



CAP/CSA/27/5.2_Reg. Activities

**UNWTO COMMISSION FOR EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC
UNWTO COMMISSION FOR SOUTH ASIA
Twenty-seventh Joint Meeting
Bandos, Maldives
4 June 2015**

Item 5.2 of the Provisional Agenda

Implementation of the General Programme of Work

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

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 Organization in the region since the 26th CAP-CSA Joint meeting which was held in Legazpi, Philippines in May 2014.

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

UNWTO's current programme of work is structured in line with its two strategic objectives: Competitiveness and Sustainability.

The Organization's activities in the Asia-Pacific region have thus sought to promote these objectives over the past year. This report summarises the major activities undertaken by UNWTO in the Asia-Pacific region since the 26th CAP-CSA Joint meeting which was held in Legazpi, Philippines in May 2014. While some of the activities are based on these objectives and priority areas, others have been carried out upon individual requests received from member States.

SUSTAINABILITY

The First UNWTO/UNESCO World Conference on Tourism and Culture (Siem Reap, Cambodia, 4-6 February, 2015)

The Kingdom of Cambodia hosted this historic event which was graced by the presence of its Honourable Prime Minister H.E. Mr. Samdech Hun Sen and His Majesty King Norodom Sihamoni – the King of the Kingdom of Cambodia. Over 900 participants, including about 45 Ministers and Vice Ministers of Tourism and Culture, international experts, speakers and guests from 100 countries, gathered in Siem Reap (home to Angkor Wat – Cambodia's renowned World Heritage Site) to explore and advance new partnership models between tourism and culture.

The Conference took advantage of the presence of the numerous high-level representations to organise a Ministerial Dialogue on *Building New Partnership Models*. Discussions among the Ministers and Heads of Delegation centred on the importance of creating common institutional structures to plan and manage cultural tourism, to promote community engagement and empowerment, as well as cooperation with the private sector.

Another important highlight of this World Conference was the endorsement of the *Siem Reap Declaration on Tourism and Culture*. The Declaration gives prominence to the opportunities for shared responsibility among tourism and culture stakeholders especially in the public sector and within governmental circles. This was meant to foster the immense synergies between culture and tourism which had been operating within government and administrative structures in silos, disconnected or poorly coordinated. The result of this had led to less optimal outcomes for national and regional development.

International Mayors' Forum on Tourism (Zhengzhou, China, 15-19 November, 2014)

UNWTO organised the Forum in collaboration with China National Tourism Administration and Henan Provincial People's Government, with the support of WTTC and PATA. Under the theme "Tourism, Soft Power of City Development", the Forum brought together mayors from 63 tourism cities worldwide and experts from international organizations to explore and analyse the role of tourism in accelerating the sustainable development of cities. They also discussed how to improve cooperation mechanisms among cities in order to promote and share strategies for the sustainable expansion of tourism cities; and the application of science and technology in urban tourism development. Other discussions centred on smart destinations, innovation in tourism cities, simplification of visitors' interaction with the environment while enhancing the quality of their experience in urban areas, and the improvement of the quality of life of city dwellers.

International Conference on Community Development through Tourism, (Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 16-17 September, 2014)

The Conference was organized by the Government of Cambodia in collaboration with UNWTO, PATA and the University of Sunshine Coast of Australia. The aim of the event was to examine case studies on mechanisms (both institutional and practical) that have led to the implementation, the successful inclusion of stakeholders and the analysis of the lessons learned in the development of community-based tourism enterprises. The Conference also provided a platform for sharing information on factors that contribute to successful development of community-based tourism in order to fulfil its aims which include sustaining communities and their unique attributes; conserving and protecting their natural environment and cultural resources; fostering knowledge exchange; and promoting local socio-economic development, capacity-building, empowerment and poverty alleviation.

The Conference brought together over 200 participants from 28 countries including tourism authorities, community tourism experts and practitioners who along with UNWTO, UNESCO, PATA, University of the Sunshine Coast and Griffith University, endorsed the *Phnom Penh Declaration on Community Development through Tourism*.

3rd International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) (Apia, 1-4 September 2014)

Heads of State, United Nations (UN) systems, global leaders, policymakers, business leaders and representatives from civil society gathered in Apia, to discuss the unique and particular vulnerabilities of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and to address and pledge support for the over-arching theme – the sustainable development of Small Island Developing States through genuine and durable partnerships.

