UNWTO COMMISSION FOR SOUTH ASIA
Fifty-fourth Meeting
Victoria Falls (Zimbabwe)
25 August 2013

Item 6 of the Provisional Agenda

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General submits to the Commission for South Asia information on regional activities since the 25th CAP-CSA Joint meeting in Hyderabad, India, in April 2013.
REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

This document covers the major activities the UNWTO has undertaken in the Asia-Pacific region since the 25th Joint Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific and the UNWTO Commission for South Asia which was held in Hyderabad, India in April 2013. It also provides some information on upcoming events scheduled for the rest of 2013.

1. **25th CAP-CSA Joint Meeting and the UNWTO Conference on Sustainable Tourism Development** (Hyderabad, India, April, 2013)

During the joint meeting, discussions centred mainly on travel facilitation, taxation, sustainability and air connectivity, all of which reflected UNWTO’s current global concerns.

The UNWTO Conference on Sustainable Tourism Development aimed at introducing UNWTO’s management approach to economic, social and environmental sustainability in tourism and the range of indicators which can be used for this purpose. It also provided a global overview of the progress that has been made in the field of sustainability since the 1990s and introduced the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria. A full report on the conference is available on UNWTO’s website on the following link: [http://asiapacific.unwto.org/en/event/25th-csap-csacap-joint-meeting-unwto-conference-sustainable-tourism-development](http://asiapacific.unwto.org/en/event/25th-csap-csacap-joint-meeting-unwto-conference-sustainable-tourism-development)


The UNWTO Regional Conference on Tourism Partnerships was the first of its kind. It was organized by UNWTO jointly with Korea Tourism Organization (KTO) in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of the Republic of Korea.

The main objective of the conference was to create a platform for participants in the private and public sectors to enable them to engage in a dialogue and shared-vision on how to advance tourism in the context of a technology-driven world, using development strategies that are both ethical and sustainable.

Within the framework of this event, the first signing ceremony of the **Private Sector Commitment to the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism** in Asia took place. This special signing ceremony was organized for companies and associations that had expressed interest in the Commitment to the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism. This Commitment constitutes a formal pledge to uphold ethical principles related to the sustainable and responsible development of tourism, enshrined in the Code. Seven Korean institutions and one company from Hong Kong joined the signing ceremony, namely Asiana Airlines, Hana Tour, Korean Air, Korean Association of Travel Agents (KATA), the Korean Mice Association, the Korean Tour Association, Lotte Hotel and Resorts, and Sanctuary Resorts of Hong Kong.

3. **7th UNWTO Asia/Pacific Executive Training Programme on Tourism Branding and Communications** - Busan - South Korea (June 2013)

The programme was aimed at strengthening effective policies and strategies that must be adapted to changing priorities and concerns at the national and destination levels. The overall
objectives of the training programme were to deepen participants’ understanding of branding and communications in the following areas: success of a tourism destination; forming effective and meaningful marketing partnerships between the public and private sectors; working with traditional media outlets to promulgate a destination’s brand; and capitalizing on emerging technologies as a destination promotion tool. It was organised with the financial support of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of the Republic of Korea.

4. Technical assistance mission on tourism statistics to Bangladesh, Bhutan and Sri Lanka (July 2013)

UNWTO carried out a technical assistance mission on tourism statistics to Bangladesh, Bhutan and Sri Lanka at the request of the Bangladesh Tourism Board, the Tourism Council of Bhutan and the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority.

The mission focused on understanding the main features of the scope of the tourism industry in each country and made an assessment of the quality of the data included in their respective country’s System of Tourism Statistics and their ability to describe such a scope. The establishment of a TSA has to be seen as a long-term goal and could well serve as an enabler to improve tourism statistics.

5. 6th UNWTO International Meeting on Silk Road Tourism - Dunhuang – China (August 2013)

The 6th International Meeting on Silk Road Tourism was the largest meeting on the Silk Road ever to be organised in China, gathering more than 300 participants from 27 countries. It was jointly organized by UNWTO, China National Tourism Administration (CNTA) and Gansu Province of China, in collaboration with the China Chamber of Tourism, whose members are the major tourism operational and investment companies in China.

The meeting brought together experts in the fields of tourism, marketing, investment and heritage management to discuss how to further raise the profile of Silk Road tourism and drive development that is sustainable, responsible and internationally competitive. The Meeting also looked at how stakeholders can leverage from the Silk Road’s positioning and help rebuild the world’s most important travel route.

