UNWTO COMMISSION FOR EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC
UNWTO COMMISSION FOR SOUTH ASIA
Twenty-sixth Joint Meeting
Legazpi, Philippines
18 May 2014

Item 5.3 of the Provisional Agenda

Implementation of the General Programme of Work

–

ACTIVITIES OF THE UNWTO REGIONAL SUPPORT OFFICE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General submits to the Joint Meeting of the two Commissions a report on the activities that have been undertaken by the UNWTO Regional Support Office in the region since the 50th CAP and the 54th CSA Meetings which were held in Victoria Falls in August 2013 within the framework of the 20th General Assembly.

UNWTO Regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific (RSOAP): Activities in 2013 – 2014

I. The Mission of the UNWTO Regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific (RSOAP)

UNWTO RSOAP's mission is to facilitate and coordinate the efforts of Member States and Affiliate Members in tourism under the supervision of the Regional Programme for Asia and the Pacific (RPAP) at UNWTO Headquarters, and to disseminate UNWTO's knowledge and research outcomes in our region as well as to help UNWTO members to build cooperative relationships in Asia and the Pacific.

In this regard, the mandate of the office is in the following areas:

○ UNWTO's priorities

1. Mainstreaming tourism in the global agenda
2. Improving tourism competitiveness
3. Promoting sustainable tourism development
4. Advancing tourism's contribution to poverty reduction and development
5. Fostering knowledge, education and capacity
6. Building partnership

II. UNWTO RSOAP's activities in 2013

A. Mainstreaming tourism in the global agenda

JATA Tourism Expo and the Secretary-General's visit to Kyoto and Nara

In September, 2013, Dr. Taleb Rifai, Secretary General of UNWTO, visited Japan to attend the JATA Tourism Expo, signing the "JATA/UNWTO Comprehensive Partner Agreement" on September 13, 2013. On this occasion, Dr. Rifai visited Kyoto and Nara to have meetings with Mr. Shogo Arai, Governor of Nara Prefecture, Mr. Daisaku Kadokawa, Mayor of Kyoto City, Mr. Akimasa Yamashita, Vice-Governor of Kyoto Prefecture, Ms. Kazuyo Sejima, the Pritzker Architecture Prize laureate in 2010 and other influential stakeholders in tourism in the Kansai Area of Japan. The Office helped stakeholders in setting up those meetings in order to get these influential decision-makers in Japan to understand the importance of tourism and UNWTO's activities.

B. Improving Tourism Competitiveness

UNWTO Technical Assistance for Tourism Legislation Workshop in Mongolia

At the invitation of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (MCST) of Mongolia, the Japan Tourism Agency (JTA) and RSOAP supported to organize the "UNWTO Technical Assistance for Tourism Legislation Workshop" in Ulaanbaatar Mongolia from 24th-25th January 2014 with the financial support of the UNWTO/Republic of Korea Asia Competitiveness fund. The goals

of this two-day seminar were sharing expertise in the field of tourism law and promoting sustainable tourism development. The UNWTO delegation was led by Mr. Yoshiaki Hompo, Special Advisor of the Japan Tourism Agency (JTA), former Commissioner of the JTA, and a Professor of Tokyo Metropolitan University as an expert for the mission. Mr. Hompo shared his expertise and firsthand experience with the Japanese tourism legislation and policy implementation. The two-day workshop discussions displayed lively participation from a variety of stakeholders in the Mongolian tourism sector, including MCST officials, tourism industry associations, travel agencies and tourism advocates.

C. Fostering knowledge, education and capacity building

1. UNWTO Tourism Educational Seminar for Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam (9th -21st Dec.2013, Nara Japan)

RSOAP and its supporting body the Asia-Pacific Tourism Exchange Center (APTEC) organized "the UNWTO Tourism Educational Seminar in Nara, Japan for Cambodia / Lao PDR / Myanmar / Vietnam (CLMV)" from 9th to 21st December 2013 with support from the UNWTO, financed by the Nippon Foundation. 11 participants from CLMV countries, both the public and private sectors joined this seminar. This seminar was planned to address pressing needs from the participating countries such as Tourism Satellite Account (TSA), hospitality management, and destination management focused on strategies for inbound tourism.

