



AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK GROUP

REGIONAL INTEGRATION COORDINATION OFFICE



TRALAC ANNUAL CONFERENCE UPDATE ON THE AFRICA VISA OPENNESS INDEX NAIROBI, KENYA

Presented By:
ZODWA F. MABUZA
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OUTLINE

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Africa Snapshot: Rebounding After Shocks

Visa Fees and Processing Times

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A closer look at the top 5....



QUOTE

'In order to improve the condition of mankind, all men (and women) must be given the certainty and security through the exchange of safeguards, the assurance of prosperity through an exchange of resources, the reality of freedom through the free movement of information, persons and ideas..'

Antoine Pinay

Former Prime Minister of France



Background

AGENDA 2063: The Africa we want

We aspire that by 2063, Africa shall:

- Be a United Africa;
- Have world class, integrative infrastructure that criss-crosses the continent;
- Have dynamic and mutually beneficial links with her Diaspora
- Be a continent with seamless borders, and management of cross border resources through dialogue.
- ***Africa shall be a continent where the free movement of people, capital, goods and services will result in significant increases in trade and investments amongst African countries rising to unprecedented levels and strengthen Africa's place in global trade***



African
Union

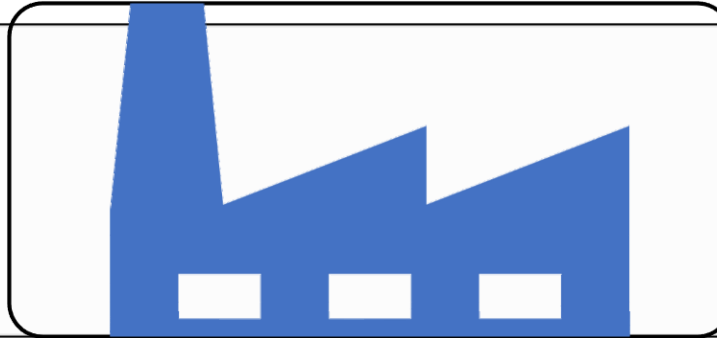


Background

Continues: Latest Development on Agenda 2063

- Protocol on the Free Movement of People
- The African Continental Free Trade Area
- Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM)
- REC Protocols on the Free Movement of People

Objectives of AVOI



- Track progress made by African Govts on visa policy reforms
- Encourage removal of obstacles impeding travel within the continent
- Ensure reciprocity on visa issuance across countries
- Promote the mobility of talent across Africa

- Promote Trade, Investment and Innovation
- Facilitation of travel contributes to increased trade, investment, innovation and promoted stronger connections between countries and citizens

Agenda 2063 – Aspiration 2 on the Africa We want:

Integrated Continent, politically united based on the ideals of Pan Africanism and the vision of Africa's Renaissance

Introduction of the African Passport in 2016



Methodology

Sources of Data

- IATA; and
- Official Country Websites

Periodicity of Data Collection

- Usually between July and August – start off and cut off dates

Category of Weight

- Visa Required (0)
- Visa on Arrival (0.8)
- No visa (1)



