

**UNWTO COMMISSION FOR EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC  
UNWTO COMMISSION FOR SOUTH ASIA**  
*Thirtieth Joint Meeting*  
**Nadi, Fiji**  
**19 June 2018**

**Item 6 of the Provisional Agenda**

**REPORT ON REGIONAL ACTIVITIES**

**Activities of 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 for Asia and the Pacific from October 2017 to May 2018.

# UNWTO Regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific (RSOAP) Activities Report

## 30th UNWTO CAP/CSA Joint Commission Meeting 18-20 June 2018, Nadi, Fiji

### Introduction

UNWTO Regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific (RSOAP) was established in 1995 in Osaka, Japan to assist with the substantial tourism growth in the region. In 2012, the office relocated to Nara. RSOAP supports the mission and activities of UNWTO Regional Department for Asia and the Pacific. Through seminars, events and research RSOAP contributed to the following objectives:

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, and
6. Building partnerships.

### Summary of Activities (October 2017-May 2018)

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The following report is a summary of activities conducted by RSOAP from October 2017 to May 2018. Under the framework of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development (IY2017), RSOAP actively promoted UNWTO's activities and initiatives around this theme and implemented the IY2017' objectives into its plan of work. RSOAP also actively participated in UNWTO international conferences, regional programmes within Asia and the Pacific as well as national events throughout Japan. Below are some of the highlights.

- Sustainable Tourism Forum
- UNWTO International Conference on Tourism and Snow Culture
- Gastronomy Tourism Symposium
- JNTO Inbound Tourism Symposium
- Kyoto Tourism Data Walk
- KIX Kanku Tabihaku 2018

#### Sustainable Tourism Forum

Shimabara, Japan  
3-5 November 2017

RSOAP was invited to present during the Fourth Sustainable Tourism Forum held in Shimabara, Japan. The Forum was organized by Ecotourism Japan in collaboration with Asian Ecotourism Network, and attended by over 80 national and local tourism stakeholders. The Forum focused on sustainable tourism as a tool for community revitalization as well as ways to monitor and measure tourism's benefits and effects. Consequently, RSOAP shared a summary of the Sixth UNWTO International Conference on Tourism and Statistics in Manila, Philippines where UNWTO launched the Sustainable Tourism Measuring Framework, an initiative aiming to provide a common language to facilitate the discussion of sustainable tourism as well as to encourage the implementation of data-driven tourism policies.

On the second day, RSOAP engaged in various group discussions related to UNWTO Indicators for Sustainable Development of Tourism, GSTC Criteria and the SDG targets and objectives.

### **UNWTO International Conference on Tourism and Snow Culture**

Yamagata, Japan  
1-4 February 2018

RSOAP, UNWTO, the Yamagata Prefectural Government and the Japan Tourism Agency (JTA) of Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT) jointly organized the International Conference on Tourism and Snow culture under the overall theme of “snow experiences and winter traditions as assets for tourism destinations”. The conference served as a platform for discussions on how to maximize tourism’s potential in snow destinations by identifying ways to utilize local resources effectively and sustainably.

International and national speakers shared case studies and good practices regarding the successful implementation of tourism projects that have contributed to the revitalization of communities and have encouraged community engagement. The conference attracted over 300 participants from 29 countries representing national and local governments, tourism industry leaders, academia, and local community members.

### **Gastronomy Tourism Symposium**

United Nations University, Tokyo, Japan  
5 February 2018

The Gastronomy Tourism Symposium took place at the United Nations University in Tokyo and was organized by Japan Travel and Tourism Association (JTTA) and co-organized by RSOAP and Gurunavi Inc. The aim of the symposium was to present the preliminary results of an extensive gastronomy research project conducted throughout Japan as part of an agreement previously signed by JTTA and Gurunavi Inc. and UNWTO. Additional report findings were presented during the 4<sup>th</sup> UNWTO World Forum on Gastronomy Tourism held in Bangkok, Thailand.

Mr. Norio Yoshiaki, Chairman & CEO, JTTA; Mr. Shogo Arai, Governor of Nara Prefecture and Mr. Yoshiaki Hompo, Chief of RSOAP were among the special guests and speakers who through their presentations provided a greater understanding of gastronomy tourism among local and tourism stakeholders, and how it can be a powerful tool for regional revitalization.

### **JNTO Inbound Tourism Symposium**

Osaka, Japan  
28 February 2018

The JNTO Inbound Tourism Symposium was organized by the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) to foment discussions related to the outstanding inbound tourism growth in Japan and the need for better understanding of the tourism benefits and effects and their relation to less-matured destinations throughout the country.

As international tourism continues to reach new communities throughout Japan, these must go through various transformations in order to adapt to new trends and meet the demands of travelers. The Symposium thus covered three pillars relevant to inbound tourism: economic benefits, capacity building and community development. RSOAP participated in a panel discussion on how to make tourism more sustainable by stressing the importance of ensuring that both tourists as well as the industry recognize sustainable tourism principles.

### **Kyoto Tourism Data Walk**

Kyoto University, Kyoto, Japan  
11-13 March 2018

RSOAP conducted two presentations during the Kyoto Tourism Data Walk, an event organized by the Kyoto University, a UNWTO Affiliate Member, in Kyoto, Japan. The three-day workshop aimed to identify ways to incorporate and monitor sustainable tourism in various key attractions

throughout the city of Kyoto. Participants, including university students and local tourism stakeholders, were divided into groups in order to carry out field research and tourism-related data analysis. During Day 1, RSOAP provided an introductory presentation regarding the latest international tourism data, general concepts of sustainability and highlights of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development.

