

**UNWTO COMMISSION FOR EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC
UNWTO COMMISSION FOR SOUTH ASIA**

Thirtieth Joint Meeting

Nadi, Fiji

19 June 2018

**Item 6 the Provisional Agenda
REPORT ON 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 52nd CAP and 56th CSA Joint meeting which was held in Chengdu, China in September 2017 within the context of UNWTO's 22nd General Assembly.

Regional Activities

The year 2017 was the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development - a unique opportunity for the international tourism community to promote the contribution of tourism to achieving the sustainable development agenda, to and beyond 2030. In line with the objectives of the International Year, one of UNWTO's key priorities in 2017 was placing sustainability at the heart of tourism development and promoting the role of sustainable tourism in development

This report summarises the main activities undertaken by UNWTO in the Asia-Pacific region since the 52nd CAP and 56th CSA meetings in Chengdu, China in September 2017 within the framework of the 22nd General Assembly. While some of the activities testify to the support of the celebration of the International Year, others – especially those that have been organized this year to date – have sought to commemorate the Year while at the same time contributing to the achievement of the 2030 agenda and beyond. Similarly, other events have been carried out in accordance with UNWTO's priority areas concerning strategic objectives of sustainability and competitiveness, its priorities in relation to tourism and technology or in response to individual requests received from member States.

Sustainability

Global Tourism Economy Forum (GTEF) 2017 (Macao, China, 16-17 October, 2017)

The 6th Global Tourism Economy Forum (GTEF) was organised by Global Tourism Economy Research Centre (GTERC) in close collaboration with Macao Special Administrative Region Government, UNWTO, All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce (ACFIC), CNTA and China Chamber of Tourism. It was also supported by important regional and international organizations such as Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA), World Tourism Cities Federation (WTCF) and European Tourism Commission (ETC).

GTEF 2017 was held in support of the 2017 International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development and its theme "Regional Collaboration Towards a Better Future" was inspired by the "16+ 1" economic framework initiated by China and Central & Eastern Europe in order to explore how tourism stakeholders can break down barriers, find common grounds, and grow stronger together. Discussions thus focused on regional and trans-regional collaboration, and how regional collaboration can create a positive impact on economic globalization and contribute to sustainable tourism development.

During GTEF 2017, the fourth edition of the UNWTO/GTERC Annual Report on Asia Tourism Trends was released. One of its main focuses was the development and trends of technology and the digital economy in the Asia and the Pacific region which is in line with UNWTO's priority areas for 2016-2017 – particularly in relation to tourism and technology.

11th UNWTO/PATA Forum on Tourism Trends and Outlook (Guilin, China, 10-12 October, 2017)

At the gracious invitation of the Municipal Government of Guilin, the 11th UNWTO/PATA Forum on Tourism Trends and Outlook was organized by the World Tourism Organization

(UNWTO) and the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) in collaboration with Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

In support of the designation of 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development by the United Nations, the 11th edition of the Forum was themed as “Sustainable Tourism: Beyond Being Green”. As the International Year aimed to support a change in policies, business practices and consumer behavior towards a more sustainable tourism sector that can contribute effectively to the SDGs, the Forum focused some of its discussions on the role of tourism as a driver for sustainable development from policy, academic, and industry perspectives.

In light of the above, this 11th edition of the UNWTO/PATA forum aimed to deliver on the following objectives:

- To review and reflect upon 30 years of sustainable tourism research and practice, and to discuss their implications for the future of tourism as a strategy for sustainable development in a destination, society or community;
- To analyse and update global and regional trends and challenges for sustainable tourism development; and
- To facilitate dialogues and knowledge exchange amongst industry practitioners, policymakers and academics so as to promote the initiative and ultimately help achieve the goal of tourism for sustainable development.

The UNWTO/Chimelong Initiative: Capacity Building Workshop for Public Officials on Wildlife Conservation and Sustainable Tourism (Dhaka, Bangladesh, 11 January 2018)

The Capacity Building Workshop which was organised by UNWTO in collaboration with the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism and Bangladesh Tourism Board was held within the framework of the implementation of the UNWTO/Chimelong Initiative on wildlife and sustainable tourism.

The workshop aimed at raising awareness on policies related to the development of sustainable tourism as a driver of wildlife conservation and protection measures. A special focus was made on the royal Bengal tiger Bangladesh, present in the Sundarbans, one of UNESCO’s World Heritage sites. The relevance of these themes within Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Tourism Goals (SDGs) was underlined as well as the need to launch policies to address these topics at the national level. The workshop included the revision of good practices related to wildlife-based tourism in Asia and the Pacific region.

The 30 participants who joined the workshop were from different ministerial authorities in Bangladesh including Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism, Ministry of Environment and Forest, Bangladesh Tourism Board, Bangladesh Coast Guard, Blue Economy Cell, Bangladesh Tourist Police and Bangladesh Television.