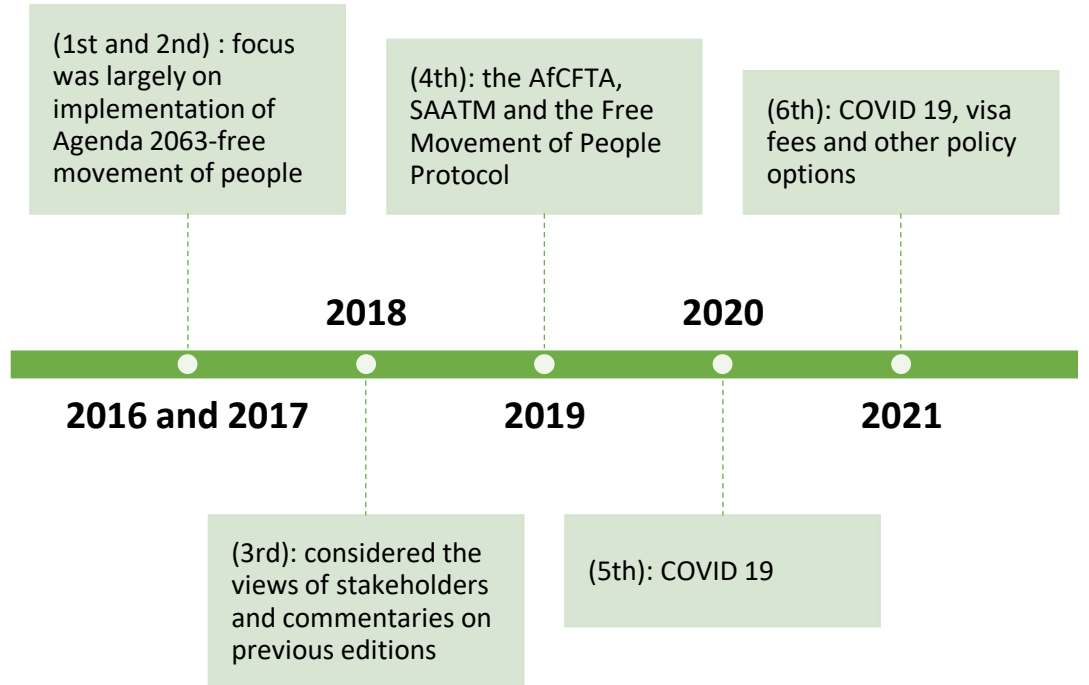
Methodology

Index category indicators based on 54 African countries:

- Number of countries from whose citizens a visa is required as a % of total number of countries.
- Number of countries whose citizens can get a visa on arrival as a % of total number of countries.
- Number of countries from whose citizens no visa is required as a % of total number of countries.
- A country's score is calculated by adding the results from all three indicators: $[(\% \text{ of visa required} \times 0) + (\% \text{ of visa on arrival} \times 0.8) + (\% \text{ of no visa} \times 1)] / 100 = \text{country visa openness score}.$



Themes for Previous Editions





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The 2021 AVOI

Headlines

- 24 million Africans have been fully vaccinated so far – about 2% of the continent's population
- Two African airlines – Ethiopian Airlines and RwandAir – are piloting the IATA Travel Pass for travellers to store and manage certifications for COVID-19 tests or vaccines.
- More than 15 African countries and regions have been awarded the World Travel & Tourism Council's SafeTravels™ stamp, which recognizes the adoption of global health and hygiene.



Overall

- Average visa fee for Africans traveling on the continent: USD 63
- Range of visa fees, depending on the length of stay: USD 12 up to USD 250
- Average processing time for issuing a visa: 72 hours (3 days)
- Range of processing times where shown: 1-2 days to 10 days



Safe Travels™ Stamp, Travel Pass and eVisas

The WTTC Safe Travels™ Stamp

- More than 15 African countries and regions have received the World Travel & Tourism Council's SafeTravels™ stamp.

The IATA Travel Pass

- The airline industry's travel pass allows passengers to manage travel documentation digitally and seamlessly. Two African airlines - Ethiopian Airlines and RwandAir are piloting the IATA Travel Pass for travellers to store and manage certifications for COVID-19 tests or vaccines.

eVisas

- Make it easier for people to practice social distancing, streamline the visa application process, open doors for travellers unable to visit a visa bureau in person, and save time.



Visa Openness Findings, 2021

Three Countries with Visa-Free for All African Visitors

- The Gambia
- Benin
- Seychelles

Important to Note:

- 1 African country (Comoros) offers a visa on arrival to all Africans (2 countries in 2020, 3 in 2019, 4 in 2018 and 2017, and 3 in 2016).



Visa Openness Findings, 2021

Access overview

- countries dropped in their rankings.
- temporary measures in most countries, largely meant to manage and contain the spread of COVID-19
- Only 4/54 countries offer liberal access (visa free or visa on arrival) to all Africans, down from 11 countries in prior years.
- Visa needed to travel to 51% of other African countries – up from 46% in 2020.
- Visa on arrival in 24% of other African countries – down from 28% in 2020.
- No visa to travel to 25% of other African countries – down from 26% in 2020.