The second presentation was conducted during the final day and it provided highlights of UNWTO's led initiatives throughout IY2017; a snapshot of the Statistical Framework Measuring Sustainable Tourism (MST); and emphasized the importance of having data-driven tourism policies in order to support better decision-making. After the group presentations, RSOAP participated in a panel discussion along with international speakers, Professors and government officials.

### **KIX Kanku Tabihaku 2018**

Osaka, Japan  
19-20 May 2018

RSOAP held a booth during the KIX Kanku Tabihaku 2018 held from 19-20 May at the Kansai International Airport. This annual travel expo provides an opportunity for the general public to speak to destination representatives and visit other tourism-related booths. This year, RSOAP displayed brochures and materials related to the SDGs, including the newly translated *Tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals* booklet as well as the *Tips for a Responsible Traveller*, with the aim to raise awareness on the role of tourism in the global agenda as well as to show tips on how travelers can join the movement by becoming more responsible.

In addition, RSOAP and the Japan Association of Travel Agents (JATA) Kasai jointly organized a destination seminar showcasing Hong Kong. The Hong Kong Tourism Board shared a presentation to fifty guests of the city's most picturesque spots, walkable areas and local cuisine.

### **Other past activities:**

- Ongoing dissemination of the Global Code of Ethics in Tourism via lectures and presentations.
- Presentations for academia UNWTO initiatives and activities, Travel.Enjoy.Respect Campaign, and the SDGs.
- Presentation at the Okinawa Future Tourism Seminar in Okinawa, Japan regarding tourism and SDGs and UNWTO's report on *Maximizing the Benefits of Mega Events for Tourism Development*
- Contribution to the 45<sup>th</sup> and 46<sup>th</sup> Issues of the UNWTO Asia Pacific Newsletter.

## **Proposed Activities for 2018-2019**

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### **Research:**

#### **Publication with focus on Pacific Islands Countries**

Considering the need to strengthen UNWTO collaboration with Pacific Islands Countries (PICs) and encourage knowledge sharing, and acknowledging UNWTO's international efforts toward the 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development and SDGs, RSOAP plans to lead a case-study publication with the sole focus on PICs under one of the following proposed themes:

#### **A. Product development and sustainable use of natural and cultural resources**

PICs are blessed with abundant marine resources and innate beauty, attractive for visitors all around the world; nonetheless, these destinations must take into account the long-term sustainability of their natural resources while maximizing the socioeconomic benefits for their communities and accommodating the growing demands of new market

segments. It is crucial, therefore, for destinations to diversify their product and identify innovative ways to appeal to these growing markets.

This research can facilitate the process of tourism product development by analysing current tourism inbound trends, visitor socio-demographics, opportunities and challenges faced by tourism, and provide best practice scenarios from across the region.

**B. Balancing infrastructure development and the conservation of biodiversity**

On the one hand, PICs require different levels of infrastructure development in order to adequately accommodate the increasing tourist arrivals both via air and sea; while on the other hand, much of the development takes place in and around vulnerable and already-threatened natural areas and coral reefs.

The research could identify case studies from destinations that have successfully implemented policies and measures that have allowed a healthy balance of conservation of biodiversity and development.

**C. Carrying capacity and tourism dispersal**

The research could explore PICs' tactics (if any) on tourism dispersal throughout the destination in order to expand tourism benefits and reduce the burden on high-trafficked tourist areas. The research could also focus on identifying strategies to measure the ideal carrying capacity of the island and/or provide scenarios from other Member States who are successfully tackling this challenge.

**D. Climate change in PICs: disaster risk policies and strategies/crisis communication plans**

Due to PICs' high vulnerability to natural disasters and global effects such as climate change, this research could evaluate current PICs' disaster risk management plans or crisis communication strategies and explore areas of opportunities and best-case scenarios from other developed island states.

**International events and upcoming activities:**

***UNWTO AP Youth Workshop (working title)***

The UNWTO AP Youth Workshop, though still in its planning stages, aims to serve as a platform for these aspiring leaders to expand their knowledge and to share ideas with similar-minded professionals from the region. In addition, the Youth workshop has proposed the following objectives:

- Enable emerging tourism professionals to share tourism-related initiatives and activities (research, school projects, etc.) through discussions and presentations;
- Provide a platform for discussion and healthy debate of issues faced by tourism, e.g.: sustainable development, SDGs, climate change, over-tourism, technology and the shared economy;
- Increase awareness of entrepreneurial opportunities and improve the image of tourism-related careers;
- Contribute to Goal 8 by promoting talent and skills development;
- Support the increasing demand for more dynamic managerial skills shared by professionals in the field that could potentially lead to long-term career;<sup>1</sup>
- Encourage engagement from government bodies, private sector and academia to work together toward a cohesive plan to prioritize investment in tourism education and training;
- Foster partnerships and collaboration among Affiliate Member within Asia and the Pacific Region and UNWTO TedQual programs; and
- Provide a platform for information exchange and networking.

**Global seminar (TBD) during Tourism Expo Japan 2018**

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<sup>1</sup> Global Talent Trends and issues for the Travel & Tourism Sector, 2015, World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC)

RSOAP is planning two seminars in September 2018. The first will take place on 21 September during the TEJ program and will focus on the upcoming UNWTO/UNESCO Conference to be held in Kyoto in 2019. Final theme for the seminar is under discussion.

The second seminar will take place after TEJ and will be held in Osaka, Japan. Currently, RSOAP and Mr. Shuichi Kameyama, Special Advisor on Sports and Tourism, are discussing program logistics and a final theme related to Mega Events and Tourism.