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Greetings!

How sustainable tourism is promoting green economy in Kenya

Green economy refers to one that improves the human well-being and builds social equity while reducing environmental risks and scarcities. Over the past few years, the concept of green economy has emerged as a strategic priority for many governments around the world, including Kenya. Perhaps the most important question is why does green economy matter? And what measures are we implementing to transition from the more dominant current model to a green economy? Indeed, there is global consensus that we need to transform our economies, so that we are primed to tackle the current global challenges such as climate change, water scarcity and improper waste management among others.

On the 26th of September 2019, Ecotourism Kenya will be holding the Eco Warrior Award and gala dinner to recognise and celebrate leadership and innovation in sustainable tourism in Kenya. This year's theme is; Tourism jobs and the Green Economy: A better future for all. In line with this theme, this week we are highlighting some of the measures that our members have implemented to promote the green economy.

Investment in ecofriendly energy resources

The effects of climate change such as extreme droughts, floods and rise in sea levels are already being observed in many countries around the world. Scientists have predicted that these conditions will continue, as long as there is increased generation of greenhouse gases such as

carbon into the atmosphere. These gases are mainly generated from consumption of fossil fuels such as diesel and petrol. On this background, there is need for a speedy shift to more ecofriendly energy resources such wind, solar, briquettes and geothermal energy. We are glad that many of the ecorated properties have already made the step forward. We are witnessing a rise in the use of renewable energy even in the remote places in Kenya, which is contributing towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions. See the picture below of a solar farm, taken during the February 2019 phase of audits in Samburu region.



Increased water use efficiency

Without a doubt, natural resources such as water are critical in the transition to a green economy. Water defines human well-being, environmental stability and economic activities such as tourism all over the world. The transition to a green economy presents a challenge that we must overcome for the benefit of our ecosystems. We need to focus on the economy, finding ways to increase economic growth without increasing water usage and environmental impacts-put simply being more resource efficient. This requires investment in technologies, for instance in accommodation facilities that will reduce water consumption, while still enabling us to enjoy the same service. Some of these technologies include: replacing single-flush toilets with dual flush-

toilets, installing water saving taps and installing low-flow shower heads. The illustration below is that of a dual-flush toilet taken during the Naivasha-Nakuru phase of audits in May 2019.



Proper waste management

Sound solid waste management is critical to meet sustainable development. Currently, a huge proportion of waste is still being dumped in the dumpsites, causing environmental damage and health problems. This is mainly due to inadequate resources and infrastructure to tackle the increasing amount of waste that is being produced as a result of factors such as unsustainable consumption patterns for example, single use plastic water bottles. Transition to a green economy, requires investment in areas such as recycling and change of consumption patterns. Some of the ecorated facilities have already made significant steps that collectively contribute towards sustainable waste management. Some of these measures include: recycling waste such as plastic, and investing in refillable water bottles for use by guests which essentially cuts down on plastic waste generation.

It is now clear to us that the shift to green economy will result in gains for both our economies and societies, even though high investment is required to adjust. Based on the current trends, including those we have highlighted in this article there is optimism that we can achieve “green growth”.