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Visa Openness Findings, 2021

Africa's Top 10 / Africa's Top 20

- Namibia, Sierra Leone, and Tanzania joined the top 20 performers in 2021.
- The average score of the top 10 countries has risen since 2016 (0.903 in 2021, 0.861 in 2016).
- Even though the average score of the top 20 countries dropped in 2021 (0.825 in 2021, down from 0.858), scores have trended upwards since 2016
- 11 of the top 20 performers have signed the Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons.
- 11 of the top 20 performers have ratified the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement.
- 12 of the top 20 countries have signed up to the Single African Air Transport Market.



Visa Openness Findings, 2021



Regional Overview, 2021

- 9 of the 20 most visa-open countries are in West Africa.
- 6 of the 20 most visa-open countries are in East Africa.
- 4 of the 20 most visa-open countries are in Southern Africa.
- 1 of the 20 most visa-open countries is in North Africa.
- Central Africa is not represented in the top 20 most visa-open countries

Important to note:

- 2021 saw a slight regression in visa openness within the continent's regional economic communities, whose average score fell to 0.417 in 2021 from 0.483 in 2020.
- 2021 saw a slight regression in visa openness within the continent's regional economic communities (RECs), whose average score fell to 0.417 in 2021 from 0.483 in 2020.



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Visa Openness Findings, 2021

Reciprocity, 2021

- **Open reciprocity:** The practice of two countries reciprocating each other's open visa policy fell by 1 percentage point in 2021, from 20% to 19%.
- **Closed reciprocity:** Two countries applying similarly restrictive visa policies for each other's citizens - rose by 5 percentage points, from 27% to 32%.
- 90% of EAC's members reciprocate each others' open visa policies
- Among Africa's RECs, EAC, ECOWAS, SADC, and AMU practice open reciprocity the most.

RECs Visa Reciprocity

- EAC=90%
- ECOWAS=84%
- SADC=68%
- AMU=60%



Visa Openness Findings, 2021

eVisas

- 24 African countries (44%) of the continent offer eVisas for Africans - up from 9 in 2016).
- 12 countries introduced eVisas in the last five years.
- 9 of the AVOI's top 20 performers offer an eVisa.
- Over 80% of countries offering eVisas are in East, West, and Southern Africa.



Overview: 2016-2021

Visa Openness Progress, 2016 – 2021

- 39 countries improved or maintained their AVOI score.
- 9 of the top-performing countries improved their AVOI score.
- 10 countries that made the most progress on the AVOI now offer eVisas.
- Over 80% of countries that made the most progress are low-income or lower-middle-income countries.

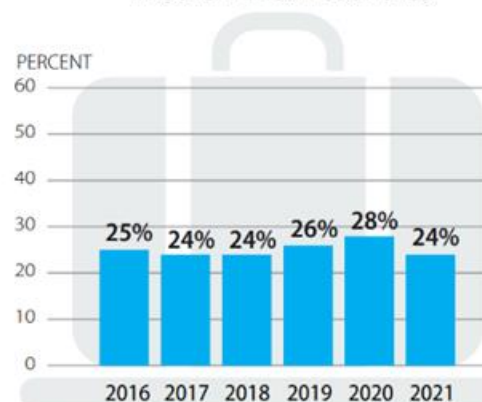


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Change in visa openness scores, 2016–2021

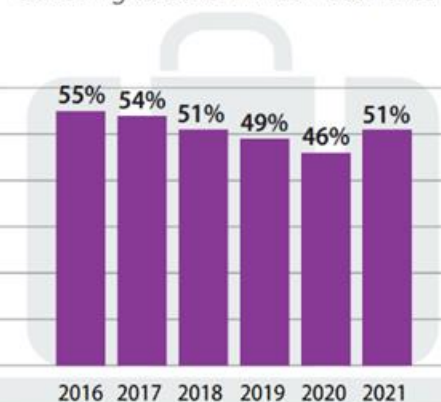
Africans can obtain a visa on arrival
in other African countries