UNWTO's presence at the Conference reflects the importance it has placed on tourism as being vital to the future development of SIDS. One initiative that responds well to the overall theme of partnerships and can provide future assistance to SIDS is the UNWTO-led Steering Committee on Tourism for Development (SCTD), which aims to coordinate and strengthen the development impact of international tourism through its participating members.

UNWTO/MTCO International Conference on Tourism and Heritage Protection (Mandalay, Myanmar, 12 June, 2014)

The Conference was organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism of Myanmar and Mekong Tourism Coordinating Office (MTCO). It was held in conjunction with the 33rd Greater Mekong Sub Region Tourism Working Group meeting and the Mekong Tourism Forum. The main purpose of the Conference was to explore the rapidly growing interest in sustainable tourism development as well as its challenges and opportunities, and to apply them to the conservation of heritage sites. The event provided an introduction to the relationship between heritage and sustainable tourism, referencing case studies of best practice in heritage conservation from countries throughout Asia and Europe. A key focus of the event was the discussion on policy formulation in regards to the sustainable management of Myanmar's rich abundance of cultural heritage sites and their long-term protection and conservation.

UNWTO-ASEAN International Conference on Tourism and Climate Change (Legazpi, Philippines, 19 May 2014)

The conference was held within the context of the 26th Joint Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific and the UNWTO Commission for South Asia.

The main objective for choosing the theme of climate change stemmed from the fact that climate change still poses an increasing risk for tourism operations in many destinations as a result of coastal erosion, damage to coral reefs, destruction of infrastructure and property as well as risk to human life and health. Improving resilience to climate change was stressed as an imperative owing to its potential significant impact on tourism activities and the natural environment - which constitutes a key attraction and a vital resource for tourism.

The Conference thus addressed specific challenges climate change poses to vulnerable destinations particularly in the Asia-Pacific region and examples of relevant actions that can be taken to counteract these challenges. A selection of successful implementation initiatives of low carbon tourism development, including climate change mitigation policies, installation of energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies and others, were also presented. The Conference concluded with the adoption of the *Legazpi Declaration on Tourism's Response to Climate Change* intended for accelerating future mitigating-oriented initiatives at the national, regional and global levels.

COMPETITIVENESS AND QUALITY

9th UNWTO Asia/Pacific Executive Training Programme on Tourism Policy and Strategy (Bohol, Philippines, 28 April – 1 May, 2015)

This annual Executive Training Programme (organized with the generous sponsorship of the Republic of Korea) serves as an important forum where high-level policymakers and directors of the region's National Tourism Administrations get together to discuss the formulation of effective and responsive policies and strategies. It also gives them the opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences on contemporary tourism issues.

This year's Programme, was co-organised and hosted by the Department of Tourism of the Philippines, under the theme *Community Based Development and Tourism Recovery*. The overall objectives were to share successful examples on community-based development and tourism; examine the key aspects that make these successful; deepen participants' understanding of the role of tourism in achieving changes in the development and recovery of local communities; how tourism policy can help in this, and how to it can empower people in the communities while providing them with the necessary skills.

UNWTO Technical Assistance Mission to Maldives on Tourism Statistics (December 2014)

This mission was organized at the request of the Ministry of Tourism of the Government of Maldives as a follow-up to a previous technical assistance mission on tourism statistics in 2013. It focused on developing a long term plan for setting up a TSA in the Maldives and preparing the officials of the Ministry of Tourism in the initiation of the development process of TSA.

The mission was aimed at reinforcing tourism statistics handling capacity in sample surveying, data handling, analysis and reporting; and developing a long term strategic plan for the

implementation of TSA in the Maldives in accordance with the resources available. Other objectives included providing assistance for training in TSA procedures (i.e. the 10 TSA tables), compilation and completion of the tables and associated cooperation with other data providers; as well as the development and review of the terms and definitions to be adopted in this process.

UNWTO Special Workshop on Tourism Statistics (Nara, Japan, 17-21 November, 2014)

This special workshop was organised within the framework of OECD and Eurostat Global Forum on Tourism Statistics. It was the first time this Global Forum had taken place in Asia as until then, it had been hosted exclusively by European countries since 1994. UNWTO's Special Workshop drew the attendance of 192 participants from 47 countries, 16 of whom were from the Asia-Pacific region. They exchanged ideas and experiences about how to better monitor domestic tourism and measure sustainability in tourism.

Presentations were made on UNWTO's Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) system which provides a framework for analysing tourism expenditures in a systematic and consistent way. The TSA provides a standardised way for policymakers to understand tourism's role in contributing to GDP, income and employment. The presentations that were delivered showcased best practices in tourism statistics and TSA compilation methods from New Zealand, Argentina, Japan, Philippines, Austria, Spain, Canada, and the United States.

