



ORGANISATION MONDIALE DU TOURISME  
WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION  
ORGANIZACIÓN MUNDIAL DEL TURISMO  
ВСЕМИРНАЯ ТУРИСТСКАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ  
منظمة السياحة العالمية

**COMMITTEE ON STATISTICS  
AND MACROECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF TOURISM**

**Seventh meeting**

UNWTO Headquarters, Madrid, Spain

27-28 March 2006

**Document for issue nº 3**

**“Call for strengthening the development of national Systems of Tourism  
Statistics and the international comparability of basic tourism data”**

1. As is the case in the other organizations that form part of the UN System, one of the statistical responsibilities of the UNWTO is to promote in its corresponding area of competence, the international comparability of a basic set of statistical information (both data and indicators) and their dissemination.
2. International comparability is a long-term objective, which can be secured through two procedures that complement and reinforce each other: the standardization of concepts, classifications and methods of compilation, used among reporting countries; and also, the dissemination of information using a formalized, uniform standard. Based on its experience in disseminating worldwide tourism statistics, UNWTO considers the present situation is far from satisfactory and requires special attention and initiatives, such as:
  - cross-national compliance or harmonization studies of concepts and procedures;
  - follow-up reviews;
  - notice and constructive advice when inconsistencies and non-compliance instances emerge or are discovered;
  - occasional audit reviews to assess compliance with international standards;
  - in-depth case studies to assess issues of international harmonization and compliance;
  - publication of countries or organizations found in non-compliance with significant variations from the established standards.

3. The following table (referred to the period 2000-2004) summarizes the availability of the basic set of indicators which support at present the international comparability of tourism activity<sup>1</sup>:

Basic Indicators (27)	TOTAL COUNTRIES 208	EU 25 MS	OECD 30 MS	U.N. REGIONAL COMMISSIONS (3)				
				ECLAC 35 MS + 7 AM	ESCWA 13 MS	UNECA 52 MS	UNECE 48 MS	UNESCAP 44 MS + 9 AM
<b>INBOUND TOURISM</b>								
Arrivals								
Visitors	115	17	18	32	9	21	30	23
Tourists (overnight visitors)	185	24	27	39	12	43	46	45
Same-day visitors	104 (1)	15	17	33	6	16	26	23
Arrivals by country of origin	193 (2)	25	30	41	13	45	47	47
Arrivals by mode of transport	163	20	24	39	7	38	36	43
Arrivals by purpose of visit								
Leisure, recreation and holidays	148	15	17	32	7	34	28	47
Business and professional	142	15	17	32	6	33	28	43
Other purposes	137	15	16	29	7	32	26	43
Accommodation								
Overnight stays in hotels and similar establishments	118	25	25	18	11	26	43	20
Guests in hotels and similar establishments	96	25	25	17	9	15	42	13
Overnight stays in all types of accommodation establishments	76	25	26	12	4	11	41	8
Average length of stay of non-resident tourists in all accommodation establishments	123	20	20	27	11	23	34	28
Tourism expenditure in the country	156	23	26	30	10	43	40	33
"Travel"	159	25	30	37	9	36	44	33
"Passenger transport"	130	23	26	26	7	32	40	25
<b>DOMESTIC TOURISM</b>								
Accommodation								
Overnight stays in hotels and similar establishments	87	24	27	8	6	20	40	13
Guests in hotels and similar establishments	68	24	25	6	6	10	40	6
Overnight stays in all types of accommodation establishments	55	24	26	4	1	7	39	4
Average length of stay of resident tourists in all accommodation establishments	33	14	12	2	3	3	22	3
<b>OUTBOUND TOURISM</b>								
Departures	108	23	28	22	6	12	37	31
Tourism expenditure in other countries	145	23	26	31	10	38	40	26
"Travel"	155	25	30	35	10	37	43	30
"Passenger transport"	134	23	26	30	8	33	40	23
<b>TOURISM INDUSTRIES</b>								
Hotels and similar establishments								
Number of rooms	172	23	29	37	13	36	42	44
Number of bed-places	149	24	24	26	12	35	45	31
Occupancy rate	153	24	29	28	10	37	43	35
Average length of stay (resident + non resident tourists)	115	19	20	22	5	26	38	24

(1) Of which, 40 correspond to cruise passenger.

(2) Of which:

95: report by country of nationality

108: report by country of residence

10: report by nationality and by residence

MS: Member States

AM: Associates members

(3) For the purpose of comparability among the regions, the following member states have been excluded from the corresponding Regional Commission:

ECLAC: France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and United Kingdom.

UNECA: Egypt

UNECE: Canada, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, United States and Uzbekistan.

UNESCAP: Armenia, Azerbaijan, France, Georgia, Netherlands, Russian Federation, Turkey, United Kingdom and United States.

