DECREMENTS TAKEN BY THE UNWTO COMMISSION FOR SOUTH ASIA AND UNWTO COMMISSION FOR EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC AT THEIR TWENTY-THIRD JOINT MEETING

Colombo, Sri Lanka, 25 March 2011

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UNWTO COMMISSION FOR SOUTH ASIA &
UNWTO COMMISSION FOR EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC
Twenty-third Joint Meeting
Colombo, Sri Lanka
25 March 2011

AGENDA

1. Adoption of the agenda

2. Communication of the Chairman of the joint meeting

3. Communication of the Co-Chairman of the joint meeting

4. Preliminary Remarks of the Secretary-General

5. Progress report on the implementation of the general programme of work for 2010
   5a – UNWTO initiatives
   5b – Regional Perspective
      ▪ Regional Activities
      ▪ Activities of the UNWTO Regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific
      ▪ Country brief by Sri Lanka and general discussion on regional tourism trends
   5c – UNWTO’s research and publications

6. Brief report on the results of the survey on priority areas of the general programme of work for 2012-2013. Presentation by the Chairman of the Programme Committee

7. Preparations for the 19th session of the General Assembly

8. Other matters
   ▪ Resolution of the two commissions in support of Japan
   ▪ Election of members of World Committee on Tourism Ethics
   ▪ Brief intervention about the Seminar on Responsible Tourism and its Socio-Economic Impact on Local Communities

9. Place and date of the twenty-fourth joint meeting of the two commissions
PREAMBLE

1. The twenty-third joint meeting of the UNWTO Commission for South Asia and the UNWTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 25 March 2011. It was held in conjunction with the UNWTO Conference on Mainstreaming Tourism in the Media.

2. The meeting was chaired by Iran and co-chaired by Thailand. There were fifty-one participants representing Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Hong Kong (China), India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Laos, Macao (China), Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. Affiliate members from Macao, China, Malaysia and the Republic of Korea were also represented. In addition to these, Italy (the current Chairman of the Executive Council) also attended the event along with the Chairman of PATA. A list of participants with the names and contact details of all attendees is attached.

DECISIONS

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA
Agenda item 1 (document CSA/CAP/23/Prov.Ag.)

3. The Secretariat proposed two modifications: that for practical reasons item 5c be presented before item 5b_c and that another point be added to item number 8 about a special resolution in support of Japan owing to the recent earthquake and tsunami it suffered. The Agenda was adopted after the two commissions agreed to the Secretariat’s proposals with the approval of the Chairperson. The final agenda of the meeting is located on page 2.

COMMUNICATION OF THE CHAIRMAN
Agenda item 2 (document CSA/CAP/23/2)

4. Iran, the Chairperson of the joint Commission expressed her deepest sympathy to the people of Japan on behalf of the two commissions for the unprecedented earthquake that shook the very foundations of the country along with the disastrous tsunami that has cost so much damage and loss of precious lives.

5. She then expressed satisfaction with the global tourism recovery which has reflected positively on the performance of the Asia-Pacific region as a whole but particularly on the remarkable 39% growth rate of Iran’s international tourist arrivals in 2010. This can be attributed to the Iranian government’s policy changes in both international and domestic tourism including the shifting of its attention from Europe as a source market to neighbouring countries in Asia. Other factors are the revision of Iran’s long-term tourism master plan and visa relaxation policies.

COMMUNICATION OF THE CO-CHAIRPERSON
Agenda item 3 (document CSA/CAP/23/3)

6. Thailand, the Co-Chairman of the joint commission echoed the Chairperson’s expression of sympathy and condolences to Japan for the tragic loss of lives coupled with the extensive damage to property and infrastructure because of the natural disaster.
7. The focus of the Co-Chairman's communication was on cooperation among member States as evidenced by sub-regional groupings such as APEC, IMT-GT (Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand – Growth Triangle) GMS (Greater Mekong Sub-region) and ASEAN and their endeavours to promote themselves as a single destination as opposed to individual country's promotional efforts. This is one of the important factors that accounts for the region's outstanding performance in 2010 in spite of the unfavourable global economic environment.

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**PRELIMINARY REMARKS BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

Agenda item 4 (document CSA/CAP/23/4)

8. The Secretary-General reiterated the sentiments expressed by the Chairman and Co-Chairperson with respect to Japan's calamity.

9. His remarks centred on five main points: a review of the world tourism trends, the Organization's on-going efforts to mainstream tourism in the global agenda, the implementation of the Organization's programme of work, its current financial situation and a review of the restructuring exercise in the Secretariat.

10. World tourism more than recovered and grew by 7% in 2010 to 935 million contrasting with the 4% decline it experienced in 2009 when the world went through the most difficult economic crisis it had ever experienced. An additional 22 million arrivals were registered over the former peak year in 2008. Emerging economies led the recovery process where arrivals grew faster (+8%) than in advanced ones (+5%). While all regions posted positive growth, Asia and the Pacific was the star performer with +13% growth. It was the first region to recover from the 2009 setback, and it grew strongly with international tourist arrivals reaching a new historic record of 204 million.