Africans don't need a visa
to travel to other African countries



Africans need a visa before
travelling to other African countries



Overview: 2016-2021



Visa Openness Findings, 2021

Countries that Progressed the most Since 2016

- **In West Africa:** Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone
- **In Southern Africa:** Angola, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, São Tomé e Príncipe, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe
- **In Central Africa:** Central African Republic, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon
- **In East Africa:** Rwanda, Tanzania
- **In North Africa:** Egypt, Tunisia



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Visa Openness Findings, 2021

Case Study 1: Namibia

- Namibia rose 21 places in 2021, moving into the AVOI's top 20 countries (Rank 19)
- 72% of African citizens can enter Namibia visa-free or obtain a visa on arrival.
- Introduction of new visa-on-arrival policy for the nationals of 47 countries worldwide, including 27 African countries.
- Exempts travellers from 12 African countries from all visa requirements.
- Tourism Sector benefited the most.



Visa Openness Findings, 2021

Case Study 2: Tunisia

- Tunisia rose five places in 2021, improving its score by 75% over the five years.
- One of 15 countries that most opened its visa regime between 2016 and 2020.
- Citizens of 42% of African countries could enter Tunisia visa-free or could obtain a visa on arrival.
- The COVID-19 pandemic -tourism industry lost almost half its share of GDP -from 14.0% in 2019 to 7.3% a year later.





Visa Openness Findings, 2021

Case Study 3: Morocco

- Morocco rose five places on the AVOI in 2021, increasing its visa openness score by 17% from the year before
- 2021 openness rate: citizens of 13% of African countries could enter Morocco visa-free or could obtain a visa on arrival.
- Before the pandemic, over 2.5 million Moroccans - almost 25% of the workforce held a job related to tourism. Tourism contribution to GDP also fell in 2021



Visa Openness: Suggestions for 2021+

Visa Solutions

- Visas on arrival
- Visa-free regional blocs
- Regional bloc visas
- A multi-year visa after an applicant has been assessed
- Positive reciprocity (countries relax their visa requirements for each other's citizens)
- Unilateral opening of the visa regime
- Streamline application process and introduce e-visas – making information available online in different languages

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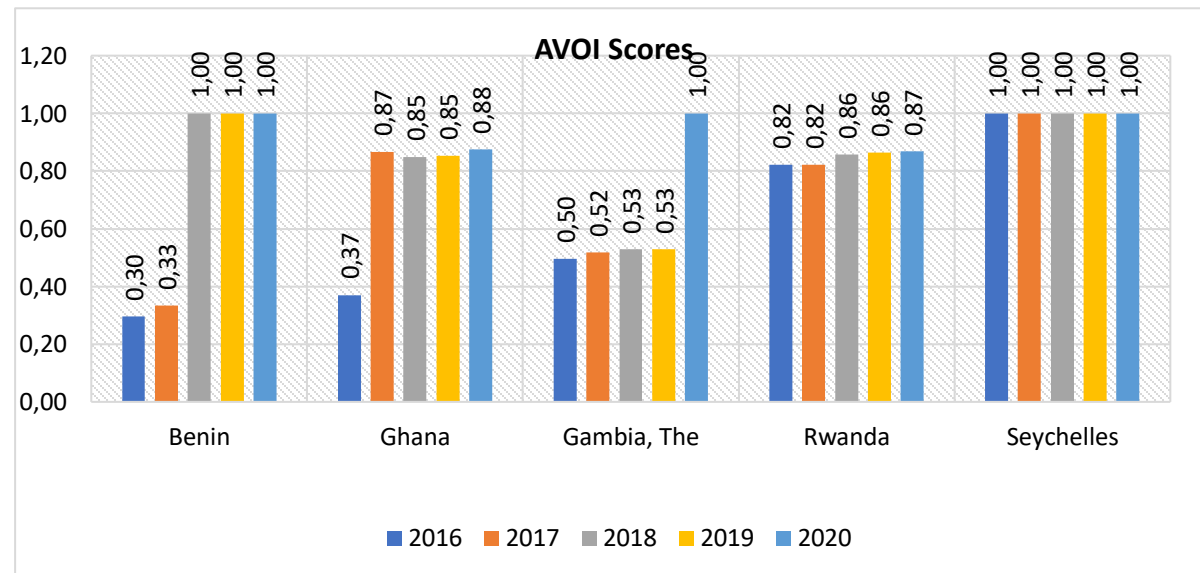
Visa Openness: Suggestions for 2021+

