



Tourism and Hospitality Industries Thematic Group (THITG) General Assembly

 Thursday **28th**
March 2024

 **Virtual Event**

 **9AM**



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| <p>Date: Thursday, March 28, 2024</p> <p>Time: 9:00 am</p> <p>Duration: 2 hours</p> <p>Venue: The Summit House, 6 Oba Elegushi Street, off Oba Adeyinka Avenue, Ikoyi, Lagos.</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><u>SESSION REPORT</u></p> <p>Session Title: TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRIES THEMATIC GROUP GENERAL ASSEMBLY</p> <p>Details of Discussants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Udeme Ufot, Private Sector Co-Chair, THECCS Policy Commission Steering Committee • Dr Ikenna Nwosu, Facilitator, THECCS Policy Commission • Ms Ngozi Ngoka, Thematic Lead, Tourism and Hospitality Industries Thematic Group (THITG) • Mr James Sule, Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Tourism • Mr Frank Aigbogun, Vice-Chair, THECCS PC Steering Committee <p>Moderated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Ewomazino Omomadia, Anchor, THECCS Policy Commission (THECCSPC) |
| <p>Background</p> | <p>The overarching objective of the Tourism, Hospitality, Entertainment, Creative Arts and Sports Industries (THECS) Policy Commission is to facilitate the adoption of various NES recommendations with a view to fast-tracking growth and development of the economy. The leadership of the Policy Commission engages the Strategic Policy Analysis Unit of the National Planning Commission in quarterly meetings to follow-through on the implementation of the various NES recommended reforms. The Policy Commission is designed to engage in policy advocacy efforts before, during and after summits.</p> |
| <p>Context</p> | <p>In recognition of the need for support from sector experts, the Tourism and Hospitality Industries Thematic Group (THITG) hosted a General Assembly (GA) to engage experts on the proposed policy advocacy plans of the Thematic Group in the period of 2024-2025. The GA provided an opportunity for members of the Thematic Group and external stakeholders to learn about the activities of the THITG, the agenda for the year, and how to support the Thematic Group's policy advocacy efforts. The General Assembly served as a platform for agenda-setting for the year.</p> |
| <p>Opening Remarks</p> <p>Mr Udeme Ufot, Private Sector Co-Chair, THECCS Policy Commission Steering Committee</p> <p>Rep by Dr Ikenna Nwosu</p> | <p>In his opening remarks, Dr. Ikenna Nwosu, representing Mr. Udeme Ufot, noted that the administration of His Excellency President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR has made a commitment to the rejuvenation of the Tourism and Hospitality sector. Part of this commitment was the creation of the new Ministry for Tourism led by the Honourable Minister Lola Ade-John. The administration highlighted the tourism and hospitality sector as a sub socioeconomic sector that can be rejuvenated along framework, governance, and other guidelines. Thus, the aim of the general assembly is to brainstorm on the strategies for rejuvenating the sector for optimization, revenue generation, and job creation to ensure the sector meets with Nigeria's KPI obligations domestically, continentally, and internationally.</p> |