Speakers also addressed the data gaps in TSA, particularly with regard to how tourism's environmental, cultural and societal impacts are not included in the system. On the whole, Nara Tourism Statistics Week fostered East-West dialogue to build greater international cooperation for the harmonization of tourism statistics.

Technical Assistance for Formulation of the Maldives Destination Marketing Strategy, 2015-2017 (November, 2014)

Upon a request from the Government of Maldives, UNWTO carried out a technical assistance mission to the Maldives for the formulation of destination marketing strategy 2015-2017. The main objectives of this mission were to identify strategies for marketing Maldives regionally within the archipelago for minimising internal competition and increasing destination competitiveness; analyse regional tourism market trends and how Maldives should be positioned ; identify options for regional joint destination marketing and promotional activities that would generate increased visitor arrivals; identify strategies for marketing Maldives regionally within the archipelago for minimising internal competition and increasing destination competitiveness; review and recommend strategies for destination marketing and promotion to increase destination competitiveness and image enhancement; and to provide strategic direction for tactical actions and an implementation plan for the above specified strategic objectives/areas.

The 3rd Global Tourism Economy Forum (GTEF) (Macao S.A.R., China, 27-29 October 2014)

The Forum was hosted by Macao Special Administrative Region, with the coordination of Global Tourism Economy Research Centre and the collaboration of UNWTO. The theme, "Maritime Silk Road - From Macao We Begin" reflected China's initiatives to revive the Maritime Silk Road and focused on using intercontinental cooperation as well as trade and tourism opportunities to strengthen both the historic and modern Maritime Silk Road routes. A special high-level session

entitled “Face to Face, Ministers and Private Sector CEOs” was organised as the Forum’s centre of attention in collaboration with UNWTO.

One of the main highlights of the event was the launching of the first UNWTO/GTERC Annual Report on Asia Tourism Trends. It provides a comprehensive overview of the latest developments in Asian tourism and reflects UNWTO and GTERC’s commitment to the promotion of tourism as an economic driver. The report presented UNWTO’s long-term forecasts indicating the continuous growth momentum in Asia and its share of international tourist arrivals which is expected to rise by 30% to reach 535 million in 2030.

Another important element of the Forum which needs to be underlined is the announcement of the Pacific Alliance countries (Mexico, Peru, Chile and Colombia) as GTEF Partner Countries in 2015.

The 8th UNWTO/PATA Forum on Tourism Trends and Outlook (Guilin, China, 13-15 October, 2014)

The 8th session of the Forum was co-organised by UNWTO and PATA in collaboration with Hong Kong Polytechnic University and Guilin Municipal Government. The theme for this edition was “Enhancing Connectivity in Tourism which was chosen mainly to reflect the trend in contemporary societies with respect to technological and social connectivity among professionals, organizations, businesses and industries.

The Forum aimed at achieving the following objectives: to enhance connectivity through sharing state-of-the-art research, perspectives, and experiences in tourism policy, development and industry practices; to analyse global and regional tourism trends and challenges in connectivity improvement or impairment; and to explore and formulate new problems for future research and knowledge development on connectivity enhancement in the tourism industry.

Discussions centred on consequences that improvement in connectivity or lack of it can have on tourism policy, development and industry practices from technological, regional, geo-political and socio-economic perspectives.

JATA Tourism EXPO and Travel Showcase (Tokyo, Japan, 25-28 September 2014)

In line with a comprehensive agreement signed between UNWTO and Japan Association of Travel Agents (JATA) to conduct joint tourism activities, JATA Tourism EXPO was organised under the themes “The Power of Travel” and “Tourism and Community Development.” Five main events were held within the framework of the EXPO including Japan Night, International Tourism Forum, International Business Meeting, Travel Showcase and Tourism and Tourism Award Commendation.

Additionally, a special seminar on “*The Growth of Cultural Tourism on the Silk Road and Opportunities for the Japanese outbound market*” was organised jointly by UNWTO, JATA and Asia-Pacific Tourism Exchange Center (APTEC). Discussions were held on the diversity of Silk Road’s cultural tourism offer and the opportunities this creates for attracting the Japanese outbound market. Apart from the seminar, 12 leading corporations and organizations from the Japanese tourism industry committed to the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics at the signing ceremony which took place for this purpose. Other events which were also held within the

framework of the Tourism EXPO include Visit Japan Travel Mart 2014 and Visit Japan MICE Mart 2014.