11. Three main factors are attributable to Asia's remarkable performance: tourism now forms an essential part of the consumption budget of a growing number of the population; tourism is increasingly becoming a priority in national policies; and intra-regional cooperation in tourism is being strengthened.

12. Growth in international tourism is expected to continue in 2011 albeit at a slower pace. Arrivals are forecast to grow by 4%-5% globally. Asia-Pacific region will experience a 7%-9% increase in its arrivals and other regions will also register different levels of growth rates.

13. However, despite the overall positive prospects, there are still uncertainties about persistently high unemployment, high interest rates and inflation, budget cuts in advanced countries (especially in Europe) and increasing taxation on travel.

14. As tourism's proven contribution to GDP, jobs and exports has still not received the due economic and political recognition, UNWTO has embarked on a campaign to highlight tourism's importance to countries' economic growth and development. Since May 2010, 18 Heads of State and Governments have been approached by the Secretary-General to present this argument about tourism's value to their economies. In the case of Asia, he has met with the Prime Ministers of Bhutan, Cambodia, Nepal and Thailand.
15. Within the same context, a new initiative known as the ‘Global Leaders for Tourism’ campaign (“Golden Book”) has been launched recently by UNWTO and WTTC with the common goal of promoting the socio-economic importance of tourism. UNWTO and WTTC are presenting an Open Letter to Heads of State and Government worldwide, with the aim of seeking their acknowledgement of the relevance of travel and tourism in facing today’s global challenges.

16. The last two points of the Secretary-General’s remarks centred on UNWTO’s Programme of Work for the biennium 2010/2011 and its general financial situation within this period. With regard to the programme of work he elaborated on the main activities carried out since the 89th session of the Executive Council in Iran last October with competitiveness and sustainability as our watchword. Concerning the financial situation of the Organization which has been good in general terms, the Secretariat continued its efforts to further rationalize and consolidate expenditure while improving the implementation level of the Programme of Work. These efforts have resulted in higher levels of output delivery within the context of a ‘zero nominal growth’ budget.

SPECIAL RESOLUTION OF THE TWO COMMISSIONS IN SUPPORT OF JAPAN

17. In view of the magnitude of the destruction that the earthquake and the tsunami brought in their wake on 11 March 2011 in some areas of North-eastern Japan, countries individually expressed their condolences to Japan.

18. The Secretariat then read the resolution it had drafted on behalf of the Joint Commission which contains the collective condolences to the Government and people of Japan, the expression of deep sorrow for the calamity and the conviction that Japan will be able to overcome the catastrophic situation by drawing on its experience in crisis management. The Commissions approved the resolution and the full text has been posted on UNWTO’s website accessible on the following link:


PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GENERAL PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2010

5a – UNWTO Initiatives
Agenda item 5 (document CSA/CAP/23/ 5a)

5b – Regional perspective
Agenda item 5b_a (document CSA/CAP/23/5b_a)

Activities of the UNWTO Regional Support Office for Asia-Pacific
Agenda item 5b_b (document CSA/CAP/23/5b_b)

5c – UNWTO Research and Publications
Agenda item 5c (document CSA/CAP/23/5c)

Country brief by Sri Lanka and general discussion on regional tourism trends
Agenda item 5b (document CSA/CAP/23/5b_Ref)

19. The Joint Commission was apprised of the implementation of the Organization’s overall programme of work for 2010-2011 and the evaluation of events and missions for 2010. The
presentation highlighted the main activities carried out since the last report of this kind presented at the 89th session of the Executive Council in Iran in October 2010.

20. Member States were informed about activities that have been undertaken by the Organization in the region since the 22nd CAP-CSA Joint meeting which took place in Hanoi, Vietnam in May 2010. The activities were carried out in line with UNWTO’s strategic objectives of improving competitiveness and sustainability – objectives which have guided our general programme of work since the 18th General Assembly in Kazakhstan.

21. This was followed by a presentation on the activities carried out during the period under review by the UNWTO Regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific, and another one on UNWTO’s latest research and publications.

22. The last sub-section under item number 5 began with a presentation on Sri Lanka’s tourism performance in 2010 followed by general discussions on regional tourism trends. Sri Lanka experienced a 46% growth – a strong rebound over the decline of the past years. It has released a new slogan for its tourism industry – Refreshingly Sri Lanka and has designated 2011 as Visit Sri Lanka Year.

23. In the general discussions that ensued about the region’s tourism trends, the main issues that came to light by country were the following:

24. Maldives: Growth was at a steady rate of 8 per cent until the tsunami disaster of the end of 2004. Maldives was very dependent on Europe as its main source market but with the economic crisis it has switched its focus to neighbouring Asian countries. China tops its arrivals; consequently the Government is taking the necessary measures to cater to the needs of the Chinese market.