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| <p>Presentation by Think Tank Operations</p> <p>Mr Sijuola Olanubi, Acting Head, Think Tank Operations, NESG</p> | <p>Mr Sijuola Olanubi, the Acting Head of Think Tank Operations, made a presentation on the Mandate, Strategy and the Future of Advocacy at the NESG.</p> <p>In his presentation, he spoke about the vision and mission of the NESG. The vision of the NESG, he said, is to become Africa's leading private sector think tank committed to developing a modern, globally competitive and inclusive Nigerian economy, and its mission is to promote and champion the reform of the Nigerian economy to an open, inclusive, sustainable and globally competitive economy.</p> <p>He highlighted some achievements of the NESG, including being instrumental in crafting Vision 2020 and the Nigeria Agenda 2050, the National Sports Industry Policy, reforms in the banking sector, telecommunication, maritime, and many more. He went ahead to talk about the NESG Policy Commissions being guided by the Public-Private Dialogue principles.</p> |
| <p>About the THECCS Policy Commission</p> <p>Dr Ikenna Nwosu, Facilitator, THECCSP</p> | <p>Dr Ikenna Nwosu, the THECCS policy commission facilitator, returned for a brief presentation About the THECCS Policy Commission. He explained that:</p> <p>The THECCS Policy Commission is one of 12 Policy Commissions within the NESG. The "THECCS" abbreviation can be unbundled as follows: T for Tourism, H for hospitality, E for entertainment, C for creatives, the second C for cultural, and then S for sports. These industries or sectors come together to form the larger policy commission. Within the THECCS Policy Commission there are four thematic groups, each led by a separate subject matter expert. The Sports Industry Thematic Group is led by Ms. Nkechi Obi, the Creatives and Entertainment Thematic Group (CETG), is led by Ms. Chinenye Uwanaka, the Tourism and Hospitality Industries Thematic Group is led by Ms. Ngozi Ngoka, while the Cultural Industry Thematic Group, the most recently formed, is led by Ms. Goodness Ejim-Obilo. Dr. Nwosu continued by explaining that the responsibility of the policy commission is to optimise the governance framework for these selected sectors. This optimisation focuses on legal reform, regulatory reform, institutional reform, and human resource reform. These specific reform areas were also selected to serve as a source of deliberation during the general assembly discussions.</p> |
| <p>Special Remarks</p> <p>Mr James Sule, Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Tourism</p> | <p>Mr James Sule, Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Tourism made the following remarks at the general assembly:</p> <p>The first General Assembly of the Tourism and Hospitality Industries Thematic Group (THITG) will present a valuable opportunity to share insights and chart the cause for collective efforts in advancing the tourism and hospitality sectors. The THITG is meant to serve as a platform for knowledge exchange, collaboration, and collective action to contribute to the growth, innovation and sustainability of the industries. It brings together professionals, researchers, policymakers, and other stakeholders to share knowledge, best practices and collaboration. It also offers various benefits to members of the industry in terms of advancing the visibility and credibility of individuals and organizations within the tourism and hospitality sectors.</p> |

The thematic group has accomplished a lot over the past year, from impactful research projects to successful advocacy campaigns, especially on the creation of a separate Federal Ministry of Tourism. The collective efforts of the thematic group have made a tangible difference in shaping the future of tourism and hospitality in Nigeria. While celebrating the achievements, it is equally important to acknowledge the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead from navigating the complexities of sustainable tourism. Adapting to technological change advancements and addressing the impacts of global crisis such as the COVID 19 pandemic, which resulted in a near collapse of the industry. The thematic group should be poised to tackle these issues head on. In facing these challenges, collaboration is key.

Members of this thematic group should leverage on the expertise or resources within the group to foster innovation, drive, positive change and support one another in achieving our shared goals. Looking ahead, it is essential to identify focal areas that align with the evolving needs of the tourism & hospitality sectors and communities. Ranging from planning and development of tourism infrastructure, advocacy for policies that support sustainable growth of the tourism, industry, promotion and preservation of cultural heritage, tourism, technology and innovation, destination management and marketing, sustainable tourism initiatives that are focused on minimizing the environmental impact of tourism, supporting local communities, and promoting responsible travel practices among others. The commitment of members of the thematic group to advancing tourism and hospitality sector is truly commendable.

As articulated by the objective of the thematic group, tourism significantly contributes to the new agenda of the present administration, in terms of revenue generation, job creation, poverty alleviation and inclusive growth. Therefore, the transformation of the sector must be at the forefront of tourism policies, and we should explicitly prioritize sustainability, inclusion and resilience. The ministry and the NESG have come a long way in the journey towards developing and promoting sustainable tourism industry for Nigeria. Our collaboration has equally yielded results in different areas of advocacies, policies, and initiatives with the recent signing of an MOU on collaboration for reform and development of Nigeria. Now Nigerian tourism and hospitality sectors with various areas of collaboration, which were systematically articulated, there is no doubt that our joint effort will yield the most desired impactful change in the sectors. There is optimism that we will end this General Assembly with a renewed sense of purpose and determination, knowing that we have the power to shape the future of tourism and hospitality for the betterment of all.