Travel Document Solutions

- A regional passport or national identity card for regional travel
- An African passport for business-people, issued by a competent authority according to strict criteria
- The African Union passport for all African citizens, issued by national authorities using the criteria rolled out by the African Union in 2016.



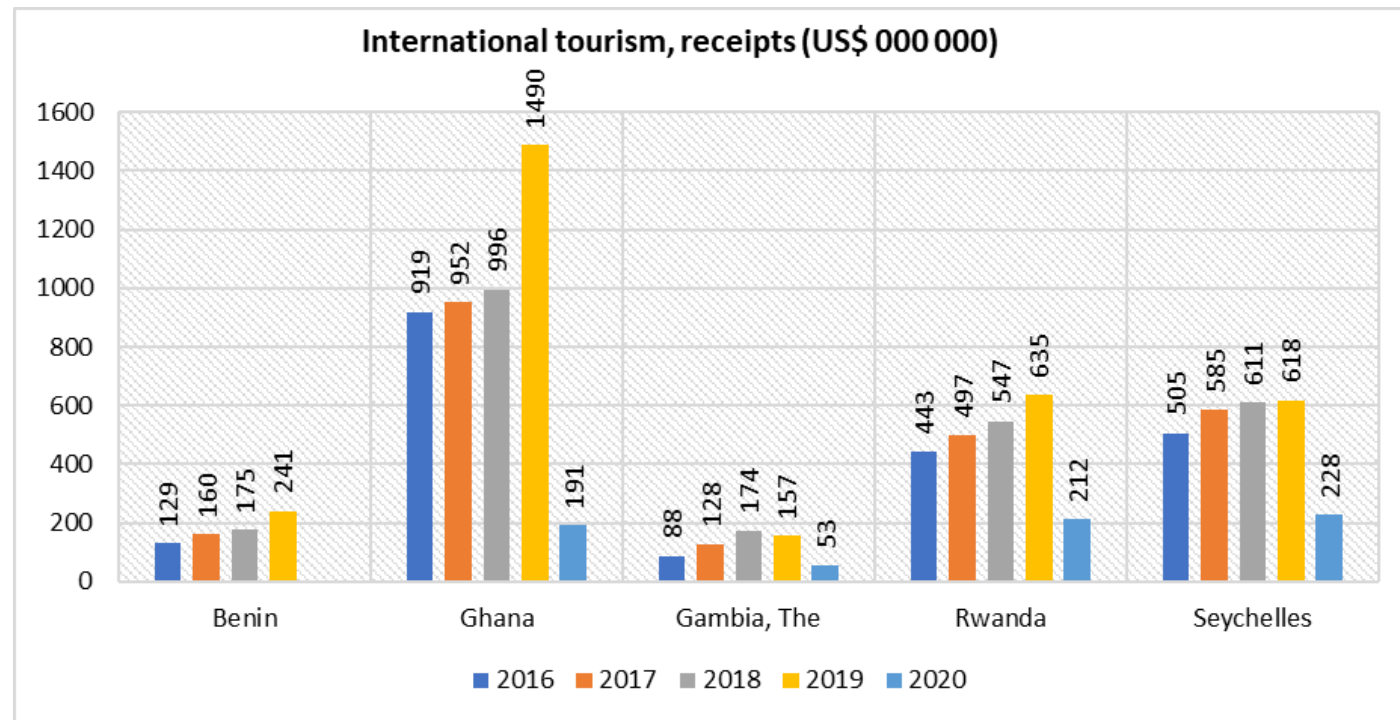
Evolution of Scores for the top five countries...