Workshop on ASEAN River-based Tourism Development (Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, 22 September 2014)

As part of the UNWTO-ASEAN tourism cooperation on river-based tourism development in the ASEAN region, UNWTO organized a Workshop on ASEAN River-based Tourism Development in collaboration with Vietnam National Administration of Tourism and ASEAN.

The main aim of the Workshop was to discuss the findings of a technical assistance mission and a study that UNWTO undertook on ASEAN river-based tourism. As the study was based on river-based tourism development experiences in Europe (the Danube, to be specific), apart from examining some case studies on ASEAN countries, there were also discussions on a comparative analysis of the European river-based cases.

Participants additionally raised issues on the cooperation between the public and private sectors related to river-based tourism. They recommended that governments and their institutions in charge of this subject should provide guidelines and plans and should ensure that they are enforced. They should also monitor river-based tourism products produced by the private sector. Challenges that need to be addressed include finding a dynamic ASEAN formula; the strict visa and passport policies in ASEAN countries which represents a major obstacle for optimizing river-based policies and projects as well as a general lack of awareness of the river-based tourism potential.

The report on the study under the title "**UNWTO Report: Initial Situation Analysis on River-Based Tourism in ASEAN Countries**" was presented to the Ministers of ASEAN on the occasion of ASEAN Tourism Forum which was held in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar in January 2015. Following the positive reaction of the ASEAN Ministers to the report, UNWTO has been entrusted with another study as a follow-up to this current study but focusing on river-based tourism development in the Mekong River Area.

UNWTO Mekong Regional Statistical Capacity Building Workshop (Siem Reap, Cambodia from 26-30 July 2014)

The UNWTO Mekong Regional Statistical Capacity Building Workshop was held in keeping with UNWTO's Regional Statistical Capacity Building Programme to provide its support and expertise to Member States that wish to improve their national System of Tourism Statistics with a view to developing a Tourism Satellite Account.

The objective of the programme was to bring together participants from the Mekong River area and train them in the United Nations recommended statistical methodology, providing guidance on the practical aspects of implementation, and offering a platform for exchanging experiences with counterparts in countries with similar situations.

The workshop was also held for other objectives such as the improvement of the regional competitiveness of the Mekong River countries because of their shared common tourism development policies and strategies; to provide a platform for regional comparability in terms of the collection of tourism and tourism-related economic data; and to ensure that participating

countries have a thorough understanding of the tourism sector and the role it plays in the regional economy. Countries that participated include Lao PDR, Myanmar, Vietnam and Thailand.

UNWTO National Statistics Workshop (Siem Reap, Cambodia, 21-25 July 2014)

In line with UNWTO's statistical capacity building programme aimed at assisting countries to progressively improve their statistical base and to provide them with useful information for policy design and for the development of a Tourism Satellite Account, a National Statistical Capacity Building Workshop was held in Siem Reap.

The aim of the training sessions was to outline UNWTO's framework and methodology for developing tourism statistics at the national level; to promote conformance with international standards (IRTS, TSA:RMF); to encourage and promote the exchange of information, knowledge and expertise among stakeholders through identifying synergies; and to promote consistency in approaches and methodology.

The workshop was organized in an interactive manner to encourage participation and input from the relevant stakeholders including Ministry of Tourism (Statistics, Planning and Marketing Divisions); National Statistics Office and Central Bank and Immigration Department. Both the national and regional workshops were organized with the financial support of the Republic of Korea.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

China International Tourism Forum (Shanghai, China, 14 November, 2014)

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and China National Tourism Administration (CNTA) co-organized the Forum on the occasion of *China International Travel Mart* (CITM) 2014 with the sponsorship of *UnionPay International*.

The Forum focused on Chinese Inbound and outbound tourism and the discussions that emerged were based on the latest studies of the rapid growth of Chinese tourism. The main aim was to showcase China's promotion strategies and how it is encouraging its citizens to travel abroad particularly to the emerging destinations in the Middle East, Africa and the Pacific.

China is attracting the world's attention with the significant achievement it has made during the last decade in terms of tourism development. The Forum was thus a good opportunity for the participants to get insight into how to better penetrate the biggest tourism emerging market (i.e. the Chinese market) and to share China's experience in destination promotion.

5th UNWTO Silk Road Task Force Meeting (Seoul, Republic of Korea, 23-24 April 2015)

UNWTO joined hands with the Ministry of Sports, Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Korea (MSCT) and the Korean Tourism Organization (KTO) to organize this Task Force Meeting in Seoul, which gathered representatives from UNWTO, UNESCO and 17 countries to discuss strategies and priorities for tourism development along the Silk Road.