Activities of the Tourism and Hospitality Industries Thematic Group (THITG)

**Ms Ngozi Ngoka,
Thematic Lead, Tourism
and Hospitality Industries
Thematic Group**

Ms Ngozi Ngoka gave a recap of what the THITG had done in the past four years. In her presentation, she noted that:

The goal of the THITG has been to reposition the tourism and hospitality sectors in Nigeria for sustainable growth, profitability, and development. This is to make the whole industry conducive for everybody that practices the need to meet global

Completed Work Plan of 2022-2023

1. Focus Group forum on Tourism and Hospitality Industries- The formal report on the forum was submitted to the Honourable Minister and Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Information and Culture (FMIC)
2. Set up 10 sub-groups to dissect issues raised from during the forum and review the National Tourism Policy and the National Tourism Master-plan- Output from the subgroups was appropriately titled: "NESG Tourism and Hospitality Policy Development and Reform Initiative" and a formal report was submitted to the Honourable Minister and Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Information and Culture (FMIC)
3. Impact of the Supreme Court decision on Tourism and Hospitality and the decision of the Federal High Court on collection of VAT - Formal report was submitted to the Honourable Minister and Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Information and Culture (FMIC)
4. NESG team held formal separate meetings with the Honourable Minister and Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Information and Culture (FMIC)
5. The team is awaiting further action by the Honourable Minister and Permanent Secretary, FMIC on the attached report of the meetings.
6. The Thematic Lead, Mrs. Ngozi Ngoka chaired the sub-committee on Contents and Program for the 1st UWTO Global Conference Linking Tourism, Culture and the Creative Industries. She received an award for "Excellence in Tourism Advocacy" and a special commendation letter from the Honourable Minister of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed.
7. The Maiden THITG Newsletter was launched.
8. The Thematic Group co-hosted the 2023 "Pyne Awards and Conference"

A run-through of the Work Plan for 2024-2025 and the key next steps from the work plan were highlighted as follows:

Next Steps from 2024-2025 Work Plan

1. Strategic Focus Group Forum on Optimisation of the Governance Framework for Nigeria's Tourism and Hospitality Sectors: Legislation, Institutional and Human Capacity Reforms
2. Engagement with Key enablers for post COVID pandemic recovery for the Tourism sector: IATA, NIS, AFCTA, AU Agenda 2063, NV 2050 and hosting of the workshop on post COVID 19 recovery.
3. Set up the Tourism Policy Review Committee, Master Plan Review Committee and draft the policy inputs.
4. Set up Policy Development Committee for National Policy on Nigeria's Hospitality Industry and Draft the Policy Inputs.
5. Host Stakeholder Validations (10 Sessions)
6. Compilation of final draft of the policy documents and Masterplan.
7. Approval of Policy Frameworks and Masterplan by FEC (Follow up meetings)
8. Federal Executive Council (FEC) approval.

Questions, Comments and Answers

Issues Identified

The following issues were identified during the Questions, Comments and Answers session:

- **Use of .ng Domain:** There is a need to transition to the use of the .ng domain for online platforms to promote a Nigerian identity, as many companies and government entities use the .org platform or otherwise. The use of the .ng domain will also align with previous directives from the government. The federal government has placed an emphasis on this previously. There was a circular within the government a decade ago directing all ministries to ensure the use of the .ng domain, as well as an executive order which deals with this same issue. While it may take time and effort to make this transition, as there will have been several documents and such printed, it is important to make this transition to ensure this is a part of the national promotion of the tourism sector and Nigeria as a whole.
- **Data Management:** The lack of a proper data management policy is hindering progress, as accurate data is crucial for policy formulation and implementation. There needs to be a significant emphasis placed on data and data management. A lot of the work the thematic group would like to accomplish is dependent on having accurate data, which would help push policies through. There must be a proper data management policy.
- **Education and Training:** There's a gap in hospitality and tourism education, including the need for the inclusion of tourism in secondary school curricula and improving management training programs. It is important for hospitality and tourism education to be taken into account when looking at the master plan. Grassroots education can play a major role in helping Nigerians, as individuals and even organisations, to understand the value of leisure. The inclusion of tourism in the secondary school curriculum should also be considered. Often, when tourism education is discussed, there is an uneven focus on universities, but in Nigeria, this education started in a polytechnic, and these polytechnics continue to play a major role. There needs to be an active effort to be more inclusive to ensure we capture all levels of manpower and skill within the sector.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** To avoid negative impacts, appropriate stakeholder engagement in developments affecting tourism and hospitality, such as coastal road projects, is essential. The current plans for the coastal road propose an encroachment of the beach land. This will lead to some leisure facilities being taken away, which could mean people lose their jobs. There is a need to make sure that such developments take the perspective of diverse stakeholders to ensure these major developments have the best interests of the citizens at heart.
- **State Government Involvement:** Many states lack institutional frameworks for tourism development, highlighting the need for better engagement with state governors and the establishment of clear responsibilities. In the master plan, a bulk of the responsibility lies with the state and local governments; however, most states do not have the appropriate institutional framework. The federal government has done some work by establishing zonal offices across the country. However, there

should be engagement, potentially with the Governors' Forum, to ensure all governors understand the value and the role tourism and hospitality can play in their state economies.