25. Sri Lanka: Inbound from the Maldives is on the rise as well as investment. The number of arrivals from China is also increasing. However, there is the need to train more Chinese-speaking guides.

26. Philippines: Chinese arrivals continue to grow with the introduction of new flight services between China and the Philippines. These fly to not only Manila but to other areas of the country to boost both business and leisure tourism.

27. Malaysia has been receiving more than 1 million Chinese tourists per year. With each passing year these tourists are becoming more sophisticated in their demands. Low cost airlines are transforming Malaysia’s travel and tourism world. They fly both short and medium haul distances. Air Asia for example is connected to Air Philippines and Air Thailand.

28. Bangladesh: Until recently, tourism did not have the political recognition it deserves. This has now changed because the Government sees tourism’s potential for socio-economic development and the alleviation of poverty. 2011 has been declared the year of tourism promotion to attract international tourists.

29. Republic of Korea: For the first time, international tourist arrivals surpassed 8 million in 2010. The Korean Government’s focus is now on quality, MICE promotion, medical tourism and cultural tourism.
30. **China** has overtaken Spain to become the third most visited country in the world. Its outbound figures have also outpaced its inbound tourism for the first time.

31. **Macao** receives over 20 million international tourists every year, the majority of whom are from Mainland China; and because of its growth potential, about 500 students register for degree courses in tourism every year.

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**BRIEF REPORT ON THE RESULTS OF THE SURVEY ON PRIORITY AREAS OF THE GENERAL PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2012-2013**

Agenda item 6 (document CSA/CAP/23/6)

32. The Joint Commission was informed by the Chairman of the UNWTO Programme Committee about the Survey on Member States’ priorities which was launched by the UNWTO Secretariat in August 2010 in order to prepare the Organization’s General Programme of Work and Regular Budget for 2012-2013. The questionnaire was divided into strategic, regional and thematic issues such as lessons learned from the recent crisis, domestic tourism, tourism and employment, tourism and the green economy, assessment of tourism’s value and role, and consumer and enterprise protection in tourism.

33. Replies received were about 50% of the total surveys sent to Members States. From the two commissions, countries that replied to the survey were **Australia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines** and the **Republic of Korea** (as far is CAP is concerned); **Bangladesh, Bhutan and India** (with regard to CSA).

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**PREPARATIONS FOR THE 19TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

Agenda item 7 (document CSA/CAP/23/7)

34. The Commissions were reminded that at its last session in Astana (Kazakhstan), UNWTO’s General Assembly unanimously accepted the generous invitation of the Government of the Republic of Korea, to host its 19th session this year. This will be held in Gyeongju, (Republic of Korea) from 8 to 14 October 2011. A special presentation was made by the Republic of Korea on its preparations for the forthcoming General Assembly.

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**OTHER MATTERS**

- Resolution of the members of the two commissions in support of Japan
- Election of members of World Committee on Tourism Ethics
- Brief Intervention about the Seminar on Responsible Tourism and its Socio-economic impact on Local Communities

Agenda item 8 (documents CSA/CAP/23/8a; CSA/CAP/23/8b)
35. The Secretariat informed the Members that the term of half of the current Members of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics (WCTE) will expire on 31 December 2011.

36. The election of these Members which was scheduled for the present 23rd Joint Meeting did not take place because as of the day of the meeting, there was no presentation of candidates. It was unanimously decided therefore to postpone the election to the period of the 19th General Assembly during which election of other organs and committees of the Organization will take place.

37. Members of the Commissions are reminded that one member is required to represent the Commission for East Asia and the Pacific while one alternate member is needed as a representative for the Commission for South Asia.

38. Countries’ expression of interest along with the nomination of their candidates is to be addressed to the Secretary General from April to mid September 2011. The new composition of the Committee will be submitted to the General Assembly in Gyeongju, Republic of Korea for final endorsement.

39. Indonesia delivered a short presentation about the forthcoming Seminar on Tourism Ethics for Asia which the Ministry of Culture and Tourism is going to organise in collaboration with the UNWTO Secretariat in Bali on 11 June 2011. The Seminar will be the first of its kind to take place in parallel with a meeting of the World Committee of Tourism Ethics (WCTE), whose members will convene for its 10th session from 12 and 13 June 2011.

40. A warm invitation was extended to all members of the Joint Commission to attend and participate in this seminar.

PLACE AND DATE OF THE
TWENTY-FOURTH JOINT MEETING OF THE TWO COMMISSIONS
Agenda item 9 (document CSA/CAP/23/9)

41. The Secretariat informed the Joint Commission that it had received letters from Indonesia and Thailand a couple of days before the meeting expressing interest as hosts of the 24th Meeting of the two commissions in 2012.