2. Keynote Speech at the 12th Lanith Symposium
(4th April.2014, Vientiane, Lao PDR)

The 12th Lanith (Lao National Institute of Tourism and Hospitality) Symposium, "Marketing and Promoting Lao Tourism," was held in Laos on the 4th of April, RSOAP dispatched Mr. Shintaro Hori, Deputy Chief of RSOAP, to give a presentation for the tourism stakeholders under the theme of "Attracting the lucrative Japanese market", highlighting five areas to attract Japanese travelers and requirement in a destination as well as providing suggestions on effective marketing strategy. Ms. Sarah Mathews from Trip advisor also addressed the marketing strategy of Lao Tourism in the Symposium. More than seventy people attended including significant decision makers in Lao Tourism, Mr. Saly Phimphinith, Director General of Tourism Marketing Department at the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism (MICT) and Mr. Vang Rattanavong, former Vice Chairman of the Lao National Tourism Administration.

3. Keynote Speech at "Technical Workshop of Cultural and Heritage Tourism" by
ASEAN Japan Centre

RSOAP cooperated with the "Technical Workshop on Cultural and Heritage Tourism" hosted by Japan-ASEAN Center by sending Mr. Shintaro Hori, Deputy Chief of RSOAP, to deliver a presentation under the theme of Cultural Tourism and Heritage Preservation, emphasizing the importance of the preservation of culture and the maintaining of sustainable tourism, using the case study of the Amish and Mennonites communities in the United States.

D. Building partnership

1. Collaboration with UNWTO. Volunteer Corps

RSOAP initiated collaboration with the UNWTO. Volunteer Corps; university graduates and professionals trained in an intensive course in the fields of international cooperation and development in tourism, organized by UNWTO, the Themis Foundation and George Washington University. RSOAP started working with UNWTO.volunteer Corps in the workshop in Mongolia as well as the translation of RSOAP's documents and press releases in 2014. RSOAP expects to establish more collaboration with the UNWTO. Volunteer Corps in future events in 2014 and 2015.

III. UNWTO RSOAP's plan for 2014

A. Introduction of IPSAS

2014 is a critical year for UNWTO RSOAP. In January, 2014, UNWTO introduced the International Public Sector Accounting Standard, IPSAS, and the Office has been integrated into the consolidated financial statement of UNWTO. Along with this integration, we are reviewing the work processes and organizational structure to maintain appropriate transparency under the IPSAS. The transition to IPSAS is planned to complete in 2014.

B. Change of organizational structure

RSOAP is reorganizing its organizational structure by adding more international staff in order to improve the office's capacity and efficiency in accommodating more work for UNWTO Member States and Affiliate Members in Asia and the Pacific.

C.UNWTO RSOAP's major events and program for 2014

1. JATA Tourism Expo (25th – 28th September, Tokyo, Japan)

The JATA Tourism EXPO Japan 2014 will be held from the 25th to the 28th of September under the theme of "Tourism and Community Development", which will follow with symposiums, such as "Mega Events and Tourism." RSOAP will assist the JATA Tourism Expo working closely together with its headquarters and JATA.

2. The 13th OECD Global Forum on Tourism Statistics (17th -18th November, Nara, Japan) and the UNWTO Special Workshop on Tourism Statistics (20th -21st November, Nara, Japan)

The 13th Global Forum on Tourism Statistics, co-organized by OECD and Eurostat, and the UNWTO Special Workshop on Tourism Statistics will be held consecutively from the 17th and the 21st of November, 2014. The Forum provides critical opportunities for exchanging information and opinions on the new methods of statistics with the perspective of domestic tourism, sustainability and the implementation of TSA. RSOAP is going to support the organization of these events.

Other than these planned events as of now, we are maintaining flexibility to plan new initiatives and research projects and to participate actively in activities to promote tourism for UNWTO Member States and Affiliate Members in Asia and the Pacific.