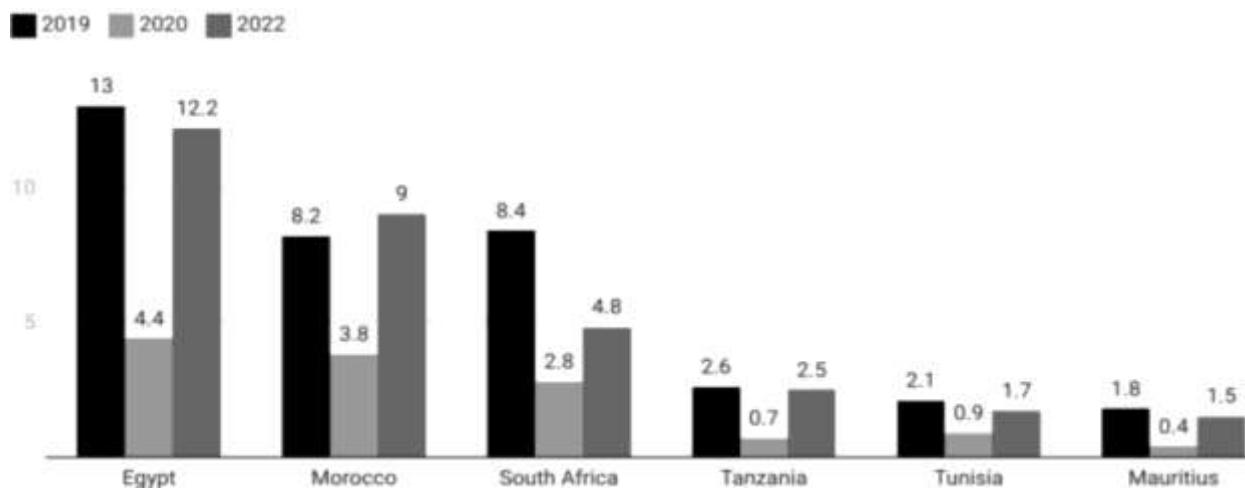
Over-reliance on international tour operators and cruise visitors makes the sector vulnerable to failures that will not build local communities through growth and development. In the Caribbean, cruise passengers constitute almost 59 percent of total visitors, but account for less than 10 percent of total expenditure.<sup>122</sup> On average, the cruise passenger spent US\$73 per visit in the local economy, whereas the average expenditure is US\$1,700 spent by a regular tourist.<sup>123</sup> Not surprisingly, the negative correlation between spending per visitor arrival and the proportion of visitors who are cruise passengers is therefore evident (Figure 2). Further, countries with a higher share of cruise visitor arrivals (as a portion of overall arrivals) also seem to have seen greater GDP declines in 2020 as a result of the outbreak of Covid-19, and slower recoveries in 2021, according to UNWTO and World Bank Group data.

**Table 2:: International Tourism Arrivals (% change over 2019).****Source: UNWTO (2024)**

Globally, the performance of the tourism industry is well on its way to recover what was lost during the pandemic. Report has it that the performance of international tourism ended in the year 2023 by 88% of the pre-pandemic, with an estimated performance of 1.3 billion international arrivals (UNWTO, 2024). The Middle East was the leader in terms of relative recovery to beat pre-pandemic levels with arrivals put at 26% above 2019 as of the year of July 2024. The performance of the African tourism sector did step up, to reach 7% recovery from the number of visitors that arrived before Covid-19 pandemic. However, Europe, the Americas and Asia / Pacific are also taking a conscious effort to come out of the pre-pandemic levels as indicated in Figure 3.

In terms of tourism receipt, the international tourism receipts was US\$ 1.4 trillion in 2023 hence, put at about 93% of the USD\$ 1.5 trillion earned by destinations in 2019. The total export revenues from tourism including passenger transport is estimated to be worth US\$ 1.6 trillion in 2023, which is close to 95% of the US\$1.7 trillion recorded in 2019. Several destinations reported strong growths in international tourism receipts in the course of the first ten to twelve months of 2023, above in some cases growths in arrivals. Strong demand for outbound travel was also reported by several large source markets within the period, many of which were above 2019 levels (TTR Weekly, 2024).

In terms of international tourist receipts, the rank of Egypt in Africa is the highest recording USD\$ 12.2 billion in revenue from tourism as of 2022 (Bethel, 2024). Morocco earned US\$9 billion, South Africa (US\$4.8 billion), Tanzania (US\$2.5 billion), Tunisia (US\$1.7 billion) and Mauritius (US\$ 1.5 billion) in the year 2022 as shown in table 1 (Bethel, 2024).

**Table 3: African countries with the highest international tourist receipts of post-COVID in USD\$ Billion.**

Source: UNWTO 2024

Though, not captured among the top six countries in terms of tourist receipts, Nigeria earned US\$404 million put at 1.2% of the entire international tourist receipts accrued to the Sub-Saharan Africa (UNWTO, 2022). The index in the above information shows a poor performance of the tourism industry in Nigeria.

## 5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

### 5.1 Conclusion

The study shows that sustainable development of tourism that is characterised by strong socio-cultural sustainability, policy & institutional framework connectivity, significantly boosts trade facilitation as measured by the tourism trade linkages between Nigeria and the Caribbean. Empirical evidence shows that sustainability led socio-cultural initiatives in Nigeria has a stimulating effect on tourism trade linkages but its effectiveness is moderated by lower policy integration and institutional coordination. On the other hand, the Caribbean models display a high level of institutional efficiency of conversion from tourist activities into export revenues and value chain integration of the region. Aligning socio-cultural sustainability, policy, and institutional mechanisms with the Tourism Systems Theory of Leiper is important to maximising the economic spillovers of tourism, promoting investment and strengthening regional integration.

### 5.2 Recommendations

Strengthen tourism driven trade through the collective integration of cultural and tourism trade linkages, including heritage music diplomacy. Songs such as Swing Low, Sweet Chariot with commonalities in the slavery past between most African-Caribbean populations should be ingrained in tourism festivals and heritage routes as cultural capital with the capacity to generate both identity-based tourism demand and creative industry export opportunities.

Establish joint Nigeria-Caribbean tourism trade facilitation desk under AfCFTA and CARICOM frameworks for harmonizing policies, and improving institutional coordination and facilitating trade procedure linked to tourism related activities, including inclusive SMEs, women and youth enterprises.

Focus on connectivity infrastructure as well as air, maritime, logistics, and digital platforms to connect tourism circuits with regional value chains and instead implement adaptive monitoring systems to respond to variations in tourist seasonality and maximize export earnings from tourism-based trade flows.

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