42. It also informed them that there have been informal negotiations between the two countries to see if they could reach an agreement about one of them hosting the next joint meeting; but these negotiations did not produce the desired end.

43. Thus the Secretariat moved that a vote be taken on this. Thailand had 7 votes, Indonesia had 6 and 4 member States abstained. Having won the highest number of votes Thailand automatically became elected as the host for the 24th Joint Meeting of the two commissions.

44. It was also recalled that during the 19th General Assembly in the Republic of Korea next October separate commission meetings will take place. We shall have the 49th CAP meeting and the 53rd CSA meeting.
45. The Secretariat and the Chairperson expressed their appreciation to the Government of Sri Lanka for the excellent arrangements provided for both the Commission meeting and the Conference.
MEMBER STATES

1) AUSTRALIA

Mr. Wayne Calder
General Manager
Tourism Research Australia
Dept of Resources, Energy and Tourism
GPO Box 1564, Canberra, ACT, 2601
Tel: +61 2 6243 7720
Fax: +61 2 6290 8570
Email: Wayne.calder@ret.gov.au

2) CAMBODIA

Mr. Darariddth Ok
Undersecretary of State
Ministry of Tourism
Lot 3A Street 169 Sangkat Veal Vong, Phnom Penh, Kingdom of Cambodia
Tel: 855-12 883 378
Fax: 855-23 884 917
Email: darariddth@hotmail.com

Mr. Nak Chhun
Deputy Director of International Cooperative
Department, Ministry of Tourism
Lot 3A Street 169 Sangkat Veal Vong, Phnom Penh, Kingdom of Cambodia
Tel: 855-16 379 007
Fax: 855-23 884 917
Email: nak_asean@yahoo.com

3) CHINA

Mr. Hui Wang
Assistant Director
China National Tourist Office in Spain
Gran Vía, 39, piso 8, Izqd. 28013, Madrid, Spain
Tel: 915 480 011
Fax: 915 480 597
Email: wanghuichn@gmail.com

5) INDONESIA

Mrs. N. W. Giri Adnyani
Director of International Relations
Ministry of Culture and Tourism
JL. Medan Merdeka Barat No. 17
Jakarta Pusat 10110
Tel: +62 21 3838 552
Fax: +62 21 345 1883
Email: adnyani@gmail.com

Mrs. Rizki Handayani
Deputy Director for Multilateral Cooperation
Ministry of Culture and Tourism
JL. Medan Merdeka Barat No. 17
Jakarta Pusat 10110
Tel: +62 21 383 8552
Fax: +62 21 345 1883
Email: rizha_ir@yahoo.co.id

Mr. Jubilar Paskoro
Staff for International Relations Bureau
Ministry of Culture and Tourism
JL. Medan Merdeka Barat No. 17
Jakarta Pusat 10110
Tel: +62 21 383 8552
6) JAPAN

Mr. Yoshio Yamamoto
Deputy Director for International Conference
Japan Tourism Agency
2-1-3, Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku
Tokyo 100 8918,
Tel: (81-3) 5253 8938
Fax: (81-3) 5253 1563
Email: yamamoto-y2iz@mlit.go.jp

7) LAO PDR

Mr. Vang Rattanavong
Vice Chairman
Lao National Tourism Administration
Lane Xang Avenue, P.O. BOX 3556,
Vientiane, LAO PDR
Tel: +856 21 212 251
Fax: +856 21 212 769
Email: v_rattanavong@hotmail.com

Mr. Phanith Rashbouth
Officer
Lao National Tourism Administration
Lane Xang Avenue, P.O. BOX 3556,
Vientiane, LAO PDR
Tel: +856 21 212 251
Fax: +856 21 212 769
Email: prashbouth@gmail.com

8) MALAYSIA

Datuk Dr. Victor Wee
Chairman
Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board
27th Floor, Menara Dato' Onn, PWTC, 45
Jalan Tun Ismail, 50695, Kuala Lumpur

Tel: +6032615811
Fax: +60326935178
Email: victor@tourism.gov.my

9) MONGOLIA

Mr. Tseden Orgodol
Director of Tourism Department
Ministry of Nature Environment and Tourism,
Mongolia
United Nation’s st-5/2, government building-2,
Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
Tel: +976 9911 4233, +976 5126 4447
Fax: +976 5126 4447
Email: orgodoltseden@yahoo.com

10) PHILIPPINES

Mr. Rolando Cañizal
Director, Department of Tourism
415 Department of Tourism Building
T. M. Kalaw Street, Ermita
Manila, Philippines
Tel: (632)525-2928
Fax: (632) 526-7657
Email: rcanizal@tourism.gov.ph

11) REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Mr. Hyun Hwan Kim
Director
Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism
International Tourism Division
Republic of Korea
2-70, Waryong-dong, Jongno-gu
Seoul, 110-360, Korea
Tel: +82 2 3704 9771
Fax: +82 2 3704 9789
Email: hrhan@korea.kr