Upcoming Events


World Tourism Day is celebrated annually on 27 September. Its purpose is to foster awareness among the international community of the importance of tourism and its social, cultural, political and economic value. The event seeks to address the global challenges outlined in the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and highlight the tourism sector’s contribution in reaching these goals.

In support of United Nations International Year of Water Cooperation, World Tourism Day (WTD) 2013 is being held under the theme Tourism and Water: Protecting our Common Future. This year’s theme highlights tourism’s role in water access and shines a spotlight on the actions
currently being taken by the sector in order to contribute to a more sustainable water future, as well as the challenges ahead. This year, as the host of World Tourism Day, the Maldives representing the Commission for South Asia, will be the world’s focus of all the celebrations.

The World Tourism Conference 2013 will be held in Melaka, Malaysia from the 21 - 23 October 2013. The key objectives of this conference are to discuss current and relevant issues of the tourism industry.

Key areas for discussion will be:

- **Beyond Mass Tourism**: In order to ensure that the sector and economies prosper with higher yield markets, they should capitalize on niche products, pricing correctly and targeting the right markets.
- **Innovative Marketing**: The new approaches for attracting affluent travellers include innovative and creative products and maintaining a strong brand identity to develop dynamism and continuous progress in the industry.
- **Directions for Tourism Product Development**: New directions include the benefits of tourism products focusing on homestay and its variants, the potential of domestic tourism as well as youth and Gen-Y Travellers, and synergies between conservation and commercial viability.

The Guilin Forum provides an annual Pan-Asia-Pacific platform for policy makers, senior officials, researchers and industry representatives to take stock of global & regional trends and to better understand their potential impacts on tourism. The event, under the joint umbrella of the UNWTO and PATA, gives participants the opportunity to share information, analyse the current tourism situation and map out the next course of action for the future.

This year’s forum will be organized under the theme of **New Knowledge, Practices and Challenges**.

4. **UNWTO Regional Conference on Tourism Development in Cultural and Natural Heritage Sites - Siem Reap – Cambodia (1 Nov 2013)**

This Regional Conference will be organized jointly by UNWTO and the Government of Cambodia. It will bring together representatives of UNWTO Member States from both the Asia-Pacific Region and other regions. This event will be a forum for tourism authorities, experts and practitioners to discuss and review opportunities and challenges of sustainable tourism at cultural and natural heritage sites.

The aims and objectives of the conference are to showcase the cultural, natural and historical richness and heritage of the Asian Region; and to present case studies and country experiences on successful policies, guidelines for sustainable sites management preservation and strategies for cultural tourism development.
5. **International Conference: Spiritual Tourism for Sustainable Development**  
*(Ninh Binh City, Viet Nam, 21-22 November 2013)*

UNWTO will organize the Conference jointly with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. It will be the first ever UNWTO event on spiritual tourism to explore the ways in which living culture, traditions and beliefs can be integrated into tourism while respecting the four pillars of sustainability: environmental, economic, social and cultural.

With a view to enhancing the positive effects of spiritual tourism on the economic and social advancement of communities and societies across the globe, the Conference will draw particular attention to:

- understanding and safeguarding spiritual, religious and cultural values and assets in the context of tourism;
- the interpretation, development, management and promotion of spiritual tourism products; and
- the socio-economic inclusion and empowerment of host communities, in particular of vulnerable groups, through spiritual tourism.

6. **UNWTO Sustainable Tourism Observatory Conference** *(Madrid, Spain, 12-13 December 2013)*

UNWTO will organize this Conference jointly with Sun Yat-sen University of China – the Monitoring Centre of UNWTO’s Sustainable Tourism Observatories in China. The conference is open to all 5 existing Observatories in China (i.e. Yangshuo, Huangshan, Zhangjiajie, Kanas and Chengdu), the one in Europe (i.e. Rhodes for the South Aegean and in Chios for the North Aegean), and countries in Asia, Europe and South America which are interested in the observatory Initiative.

The aim of the event is to review the activities undertaken by the Observatories in the past year and to share experiences which China has accumulated over the years monitoring these observatories. The Conference will be organized in conjunction with the 2nd Annual Working Meeting of UNWTO Sustainable Tourism Observatories in China.

7. **On-going UNWTO Studies in the region**

- Air Connectivity and its impact on Tourism in Asia and the Pacific (in collaboration with PATA and TPO);
- Tourism’s Response to Climate Change: an examination of tourism-related initiatives in Asia and the Pacific (in collaboration with the University of Queensland).