

# AITEC World Unveils Two Landmark Global Tourism Events, Urges African Integration Through Tourism, Trade and Investment

*The Africa-International Tourism and Economic Council (AITEC) unveils two major international tourism events to strengthen Africa's position in global tourism*

COTONOU, BENIN, August 3, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [The Africa-International Tourism and Economic Council](#) (AITEC World) has unveiled two major international tourism events aimed at boosting Africa's tourism sector while promoting [investment](#), trade, regional integration and sustainable economic growth.



Aitec President, Bouraima

The announcement was made during an international press conference held on July 23, 2026, at the Benin Royal Hotel, Cotonou, under the theme, "Tourism as a Catalyst for Global Sustainable Economic Development."

The event attracted government officials, diplomats, tourism leaders, investors, development partners and media representatives from across Africa and beyond.

AITEC World announced that its 3rd Official Global Launch will be held on November 2, 2026, at the Hilton London during the World Travel Market (WTM) London 2026. It was also confirmed that the 2nd Africa Tourism Dialogue (ATD 2026) will take place from November 12 to 14 at the headquarters of the African Union and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, as the official tourism component of Africa Celebrates 2026.

The conference also featured presentations by Amb. Kazeem Balogun, AITEC World's Vice President for Communications and International Relations, who outlined the organisation's vision and the importance of the Africa Tourism Dialogue.

AITEC World said it is positioning tourism as a driver of economic growth, investment, trade,

regional integration, [innovation](#), cultural diplomacy and stronger public-private partnerships. It added that tourism remains one of Africa's most powerful tools for creating jobs, attracting investment and accelerating development.

Delivering the keynote address, AITEC World President, Amb. Dine Bouraima, described the conference as the start of a movement to reshape Africa's tourism and economic future.

"Today, we are not gathered simply to announce two events. We are here to launch a movement for a better-connected Africa, where Africans travel more freely, investors move with greater ease, businesses trade without unnecessary barriers, and tourism becomes a true catalyst for sustainable economic development."

He said the London Global Launch and Africa Tourism Dialogue share one goal: positioning tourism as a catalyst for investment, trade, job creation, international cooperation and sustainable economic development.

Amb. Bouraima noted that Africa is home to nearly 1.5 billion people and is expected to reach 2.5 billion by 2050. He also highlighted the opportunities created by the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the world's largest free trade area by participating countries.

He said the world recorded more than 1.52 billion international tourist arrivals in 2025, while Africa welcomed nearly 100 million visitors. The continent's tourism sector is expected to contribute about US\$241 billion to the economy in 2026 and support more than 31 million jobs.

Despite this potential, he said Africans still face major travel barriers.

"We continue to make travel difficult. We continue to have some of the highest airfares in the world. We continue to require visas from our own African brothers and sisters. How can we speak of economic integration when travelling between two African countries is sometimes more difficult than travelling to another continent?"

Quoting African industrialist Aliko Dangote, he added:

"If somebody like myself needs 38 visas to travel across Africa, how can I invest?"

He said the remark reflects the reality many Africans face, stressing that easier movement is essential for stronger trade, investment and regional integration.

Amb. Bouraima welcomed ECOWAS' decision to reduce air transport costs in West Africa and commended President Alassane Ouattara and the Government of Côte d'Ivoire for being the first to implement it. He urged other member states to follow while calling for wider reforms across the continent.

He also praised Benin, Rwanda, Seychelles, The Gambia, Ghana, Togo and Kenya for adopting visa-free or more liberal entry policies for Africans. He said AITEC World hopes at least 27 African countries will fully implement visa-free travel for all African citizens by 2031.

“When Africans move freely, investment increases. Trade expands. Tourism grows. Businesses flourish. Jobs are created. Our continent becomes stronger.”

Reaffirming the organisation’s vision, he said:

“Tourism is not an end in itself. Tourism is the gateway to investment, trade, economic cooperation and sustainable development.”

AITEC World is an international organisation that promotes tourism as a driver of sustainable development by connecting governments, investors, development partners and the private sector to unlock Africa’s tourism and economic potential through investment, trade and innovation

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