Mr. Hyon Mok Kim
Deputy Director, Tourism Industry Bureau
Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism,
International Tourism Division
2-70, Waryong-dong, Jongno-gu
Seoul, 110-360, Korea
Tel: +82 2 3704 9808
12) THAILAND

Mr. Somprasong Khomapat
Inspector General
Ministry of Tourism and Sports, Thailand
4 Rajadamnern Nok Avenue, Pom Prap Sattru Phai, Bangkok, Thailand 10100
Tel: +662 356 0675
Fax: +662 356 0654
Email: skhomapat2000@yahoo.com

Mrs. Urariratana Naothaworn
Director International Affairs Division
Ministry of Tourism and Sports, Thailand
4 Rajadamnern Nok Avenue, Pom Prap Sattru Phai, Bangkok, Thailand 10100
Tel: +662 356 0684
Fax: +662 356 0678
Email: urairatn@hotmail.com

Mrs. Hathaikan Ipichat
International affairs Officer
Ministry of Tourism and Sports, Thailand
4 Rajadamnern Nok Avenue, Pom Prap Sattru Phai, Bangkok, Thailand 10100
Tel: +662 356 0684

13) VIETNAM

Mr. Duc Ngoc Dinh
Deputy Director
International Cooperation Department
Vietnam National Administration of Tourism
80 Quan Su, Han Noi, Viet Nam
Tel: 84 4 3 943760 ext 121
Fax: 84 4 39424115
Email: dinhngocduc@vietnamtourism.gov.vn

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

1) HONG KONG, CHINA

Mr. Vincent Fung
Assistant Commissioner for Tourism
Tourism Commission
Commerce and Economic Development Bureau
2/F, East Wing, Central Government Office
Lower Albert Road, Hong Kong
Tel: (852) 2810 2911
Fax: (852) 2121 8791
Email: international_tourism@cedb.gov.hk

2) MACAO, CHINA

Mr. Cheng Wai Tong
Head of Research & Planning Department
Macau Government Tourist Office
Alamada Dr. Carlos D’Assumpção, No. 335-341, Hotline Building, 12th floor, Macau
Mr. Frankie Lau  
Senior Executive of Research and Planning Department  
Macau Government Tourist Office  
Alamada Dr. Carlos D’Assumpção, No. 335-341, Hotline Building, 12th floor  
Tel: (853) 83971516  
Fax: (853) 2837 2446  
Email: chengwt@macautourism.gov.mo

Mr. Pema Samdup  
Tourism Council of Bhutan  
P.O.BOX- 126  
Tarayana Centre, Chubachu, Thimphu Bhutan  
Tel: +975 2 323251  
Fax: +975 2 323695/ 337 356  
Email: psamdup@tourism.gov.bt

3)   INDIA

Mr. Manish  
Counsellor (Economic & Commercial)  
High Commission of India  
36-38, Galle Road  
Colombo – 3  
Sri Lanka  
Tel: 94-11-243 05 60  
Fax: 94-11-239 92 87  
Email: com.colombo@mea.gov.in

Mr. Anurag Srivastava  
First Secretary (Political)  
High Commission of India  
36 Galle Road  
Colombo – 3  
Sri Lanka  
Tel: 94-11-243 0160  
Fax: 94-11-239 92 87  
Email: pol.colombo@mea.gov.in

4)   IRAN (I. R.)

Mrs. Ladan Jafari Tehrani  
Head of Foreign Tourism Development, ICHTO  
Iran Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization

UNWTO COMMISSION FOR SOUTH ASIA  
MEMBER STATES

1)   BANGLADESH

H.E. Mr. Ghulam Muhammed Quader,  
Minister of Civil Aviation and Tourism  
Main Building, Bhaban 6  
Bangladesh Secretariat  
Room No. 1922  
Dhaka 1000  
Tel: (880-2) 716 72 44  
Fax: (880-2) 716 92 06

H.E. Mr. Mahboub Uz Zaman  
High Commissioner  
Bangladesh High Commission  
65 Ward Place, Colombo 7, Sri Lanka  
Tel. +94 11 2695744, 2695748  
Fax +94 11 2695556

2)   BHUTAN

Mr. Thuji D. Nadik  
Director of Planning  
Tourism Council of Bhutan  
P.O.BOX- 126  
Tarayana Centre, Chubachu, Thimphu Bhutan

3)   INDIA

Mr. Manish  
Counsellor (Economic & Commercial)  
High Commission of India  
36-38, Galle Road  
Colombo – 3  
Sri Lanka  
Tel: 94-11-243 05 60  
Fax: 94-11-239 92 87  
Email: com.colombo@mea.gov.in

Mr. Anurag Srivastava  
First Secretary (Political)  
High Commission of India  
36 Galle Road  
Colombo – 3  
Sri Lanka  
Tel: 94-11-243 0160  
Fax: 94-11-239 92 87  
Email: pol.colombo@mea.gov.in

4)   IRAN (I. R.)