- **Master Plan Accessibility:** The tourism master plan needs to be made more accessible and dynamic, possibly through shorter-term strategies aligned with the sector's dynamic nature. Tourism is a dynamic sector, which means it is constantly changing. People who work in and study tourism suggest it changes in five-year cycles. Perhaps the government strategy for the sector should not be any longer than a five-year plan.
- **Investment Opportunities:** There's a need to attract investors to the tourism and hospitality industry, especially in areas like the Lagos coastline, to drive growth and development. For tourism to upskill, expand, and take advantage there is a need for investors to be brought on board.
- **Cultural Tourism Emphasis:** While progress has been made in separating tourism and culture into separate ministries, there's a need to focus more on cultural tourism, which is integral to Nigeria's tourism potential. Often, when we talk about tourism, we only look at the concrete aspects, such as hotels, but in Nigeria, cultural tourism is really at the heart of things. Cultural tourism has been at the fulcrum of tourism development. A place like Nike Gallery does cultural tourism and even other festivals like Osogbo and the likes.

Recommendations

- **Transition to .ng Domain:** Expedite the transition to using the .ng domain for online platforms to promote Nigerian identity and align with government directives.
- **Data Management Policy:** Expedite ongoing efforts to develop and implement a comprehensive data management policy to ensure accurate data collection, analysis, and utilisation for policy formulation. In recognition of the value of technology and data management, the Ministry of Tourism has agreed to collaborate with NESG to develop not just a data bank but a setup for data collection, statistics, and also analysis.
- **Education and Training Enhancement:** Enhance hospitality and tourism education, including incorporating tourism into the secondary school curriculum and improving management training programs.
- **Stakeholder Engagement Framework:** Establish a robust framework for stakeholder engagement in tourism and hospitality developments to ensure diverse perspectives and minimise negative impacts.
- **State Government Engagement:** Engage state governors effectively in tourism development, providing necessary support and guidance to establish institutional frameworks and responsibilities.
- **Master Plan Review:** Review and revise the Tourism Masterplan to make it more accessible, dynamic, and aligned with shorter-term strategies reflecting the sector's evolving nature.

- **Investment Promotion:** Actively promote investment opportunities in the tourism and hospitality industry, especially in areas like the Lagos coastline, to attract investors and drive growth.
- **Cultural Tourism Promotion:** Emphasize and promote cultural tourism initiatives, leveraging Nigeria's rich cultural heritage to attract domestic and international tourists.

Closing Remarks

Mr Frank Aigbogun, Vice-Chair, THECCSPC Steering Committee

In his closing remarks, Mr Frank Aigbogun noted that there is absolutely no doubt that the participants are all aligned on the fact that the tourism and hospitality industries hold a strong promise for the progress and development of Nigeria. This has been conveyed in every comment that has been made.

There is a hunger to better understand the whole ecosystem with the hope that, in working in partnership with the government, we can evolve policies that address the demand side, supply side, and funding side of the ecosystem. Points have been made about education and how it can be handled to ensure that there is enough industry awareness and skill to deliver the service. Ultimately, the tourism and hospitality industry is about good service, which requires skilled personnel. The nation also needs companies that are well capitalised, with access to credit, and a policy environment that is understanding of the struggles of the players in the industry. The policy environment should always focus on the overarching objective, which is to promote a healthy tourism and hospitality environment in Nigeria.

The Nigerian Economic Summit Group has demonstrated its commitment and willingness to make the sacrifice that is required, not only in meetings like this but also in long-term advocacy and engagement with the government as well. Ultimately, tourism is about what the states and local governments do, as our tourists travel to different places across the country, not just Abuja. So, it is important that we understand how working with the state and the local governments can better enhance the overall objective of this group. There have been improvements in the arrival at the airport in Lagos, but there is still much work to be done. With the enthusiasm and zeal that has been demonstrated by the people gathered here today and the willingness of the government, we can indeed make tourism a significant contributor to GDP in Nigeria. Hopefully, we can come to a point where there is a policy document that we all subscribe to and that we are willing to defend and advocate for.