Item 6 of the Provisional Agenda

CELEBRATION OF WORLD TOURISM DAY 2013:
TOURISM AND WATER, PROTECTING OUR COMMON FUTURE

Note by the Secretary-General

In the attached document, the Secretary-General submits to the members of the Commission information on World Tourism Day 2013.
World Tourism Day 2013: *Tourism and Water – Protecting our Common Future*

(Republic of Maldives, 27 September)

**Background**

World Tourism Day (WTD) takes place each year on 27 September, coinciding with the anniversary of the adoption of the [UNWTO Statutes](http://www.unwto.org) on 27 September 1970. The third session of the UNWTO General Assembly (Torremolinos, Spain, September 1979) decided to establish WTD, beginning in 1980.

The purpose of WTD is to foster awareness among the international community on the social, cultural, political and economic importance of tourism. The celebration seeks to address global challenges outlined in the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to highlight the contribution the tourism sector can make in reaching these goals.

WTD is celebrated each year around the themes selected by the UNWTO General Assembly, on the recommendation of the UNWTO Executive Council. In recent years, the official themes have gained further visibility by being aligned to United Nations Observances.

The 19th session of the UNWTO General Assembly (Gyeongju, Republic of Korea, 10-13 October 2011), approved *Tourism and Water – Protecting our Common Future* as the theme for the 2013 World Tourism Day (WTD) celebrations and selected the Republic of Maldives, as the host of these celebrations.

**UN context**

*Tourism and Water – Protecting our Common Future* will underscore the role of the tourism sector in the broader context of the United Nations International Year of Water Cooperation.

With the support of UN Water, the United Nations coordination mechanism for all water-related issues, WTD 2013 has a clear potential to further promote the contribution of tourism to sustainability related issues, especially to climate change response and the management of water resources, and the constructive role of the public and private tourism sector.

Additional support is regularly provided by a dedicated WTD message by the UN Secretary-General.
Objectives for 2013

WTD 2013 will be a unique opportunity to raise awareness of tourism’s role in water access and shine a spotlight on the sector’s contribution to a more sustainable water future. This will be communicated around the following key messages

(a) Clean and readily accessible freshwater is one of tourism’s most precious resources.  
(b) Excessive water consumption coupled with weak water management is limiting universal access to safe water.  
(c) Tourism can and should provide environmentally sound solutions, as well as political and financial support, for the conservation and sustainable use of freshwater sources.

UNWTO Members are encouraged to support WTD through activities on a national and local level, through public and public-private initiatives. Every year, the UNWTO facilitates free-to-use collateral and support material around WTD, including the official logo, a message by the UNWTO Secretary-General, research resources as well as a mapping system where all Members can place their events and initiatives.

Official activities

The official celebrations of WTD 2013, chaired by the UNWTO Secretary-General, will take place in the Maldives.

In coordination with the host country, UNWTO will hold an annual Think Tank around the WTD theme and encourages all Member States to engage in this event. Further activities are under discussion with the host country.

All official WTD activities are strongly promoted by the UNWTO on its dedicated WTD website and through its communication channels (press releases, letters to members, social media, etc.). The host country is also given space on the WTD website to feature itself as a destination.

Previous celebrations

Information on previous WTD celebrations can be found online at [http://wtd.unwto.org/en/content/previous-world-tourism-day-celebrations](http://wtd.unwto.org/en/content/previous-world-tourism-day-celebrations)