Mrs. Ladan Jafari Tehrani  
Head of Foreign Tourism Development, ICHTO  
Iran Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization
Tourism Deputy, Azadi-Roudaki Cross-roads, Tehran, Iran
Tel: +98-21-66582014
Fax: +98-21-66582015
Email: l_tehrani@yahoo.com

Dr. Alineza Eghlim,
First Counselor
Embassy of Iran
Colombo
Sri Lanka

5) MALDIVES

H.E. Dr. Mariyam Zulfa
Minister
Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture
Velaanaage 5th Floor
Ameery Ahmed Magu
Male, Maldives
Tel: +960 332 5027
Fax: +960 332 2512
Email: bureau@tourism.gov.mv

Mr. Moosa Zameer Hassan
Deputy Director General
Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture
Velaanaage 5th Floor
Ameery Ahmed Magu
Male, Maldives
Tel: +960 332 3224
Fax: +960 332 2522
Email: zameer@tourism.gov.mv

6) SRI LANKA

HE Mr. Basil Rajapaksa
Minister of Economic Development and Tourism, Sri Lanka
64 Galle Road
PO Box 570, Colombo 03, Sri Lanka
Tel: +9411 242 1780/239 0799/238 5241
Fax: +9411 232 8415
Email: Minot@sitnet.lk

Hon Mr. Lakshman Yapa Abeywardena
Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Tourism, Sri Lanka
64 Galle Road
PO Box 570, Colombo 03, Sri Lanka
Tel: +9411 242 1780/239 0799/238 5241
Fax: +9411 232 8415
Email: Minot@sitnet.lk

Mr. Nalaka Harshajeewa Godahewa
Chairman
Sri Lanka Tourism
80 Galle Road
Colombo 03, Sri Lanka
Tel: +94 11 243 7059
Fax: +94 11 243 7953
Email: chairman@srilanka.travel

Mr. Seenivasagam Kalaselvam
Director General
Sri Lanka Tourism
80 Galle Road
Colombo 03, Sri Lanka
Tel: +94 11 243 7061
Fax: +94 11 238 0943
Email: dg@srilanka.travel

Mr. Malraj Bharatha Kiriella
Acting Managing Director
Sri Lanka Tourism
80 Galle Road
Colombo 03, Sri Lanka
Tel: +94 11 254 4534
Fax: +94 11 238 0943
Email: malrajbk@srilanka.travel

Mr. Sunil Shantha Hettiarachchi
Director-General of Investment
Ministry of Economic Development
464A T.B. Mawatha
Colombo 10, Sri Lanka
Tel: +94 11 313 3576
Fax: +94 11 267 3459
Email: sunil18c@gmail.com

Mr. Vilpula Chandrakumara Don
Wanigasekera
General Manager
Sri Lanka Convention Bureau
4th Floor, Hotel School Building
78 Galle Road, Colombo 03, Sri Lanka
Tel: +94 11 244 0002/ 486 5050-1
Fax: +94 11 247 2985
Email: vipulaslcb@slt.net.lk

OTHER MEMBER STATES

1) ITALY

Mrs. Caterina Cittadino
Head of Department
Department for Development and
Competitiveness of Tourism
Via Della Ferratella in Laterano 51
00184, Rome, Italy
Tel: +39 6 45532 5955
Fax: +39 6 45532 3245

Mrs. Rossella Franchini
Director of EU and International Relations
Department for Development and
Competitiveness of Tourism
Via Della Ferratella in Laterano 51
00184, Rome, Italy
Tel: +39 6 45532 5281
Fax: +39 6 45532 5429
Email: r.franchini@governo.it

AFFILIATE MEMBERS

Discovery MICE (Malaysia)

Mr. Choon Loong Lee
President and CEO
DISCOVERYMICE

Victoria University (Australia)

Dr. Sarath Divisekera
City Flinders Campus
Victoria University
P.O. Box 14428
Melbourne 8001
Australia
Tel: 61-3-9919 1071
Fax: 61-3-9919 1064
Email: dividekera@vu.edu.au

New Zealand Address: 9a Melford Street,
Auckland 2011 New Zealand
Tel: +6421477720
Email: susanmwarren@me.com

Mr. Michael Schuman
International Business Correspondent Asia –
Time Magazine
30/F Oxford House
Taikoo Place 979 King’s Road
Quarry Bay - Hong Kong
Email: michael_schuman@timeasia.com

SPEAKERS

Mr. Hiran Cooray
Chairman - Jetwing Hotels Ltd.
Chairman - Pacific Asia Travel Association
46/26, Jetwing House, Nawam Mawatha,
Colombo – 02, Sri Lanka
Tel: +94 11 2345728 | 7
Fax: +94 11 2345729
Email: hiran@jetwinghotels.com