<sup>1</sup> This set of basic indicators is disseminated in print ("Compendium of Tourism Statistics") and in electronic format (via access to the "Tourism Factbook" service of the WTOelibrary). It should be pointed out that the latter version offers more up-to-date results.

4. Despite the short period of time elapsed between the development of the two international standards on tourism statistics<sup>2</sup>, a giant step has been made in the integration of tourism statistics in the General Statistical System. However, there are still important limitations in the international comparability of the available data, mainly in those basic characteristics such as international arrivals and departures, expenditures associated with inbound and outbound tourism, and particularly with the corresponding travel flows in the case of domestic tourism for which there is just a limited number of countries with comparative international data series.
5. There is sufficient experience on the part of International Organizations, in the specific case of tourism statistics strictly speaking or other statistics used for the analysis of tourism's economic contribution (as is the case of Balance of Payments, National Accounts, etc.), to highlight the need to tackle specific initiatives in order to improve both their quality and comparability.
6. Also, in a significant number of countries (about 70), TSA development has revealed some challenges that were not expected before initiating this type of exercise, with regard to the credibility of good part of available tourism statistics, which have been (and still are) mainly associated with tourism demand. These challenges are very diverse but all respond to the fundamental nature of TSA as a tool for the integration of scattered tourism data:
  - the lack of uniformity in the classifications and definitions used for the same variables in different sources (for example, in accommodation);
  - the confrontation between supply and demand with regard to which products are those supplied by tourism industries to visitors, both residents and non-residents;
  - new users' needs, like for instance some characteristics of the trip and/or of the visitors themselves who are usually not included in the main statistical operations in the field of tourism (as for instance, organization of the trip, size of the travel group, identification of same-day visitors, etc).
  - etc.

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<sup>2</sup> The corresponding documents are the following:

- "Recommendations on Tourism Statistics", 1993
- "Tourism Satellite Account (TSA): Recommended Methodological Framework", 2000

7. Without a doubt, the case of Europe is unique, as there is no other area in the world where a statistical office (Eurostat) with very broad attributions with regard to the statistical development of a substantial and extensive set of countries has been able to carry out an effort to harmonize the development of statistical operations as it has done.
8. The UNWTO has also made an effort, over the past several years, to assume its own responsibility to carry out specific initiatives to enhance the credibility and comparability of tourism statistics in those areas where it could have a comparative advantage: this has to do exclusively with two variables on the demand side (arrivals/departures of non-residents and the expenditure associated to inbound tourism), regarding which general guidelines have been drawn up in order to have what are considered the ideal statistical tools for the great majority of countries (this is the case of our model border surveys). Moreover, although with much more limited ambitions, a few basic guidelines were drawn up for countries that due to a different kind of reason (undoubtedly, the most frequent is the low availability of budgetary resources) consider the use of tourism modules in surveys in which it is possible to do so (basically, household surveys for the purpose of researching household budgets)<sup>3</sup>.
9. The Programme of Work 2006-2007 expressly mentions two initiatives:
  - 3.2 Metadata Project (in order to promote the preparation of metadata associated to those statistics included in the Yearbook and Compendium of tourism statistics);
  - 4.2 Tourism macroeconomic indicators (in order to enlarge the scope of international comparability by identifying tourism-related economic indicators so as to generate an additional set of quantitative data).

However, it does not include an initiative agreed upon between the UNSD and the UNWTO at the last meeting of the CCSA<sup>4</sup>, whereby a workshop on basic tourism statistics is to be held at the UNWTO headquarters with joint delegations from CSOs and NTAs of approximately 25 countries.

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<sup>3</sup> Both documents, "Tourism as an international traded service – a guide for measuring arrivals and associated expenditures of non-residents" and "Measuring domestic tourism and the use of household surveys", were officially presented at the Iguazu Conference and will be updated in 2008, with the inclusion of new cases of good national practices that illustrate the experience that we are accumulating in these relatively new fields of tourism statistics.

<sup>4</sup> The Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities meets twice a year. The members of the Committee comprise all members and observers of the former ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities, namely United Nations Statistics Division, the Regional Commissions, the UN Programmes and Funds, the specialized agencies and related organizations, certain non-UN intergovernmental organizations (OECD, EUROSTAT, Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States, World Tourism Organization and World Trade Organization), regional development banks and the International Statistical Institute. Other organizations can participate by invitation.

Questions / points for discussion by the Committee:

- Should the International Organizations involved in the different areas of production and/or dissemination of tourism statistics (specifically, the IMF, UNSD, Eurostat, ILO, and UN Regional Commissions) carry out joint initiatives to strengthen national systems of tourism statistics?
- Should the UNWTO explore other avenues of technical assistance that are complementary to the holding of Workshops?
- Should the UNWTO provide general guidelines for the development of statistics on production in tourism industries?