

TOURISM CS NAJIB BALALA JOINS WORLD TOURISM MINISTERS IN CALLING FOR AN END TO INACCURATE TRAVEL ADVISORIES

Tourism Cabinet Secretary Najib Balala has warned that irresponsible issuance of travel advisories by Western countries will continue to harm tourism and by large economies of developing countries especially in Africa. Balala has also condemned the quick and negative publicity given to countries affected by calamities.

Speaking to tourism world leaders attending the United Nations World Tourism Organization Summit in Madrid Spain, CS Balala said travel advisories have major impacts on countries struggling to build their tourism sectors and their economies and called on the international community to ensure proper measures are taken and considered before issuance of the advisories.

The refusal by insurance companies to insure visitors touring affected countries Balala said has been a major challenge brought about by travel advisories, among many other effects.

The Cabinet Secretary who was speaking during a high level security meeting of Ministers also condemned the manner in which international media has portrayed countries as unsafe.

The Tourism Cabinet Secretary said the media has played a big role in misinforming the world on the status of security in different parts of the world, Africa in particular.

He gave an example of how the international media labelled Kenya a hot bed of terror at a time when the country was preparing to receive U.S President Barack Obama. Further, the CS told the tourism leaders of how the Ebola pandemic that affected West Africa affected economies of the entire African continent as the international media portrayed it as having affected the entire continent.

Noting that tourism has a direct link with poverty eradication, the CS asked leaders to jointly work together towards ensuring sustainable tourism.

On Security, Hon. Balala said terrorism was a global threat and has affected many countries Kenya included. He appealed to the international Community to join in the war against acts of terrorism in order to find global peace.

Earlier in the day, the Cabinet Secretary met with leading tour operators in Spain to discuss strategies of increasing tourist arrivals from Spain.

Europe and the United States of America (USA) represent Kenya's traveler generating region with 70% of the market being Europeans (Switzerland, Italy, Belgium France and Britain account for the bulk of tourists).

The meeting with key tour operators in Spain is in line with the Ministry of Tourism's plan to increase tourist arrival numbers to three million by 2017

The Cabinet Secretary assured the tour operators of necessary support in ensuring that they intensify destination Kenya marketing in Spain and Europe at large.