Mr. Sheldon Santwan
Editor, Travel Division, Saffron Media Pty.
TravelBiz Monitor & Hospitality Biz
Sterling House, 5/7, Sorabji Santuk Lane,
Opp.Cawasji Hormasji Lane,
Dhobi Talao, Marine Lines (E),
Mumbai - 400 002 - INDIA.
Tel: +91 (022) 30271700 Ext. 401
Email: sheldon@saffronmedia.in

Mr. Oliver Wates
Media Train Consultant
Adress: Summerlands Court
Endmoor - Kendal
Cumbria LA8 0ED UK
Tel: +44 79675 07187
Email: mediatrainow@gmail.com

Mr. Alejandro Ossa
Commercial Counselor
Embassy of Colombia in China
34 Guang Hua Lu,
Beijing 100 600, P.R. China
Tel: +86 10 6532 9767 Ext. 321
Email: aossa@proexport.com.cn

Mr. Michael Altenhenne

JOURNALISTS

Mr. Sergio Martínez
Photographer, Condé Nast Traveller, Spain
Calle Rios Rosas Nº46  9ºB  CP. 28003
Madrid. España
Email: sergiom_art@yahoo.es / foto@sergiomartinez.eu

Ms. María A. NeyraRodríguez
Reporter Condé Nast Traveller, Spain
Marques de Monasterio, 8. 1 dcha. Madrid.
Tel: +34685618036
Email: araneyra@gmail.com

Mr. Luís Davilla
Photographer
Siete Leguas, C/ Seco, 6, Madrid. – Spain
Tel: +34 656 88 17 89
Email: luisdavilla@luisdavilla.com

Ms. Elena del Amo
Reporter, Siete Leguas, C/ Concepción
Jerónima 21, 28012 Madrid - Spain
Tel: +34 639 81 01 82
Email: elenadelamo@gmail.com

Ms. Stefanie Müller
Correspondent, Wirtschaftswoche, Germany
Av. Guadalix, 25a
28120 Ciudad de Santo Domingo - Madrid
Tel: +34-610844147
Email: smueller@planet-bpm.com

Mr. Michael Altenhenne
Producer, Deutsche Welle TV, Germany
Adresse: Grossgörschenstr. 23
10829 Berlin
Germany
Tel: +49-171-5475769
Email: altenhenne@aol.com

Mr. Oliver Holmes
Freelance journalist, Time Magazine & Wall Street Journal, USA
The Steadings,
Baggrave Hall Road, Hungarton,
Leicester,
LE7 9JB UK
Tel: +44 780 350 2410
Email: oliverholmes@hotmail.com

Ms. Alessandra Viola
Reporter, La Repubblica, Italy
Address: via Emanuele Filiberto 191
00185 Roma
Tel: +39.33.93.24.72.55
Email: alessandra.viola@inwind.it

Mr. Rafael Estefania
Producer, BBC World Service - Spanish Americas department
Room 826 NE Bush House
Strand, LONDON WC2B 4PH
Tel: 0207 5570739
Tel: 07963 288072
Email: Rafael.Estefania@bbc.co.uk

Mr. John Bell
Reporter, Daily Mail, UK
21 Chantry Street, London
N1 8NR UK
Tel: +44 (0) 7715 370 447
Email: travelwriterjb@yahoo.co.uk

INTERNATIONAL & REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. Douglas Keh
Act. Resident Representative (UNDP)
202-204, Bauddhaloka Mw,
Colombo 07
Tel: 0094-11- 2580691 Ext : 200
Fax: 0094-11- Fax: 2589691
Email: douglas.keh@undp.org

WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION (UNWTO)

Mr. Taleb Rifai
Secretary General
World Tourism Organization
Calle Capitán Haya, 42
28020 Madrid, Spain
Tel: (34-91) 567 8100
Fax: (34-91) 571 3733
Email: omt@unwto.org

Mr. Zoltan Somogyi
Executive Director
World Tourism Organization
Calle Capitán Haya, 42
28020 Madrid, Spain
Tel: (34-91) 567 8100
Fax: (34-91) 571 3733
Email: zsomogyi@unwto.org

Mr. Xu Jing
Director, Regional Programme for Asia and the Pacific
World Tourism Organization
Calle Capitán Haya, 42
28020 Madrid, Spain
Tel: (34-91) 567 8100
Fax: (34-91) 571 3733
Email: jxu@unwto.org

Mr. Hae-guk Harry Hwang
Deputy Director, Regional Programme for Asia and the Pacific
World Tourism Organization
Calle Capitán Haya, 42
28020 Madrid, Spain
Tel: (34-91) 567 8100
Fax: (34-91) 567 3733
Email: hhwang@unwto.org