International Sustainable Tourism Conference (Yogyakarta, Indonesia, 31 October - 1 November 2017)

The Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Indonesia, in collaboration with the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), organized the International Conference on Sustainable Tourism under the theme “Managing Tourism as a Sustainable Business Model for a Sustainable Future”.

The conference provided a platform for the public and private sector to share experiences, new methods and practices on developing business models that could transform and balance social and environmental preservation into prosperity for businesses. It also gave national and international participants the opportunity to discuss the systematic application of monitoring, evaluating (sustainable tourism indicators) and managing information techniques as key tools for the formulation and implementation of sustainable tourism policies, strategies, plans and management processes.

One important highlight of the conference was the launch of Indonesia's two new observatories which were added to the UNWTO International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories. The two new observatories are hosted by the Research Centre for Culture and Tourism of the Udayana University, responsible for monitoring Sanur's sustainable tourism, and the University of Sumatera Utara, responsible for monitoring Pangururan sustainable tourism destination. With these two observatories Indonesia now hosts 5 observatories. The first three were inaugurated on the occasion of the PATA Travel Mart which was held in Jakarta in September 2016.

The General Assembly Special Session on Smart Tourism (Chengdu, China, 14-15 September, 2017)

The General Assembly Special Session on Smart Tourism was held within the framework of the 22nd Session of the General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). It was jointly organized by UNWTO and the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) in collaboration with Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Zhejiang DRORE Technology Co., Ltd, Zhejiang University and other related Chinese government authorities.

In line with the celebration of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development 2017, the theme of the event was *A More Sustainable Tourism Future through Technology and Innovation*. The session aimed at building an understanding of the latest digital technologies and their applications to tourism, thereby reflecting one of the three pillar priorities of UNWTO's general programme of work concerning tourism and technology. Its main objectives were to debate on the information technologies and their applications to tourism; to examine social media, product innovations and the big data concept being applied to the industry in terms of destination planning and marketing and compilation of tourism statistics; to review the overall application of technology and its impact on tourism beginning with the transport industry; to assess the evolving growth and impact of changing technologies of ICT on tourism (particularly in the past decade with the growth of the Internet and the Web); and to evaluate the technology and applications that will impact on the travel and tourism industries over the next ten years.

Competitiveness

4th UNWTO World Forum on Gastronomy Tourism (Bangkok, Thailand, 30 May-1 June, 2018)

Under the theme *Harnessing the Power of Technology and Community Tourism as Drivers for a Positive Global Impact*, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Thailand co-organised the 4th UNWTO World Forum on

Gastronomy Tourism in collaboration with the Basque Culinary Center – an Affiliate Member of UNWTO.

The Forum explored topics related to cultural fusion throughout history and its impact on the local community, technology and gastronomy tourism and commercialization strategies in gastronomy tourism. The event also used the momentum created by the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development 2017 as a backdrop for discussions on how gastronomy tourism can be a force for good and drive positive global impact and the journey to 2030. Like previous editions of the UNWTO World Forum on Gastronomy Tourism, the forum examined gastronomy as the essence of culture, an element of intangible heritage, and the interrelation between gastronomy and tourism to enhance sustainable local development.

This was UNWTO's first world gathering on Gastronomy and Tourism in the Asia-Pacific region, bringing together panelists with decision-making power to gear the course of gastronomy tourism in the region and to position it as a competitive destination on this subject.

Thailand's fame as a leading gastronomy destination was strengthened by the recognition it received from the 350 international and local participants who gathered in Bangkok to savour a wide variety of Thai dishes known for their complex interplay of strong spices and unique ingredients.

The 2018 International Mayors' Forum on Tourism (IMFT) (Zhengzhou, China, 27-30 May 2018)

The 2018 International Mayors' Forum on Tourism (IMFT) was jointly organized by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of China and the People's Government of Henan Province in collaboration with World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

The International Mayors' Forum on Tourism was launched in 2008 as a high-end dialogue platform for tourism communities gathering many mayors in Henan from China and abroad to exchange ideas on strategies to boost tourism development.

The 2018 Forum was conducted under the theme of "City Tourism Innovation in an Era of Sharing Economy". It brought together mayors of tourism destinations along the Silk Road and experienced experts from the world over as well as international organizations to explore the role of tourism in promoting sustainable urban development. Some of the topics tabled include tourism innovation, shared tourism and tourism cooperation. They generated a good source of guidance for the Silk Road tourism cities to develop local tourism development.

12th UNWTO Asia Pacific Executive Training Programme on Tourism Policy and Strategy (Kerala, India, 18-22, March 2018)

This 12th edition of the training programme dwelt on the theme of tourism and technology in line with one of UNWTO's priority areas. It was organized by UNWTO in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India and Kerala Tourism.