The Task Force Meeting highlighted the vast opportunities for joint product development and marketing campaigns, and emphasized the ongoing need for facilitating travel across the Silk Road region. Republic of Korea demonstrated its commitment to promoting the Silk Road and will host the Silk Road Cultural Festival in Gyeongju in August 2015.

The Meeting was opened by Mr. Chong Kim, Vice-Minister, Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of the Republic of Korea and included participants from UNWTO, UNESCO, WFTGA, and 17 countries including Azerbaijan, **Bangladesh**, Bulgaria, Croatia, **China**, Georgia, **Iran**, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, **Mongolia**, **Pakistan**, **Republic of Korea**, Russia, Spain, Tajikistan, Turkey and Ukraine.

Annual Briefing for Asia and the Pacific Ambassadors (Madrid, Spain, March 2015)

Ambassadors and Heads of Mission from 17 embassies of the Asia Pacific region resident in Madrid attended UNWTO's Annual Asia-Pacific Ambassadors' Meeting and Luncheon on Tuesday the 10th of March. During the meeting, the Secretariat briefed them about important events and projects of the region over the past year as well as global and regional contemporary issues in the tourism world.

The annual event also served as a platform for ambassadors from across the Asia-Pacific region to network with each other

PUBLICATIONS

Tourism Shaping Tomorrow: Benefitting from the Best Practices of Observatories of Sustainable Tourism

This publication is the product of a joint partnership between the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Sun Yat-Sen University (SYSU) and the Monitoring Centre for UNWTO Sustainable Tourism Observatories (MCSTO).

It is a compendium of UNWTO's 6 observatories in China which serves as a means of providing destinations worldwide with inspiration and direction potentially leading to measurable, meaningful tourism sector development. Its main aim is to encourage the adoption of observatories as a means of measuring the transformational role of tourism. Through a showcase of the goals, work and quantifiable results of observatories, this book provides an inspiring direction on how other nations across the globe can accurately measure, both quantitatively and qualitatively, the contribution that tourism is making towards providing jobs, strengthening economic activity, increasing differentiation and competitiveness, enhancing experience delivery, and playing a critical role in community development.

Initial Situation Analysis on River-based Tourism in ASEAN Countries

At the request of ASEAN, UNWTO launched a fact-finding study on ASEAN River-based Tourism Development in 2014.

The rationale behind the request was in line with the ASEAN Tourism Marketing Strategy 2012 – 2015, that is, to look more closely at river-based tourism resources in ASEAN. River-based

tourism resources in ASEAN are undeveloped or under-developed compared with their full potential and the enormous opportunities they offer for tourism development.

Also, given the rich river-based assets of individual countries, with special emphasis on the mighty Mekong and the Salween rivers due to their regional propensities, there was a consensus in favour of such a study because it was considered valuable to ASEAN's tourism growth.

Thus, the main objectives for the study were *inter alia*, to assist ASEAN countries in comprehensively evaluating the potential of key river tourism development in a way that promotes cross border cooperation and tourism activities between member countries; and to facilitate cooperation in the management and development of river tourism development among industry stakeholders in ASEAN and participating partners in the different source markets worldwide.

UNWTO / GTERC: Asia Tourism Trends

This publication is the result of an agreement between UNWTO and the Global Tourism Economy Research Centre (GTERC) which was signed in September 2013 for the production of an annual Asia Tourism Trends Report to be presented at the Global Economy Forum (GTEF).

This first edition of the joint UNWTO/GTERC publication on Asia Tourism Trends focuses on the recent tourist trends of Asia with particular emphasis on economy and demographics; outbound tourism and tourism receipts; the new maritime Silk Road with Macao and China as the focal points; the key tourism agendas of Asia in relation to air connectivity and climate change; and Islamic culture and its impact on tourism in Asia.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Mekong Tourism Forum 2015 (15-19 June, Danang Vietnam)
- 2015 Silk Road International Conference (18 – 20 June, Xian China)
- UNWTO General Assembly (12-17 September Medellin, Colombia)
- Global Tourism Economy Forum 2015 (12-14 October, Macao, China)
- 2nd Euro/Asian Mt. Resorts Conference (14-16 October, Ulsan, Republic of Korea)
- 9th UNWTO/PATA Forum on Tourism Trends and Outlook (19-21 October, Guilin, China)
- Silk Road Thematic conference (16-18 December, Nara, Japan)