Mr. Byoung Woo Eric Park
Senior Officer, Regional Programme for Asia and the Pacific
World Tourism Organization
Calle Capitán Haya, 42
28020 Madrid, Spain
Tel: (34-91) 567 8100
Fax: (34-91) 567 3733
Email: bpark@unwto.org

Mr. Marcelo Risi
Principle Media Officer
World Tourism Organization
Calle Capitán Haya, 42
28020 Madrid, Spain
Tel: (34-91) 567 8160
Fax: (34-90) 567 8219
Email: mrisi@unwto.org

Ms. Christine Brew
Senior Programme Assistant
Regional Programme for Asia and the Pacific
World Tourism Organization
Calle Capitán Haya, 42
28020 Madrid, Spain
Tel: (34-91) 567 8100
Fax: (34-91) 567 3733
Email: cbrew@unwto.org

Email: hhwang@unwto.org

ITM 4F, K-1, ATC Building, 2-1-10, Nanko-Kita, Suminoe-Ku, Osaka, 599-0034, Japan
Tel: +816 6613 2566
Fax: +816 6613 2577
Email: Honda@apte.or.jp

Mr. Nobuyuki Horie
Deputy Chief
UNWTO regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific
ITM 4F, K-1, ATC Building, 2-1-10, Nanko-Kita, Suminoe-Ku, Osaka, 599-0034, Japan
Tel: +816 6613 2566
Fax: +816 6613 2577
Email: horie@apte.or.jp

Mr. Kazuo Ichikawa
Executive Director
UNWTO regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific
ITM 4F, K-1, ATC Building, 2-1-10, Nanko-Kita, Suminoe-Ku, Osaka, 599-0034, Japan
Tel: +816 6613 2566
Fax: +816 6613 2577
Email: ichikawa@apte.or.jp

UNWTO REGIONAL SUPPORT OFFICE
FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Mr. Yuichiro Honda
Chief
UNWTO regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific

ITM 4F, K-1, ATC Building, 2-1-10, Nanko-Kita, Suminoe-Ku, Osaka, 599-0034, Japan
Tel: +816 6613 2566
Fax: +816 6613 2577
Email: Honda@apte.or.jp

Mr. Nobuyuki Horie
Deputy Chief
UNWTO regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific
ITM 4F, K-1, ATC Building, 2-1-10, Nanko-Kita, Suminoe-Ku, Osaka, 599-0034, Japan
Tel: +816 6613 2566
Fax: +816 6613 2577
Email: horie@apte.or.jp

Mr. Kazuo Ichikawa
Executive Director
UNWTO regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific
ITM 4F, K-1, ATC Building, 2-1-10, Nanko-Kita, Suminoe-Ku, Osaka, 599-0034, Japan
Tel: +816 6613 2566
Fax: +816 6613 2577
Email: ichikawa@apte.or.jp

UNWTO REGIONAL SUPPORT OFFICE
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Mr. Yuichiro Honda
Chief
UNWTO regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific

ITM 4F, K-1, ATC Building, 2-1-10, Nanko-Kita, Suminoe-Ku, Osaka, 599-0034, Japan
Tel: +816 6613 2566
Fax: +816 6613 2577
Email: Honda@apte.or.jp

Mr. Nobuyuki Horie
Deputy Chief
UNWTO regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific
ITM 4F, K-1, ATC Building, 2-1-10, Nanko-Kita, Suminoe-Ku, Osaka, 599-0034, Japan
Tel: +816 6613 2566
Fax: +816 6613 2577
Email: horie@apte.or.jp

Mr. Kazuo Ichikawa
Executive Director
UNWTO regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific
ITM 4F, K-1, ATC Building, 2-1-10, Nanko-Kita, Suminoe-Ku, Osaka, 599-0034, Japan
Tel: +816 6613 2566
Fax: +816 6613 2577
Email: ichikawa@apte.or.jp

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FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Mr. Yuichiro Honda
Chief
UNWTO regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific

ITM 4F, K-1, ATC Building, 2-1-10, Nanko-Kita, Suminoe-Ku, Osaka, 599-0034, Japan
Tel: +816 6613 2566
Fax: +816 6613 2577
Email: Honda@apte.or.jp

Mr. Nobuyuki Horie
Deputy Chief
UNWTO regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific
ITM 4F, K-1, ATC Building, 2-1-10, Nanko-Kita, Suminoe-Ku, Osaka, 599-0034, Japan
Tel: +816 6613 2566
Fax: +816 6613 2577
Email: horie@apte.or.jp

Mr. Kazuo Ichikawa
Executive Director
UNWTO regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific
ITM 4F, K-1, ATC Building, 2-1-10, Nanko-Kita, Suminoe-Ku, Osaka, 599-0034, Japan
Tel: +816 6613 2566
Fax: +816 6613 2577
Email: ichikawa@apte.or.jp