The overall objectives of the 12th Executive Training Programme were to deepen participants' understanding of how to maximize the use of technology for the benefit of tourism with a focus on the following areas:

- How to inform national tourism authorities of the importance of technology to support management of the unprecedented growth of sector growth in the region;
- How to prepare national tourism authorities for the continued expansion of technology as a tool for destination development, management and innovation;
- How technology can support inclusive and sustainable growth of tourism in the region;
- How technology and social media can contribute to destination marketing and quality assurance; and
- How policy level decisions can help improve the effectiveness of the use of technology to ensure the competitiveness and sustainability of a tourism destination.

As in the previous editions, the Training Programme was organized with the generous financial support of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, Republic of Korea. In all, 16 member countries from the Asia-Pacific region were represented.

The 2nd International Workshop on the use of Mobile Positioning data for Tourism Statistics (Bali, Indonesia, 27 March, 2018)

The *2nd International Workshop on the use of Mobile Positioning data for Tourism Statistics* was jointly organised by the Ministry of Tourism of Indonesia and the National Statistics Bureau in collaboration with UNWTO.

After the successful organisation of the first national workshop on mobile positioning data in 2017 following Indonesia's request to UNWTO for technical assistance on the subject, the 2nd edition of this workshop took place with a two-pronged objective: to introduce the significance of mobile positioning data implementation to particularly ASEAN member states and to give their officials and domestic stakeholders the opportunity to learn about the growing importance of mobile positioning data internationally.

Recent studies have revealed how mobile positioning is becoming increasingly important as a new source of big data in national statistics, tourism statistics, transportation, population census etc. In the field of tourism, mobile positioning has been identified as a data source for monitoring flows of persons, inside or outside their usual environment through inbound roaming, domestic and outbound roaming calls. About 100 participants attended from ASEAN and Europe as well as local representatives from telecommunication companies, the academia and ministries related to the subject of mobile data positioning.

UNWTO International Conference on Tourism and Snow Culture (Yamagata, Japan, 1-3 February 2018)

The UNWTO International Conference on Tourism and Snow Culture was co-organized by UNWTO, the Government of Japan and the Yamagata Prefectural Government. It was themed as *Snow Experiences and Winter Traditions as Assets for Tourism Destinations* to maximize tourism's potential in snow destinations by identifying ways to utilize local resources effectively and sustainably; and to reflect the shift from the conventional

(passive) tourism activities such as shopping and sightseeing to the increasing desires to take a more active role in experiencing the host culture.

The Conference aimed to continue the momentum and objective of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development by providing a platform to discuss best practices for the sustainable development and promotion of tourism related to snow experiences and winter traditions; to exchange ideas on how to foster inclusive and sustainable economic growth for host communities; and to identify ways to utilize resources efficiently.

The main objectives of the Conference were to better understand current status, trends and shifting demands; discuss proactive approaches to mitigate direct and indirect challenges posed for snow destinations: i.e. climate change, adequate infrastructure, sustainable policies, seasonality; best practices on how to develop and promote sustainable snow tourism as a tool to revitalize local communities; provide a platform for business-to-business to discuss investment opportunities and public-private partnerships; identify ways to improve collaboration among central and local governments and host communities in order to develop sustainable management plans in snow destinations; and identify ways to creatively brand and promote snow tourism experiences. The Conference attracted some 300 participants from 26 countries representing national and local governments, tourism industry leaders, academia and local community members.

The International Workshop on Pakistan Tourism (Islamabad, Pakistan, 29-30 January 2018)

The International Workshop on Pakistan Tourism was organized by Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) in collaboration with UNWTO.

The workshop was conducted with a view to assisting the Government of Pakistan in raising the profile of Pakistan's tourism as a viable socio-economic sector that could contribute substantially to the national economy. Thus the workshop was designed to review the current and potential quality standards of the country's tourism product in terms of its diversity (natural, cultural, and recreational).

One of the main recommendations that emerged from the discussions for enhancing the promotion of tourism in Pakistan was the need to improve the country's image through corrective measures. Apart from marketing and image building strategies, the recommendations also called for strengthening institutional relations and greater visibility through the participation of Pakistan in international events and tourism exhibitions.

The workshop attracted over 250 participants from the public and private sectors, as well as academic and research institutions in the tourism industry of Pakistan. They were informed at the conclusion of the workshop that the establishment of a National Tourism Authority in Pakistan was a priority to propel the promotion of tourism in the country.

The 6th Global Summit on Urban Tourism: "Sustainable and Competitive Tourism on the New Urban Agenda" (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 4-6 December 2017)

The 6th Global Summit on Urban Tourism was organized jointly by the UNWTO and the Ministry of Tourism and Culture of Malaysia.

