African responses to COVID-19 & the importance of diversification to build resilience

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Impact of COVID-19 on tourism in Africa

- Largest shock to-date
- Devastating and widespread impacts
- International arrivals to Africa down 83% (2021 vs 2019)
- Heavy reliance on international tourism for economic growth
- Repercussions for communities and conservation
- Uncertainty re virus and vaccines

Source: UNWTO, 2021
Some country responses

**Kenya:** USD 18.5 million economic rescue package as grants for community conservancies & for 5,500 community scouts

**Rwanda:** Lowered gorilla permit fees to encourage domestic and regional tourism

**Namibia:** Emergency funding raised from donors & MET to allow conservancies & the private sector to pay at least 50% of their costs

**South Africa:** COVID-19 Tourism Relief Fund: one-off capped grants and a detailed Tourism Recovery Plan

Source: Spenceley, 2021
Diversification is key to building resilience and sustainability

State of the Wildlife Economy in Africa
Potential of the wildlife economy

THE STOCK
WILDLIFE
Fauna, flora, marine, freshwater, terrestrial

Film & Photography
Wildlife Estates
Wildlife Ranching
Hunting
Non-Timber Forest Products

Ecotourism
Carbon

Not yet utilised: POTENTIAL
Building forward better

**Economic**
- Diversification of the wildlife economy
- Domestic & regional tourism
- Diversification of the tourism product
- Fiscal incentives
- Benefit sharing & linkages

**Environmental**
- Promotion of Healthy Parks/Healthy People
- Better planning and management plans

**Social**
- Safety
- Innovation (virtual tourism/gamification)
- Collaboration and partnerships
Key takeaways

Research on, and understanding the value of, the **Wildlife Economy** is critically important as countries revise strategies & reform policy & practice post-COVID

**Government support** for and investment in wildlife and tourism, given the economic benefits provided by it, is crucial

There is a need to **build capacity & provide supportive institutions** as well as establish institutional arrangements for benefit-sharing

**Diversification** of all wildlife economy activities is important to reduce risk & build resilience

**Monitoring and evaluation** is important, including robust, regular data collection, to allow for data-driven decision-making going forward
THANK YOU

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If you want to go fast, go alone.
If you want to go far, go together
- African proverb