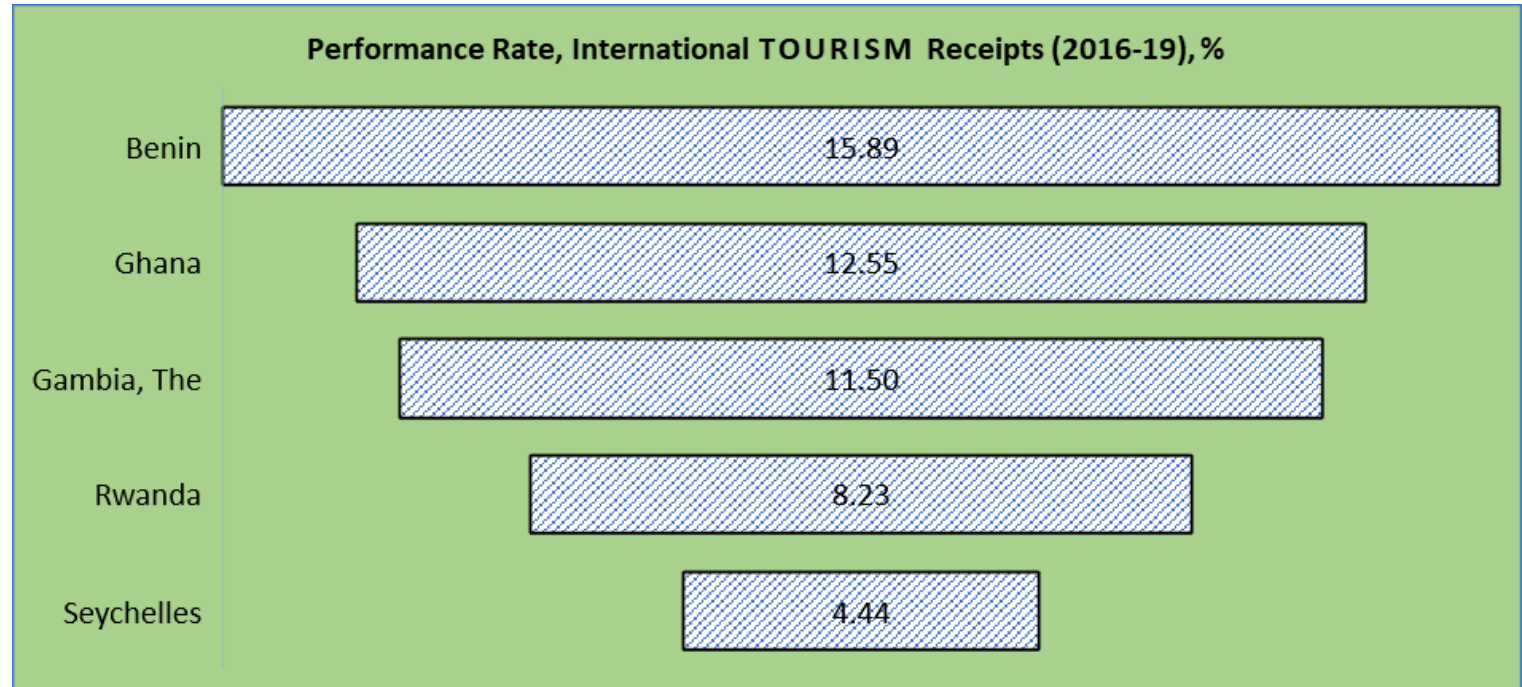
Tourism Receipts



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Growth in
Tourism over
the six
years....





Looking ahead

Safety and Hygiene

1. Ensuring that visitors can move through border controls with speed and ease has taken on a new urgency.
 - streamline the visa process.
 - reduce number of documents, fees, time, move to eVisas, issue visas on arrival, or eliminate visas altogether.
2. Opening borders will ensure that Africa's travel, tourism, and investment grow apace.





For more info:

www.afdb.org

z.mabuza@afdb.org

Webpage has been launched on the AfDB website.

www.visaopenness.org