Urban tourism is an important segment in today's domestic and international tourism market. It is also a significant player in many urban destinations around the world as well as a driving force for creating economic, social and spatial dynamics for transforming the urban landscape. This transformation is effected through the rejuvenation of public space, public infrastructure and connectivity; development of local amenities and recreational facilities; stimulating business entrepreneurship; developing public-private partnership; attracting other industries and services and building citizen awareness on cultural and natural protection.

The 6th Summit provided participants with an opportunity to explore the way forward on how to capitalize on opportunities for a sustainable and competitive urban tourism by clearly analyzing the key factors and parameters for success. It also aimed at promoting a globally-shared vision and a strategic approach to adapting to the new paradigms in urban tourism while achieving coherence among the tourism activities, urban development policies and the economic and social benefits for the local inhabitants.

UNWTO/IFT Global Centre for Tourism Education and Training 4th Training Workshop (Macao, China, 29 November – 6 December 2017)

This eight-day training programme entitled “Capacity Building for Destination Marketing & Tourism Development” was the 4th training workshop to be organised by the Institute for Tourism Studies (IFT) of Macao in collaboration with UNWTO. It was held in accordance with an MOU the latter signed with the Government of Macao, China in 2015. The main aim of this MOU is to enhance the quality of human capital and increase the competitiveness of tourism destinations (particularly in the Asia and the Pacific Region) in order to achieve sustainable tourism development.

This 4th edition of the training programme focused on issues related to tourism development, destination marketing/promotion, hospitality management and strategic planning and management for future development. It was attended by 26 officials from Ministries of Tourism of Samoa, Fiji, Vanuatu, The Maldives, Papua New Guinea, mainland China and Macao, China.

The UNWTO-WTCF (World Tourism City Federation) Technical Workshop “City Tourism Performance Research” (Tianjin, China, 2 September, 2017)

The *UNWTO-WTCF Technical Workshop “City Tourism Performance Research”* was organized by Tianjin Municipal People’s Government and Tianjin Tourism Administration in collaboration with UNWTO and the World Tourism City Federation (WTCF).

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the World Tourism Cities Federation (WTCF) jointly launched the “UNWTO-WTCF City Tourism Performance Research”, an instrument with a set of criteria and a platform for exchange of information that can be used globally to benchmark tourism performance in urban destinations. The research was conducted to collect field data in order to have more in-depth understanding of each city involved in the initiative. It focused on destination management, economic perspective, social and cultural perspective, environmental perspective and technology & new business models.

The workshop was thus conducted with a view to presenting and discussing the results and findings of the UNWTO-WTCF City Tourism Performance Research applied to urban

destinations in the Asia-Pacific region. It provided recommendations to cities on the selected key performance areas in the region by drawing lessons from the best practices of the different case studies evaluated during the course of the research. Participants used the platform of the workshop to exchange knowledge and experiences in order to enhance the urban tourism monitoring, planning and development in their own destinations.

Publications

The ***UNWTO/GTERC Asia Tourism Trends 2017 Edition***: Tourism is a reflection of the socio-economic conditions of the region whose GDP has been growing much faster than the world's average. This is the fourth annual report in the series highlighting the rapidly growing tourism sector of Asia and the Pacific. It underlines the fact that the growth of tourism has been influenced by technological developments and the digital revolution. Regional collaboration with its many challenges and opportunities is also presented as one of the factors shaping tourism development in Asia and the Pacific. The final chapter gives a summary of the agenda of activities of the Regional Programme for Asia and the Pacific for the year.

The ***Tourism Stories Thailand*** book was published in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Thailand. It was launched during the ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF) in 2018 in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The Book was dedicated to the memory of His Majesty, the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej. The collection of 15 stories features the voices of ordinary people across Thailand who work on a daily basis within the tourism sector, and showcases how their lives have been shaped because of tourism; but most importantly, these stories portray what their lives would be like were they not working in the tourism industry.

The publication was launched at the end of 2017 in support of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, providing personal stories of how tourism can be a global force for good at the economic, social, cultural and environmental levels.

Upcoming activities and events

- 2018 International Mountain Tourism and Outdoor Sports Conference (Guizhou, China September, 2018)
- 2018 Global Summit on Urban Tourism (Seoul, September, 2018)
- 12th UNWTO/PATA Forum on Tourism Trends and Outlook (Guilin, China, 25-26 October, 2018)
- 40th Plenary Session of UNWTO Affiliate Members Programme (Hamedan, Iran, November, 2018)
- UNWTO/Chimelong Initiative: "Sub-region Capacity Building Workshop on Nature based Tourism for Mekong Sub-region Countries" (Pakse, Laos, November, 2018)
- 7th Annual Conference of UNWTO Sustainable Tourism Observatories in China (Jiangmen, China, dates to be determined)