



ORGANISATION MONDIALE DU TOURISME  
WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION  
ORGANIZACIÓN MUNDIAL DEL TURISMO  
ВСЕМИРНАЯ ТУРИСТСКАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ  
منظمة السياحة العالمية

CAP/CSA/18/DEC  
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**DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE WTO COMMISSION FOR EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC  
AND THE WTO COMMISSION FOR SOUTH ASIA AT THEIR EIGHTEENTH JOINT MEETING**

Manila, Philippines, 19 June 2003

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**WTO COMMISSION FOR EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**  
**WTO COMMISSION FOR SOUTH ASIA**  
**Eighteenth Joint Meeting**  
**Manila, Philippines**  
**19 June 2003**

**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 by the WTO Secretary-General
5. Guidelines for the preparation of draft programme of work and budget for the period 2004 – 2005 for the Asia-Pacific region
6. Status of WTO activities following the World Summit on Sustainable Development
7. Other issues
8. Place and date of the nineteenth joint meeting of the Commissions

## PREAMBLE

1. The 18<sup>th</sup> joint meeting of the WTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific and the WTO Commission for South Asia was held in Manila, Philippines, on 19 June 2003 at the gracious invitation of the Government of the Philippines. The meeting was held within the framework of the WTO Tourism Week which was held in Manila from 16-20 June 2003.
  2. The meeting was chaired by **Philippines** who called the meeting to order. The meeting was co-chaired by **Bangladesh**.
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## DECISIONS

### ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Agenda item 1 (document CAP/CSA/18/Prov.Ag.)

3. After reviewing the provisional agenda, and taking into account that the Preliminary Remarks of the Secretary-General included an update on the transformation of the WTO into a specialised agency of the UN, it was proposed to incorporate provisional agenda item (6) to item (4).
  4. The Commission unanimously approved the request made by the Government of Hong Kong SAR and the representative of UNESCAP to be able to address the floor and a new agenda item (7) "Other issues" was incorporated into the agenda.
  5. The Commission unanimously approved these proposals and the provisional agenda was **adopted** with these modifications. The final agenda of the meeting is located on page 2.
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### COMMUNICATION OF THE CHAIRMAN

Agenda item 2 (document CAP/CSA/18/2)

6. In his Communication, the Chairman expressed his concern at the latest crises such as the war in Iraq and SARS which not only affected the tourism sector, but the airline and retail industries as well, which resulted in a reduction of manpower or closure of businesses in many tourism establishments. He recommended that the meeting of the Commissions should focus on the promotion of greater cooperation and collaboration between its members so as to minimize the negative impacts of the crises. He requested the joint commissions to develop joint cooperative programmes in crisis management as well as to demonstrate its leadership in operationalising a global response to the crises through concrete actions. He also urged the WTO to provide greater assistance to the members with greater support for crisis management programmes in 2004. he also requested WTO to coordinate these programmes with other international organizations.
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**COMMUNICATION OF THE CO-CHAIRMAN**

## Agenda item 3

7. The co-Chairman thanked the Government of the Philippines for their hospitality in the organization of the WTO Tourism Week in Manila and joined the Chairman in his concern on the impacts of the latest crises in Asian tourism.

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**PRELIMINARY REMARKS BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

## Agenda item 4 (document CAP/CSA/18/4, CE/70/2/Doc.S, CAP/CSA/18/6)

8. The Secretary-General commenced his Preliminary Remarks by commenting on the healthy state of the Organization with the incorporation of new Members particularly from the Middle East region. He felt that it was significant that a region which has been through several crises should respond to the crises with membership of WTO. He also informed the members that the Organization's financial situation was very good, the transition to the Euro having been very smooth. He stated that the Organization was watching its budget very carefully for 2003 as WTO had undertaken many activities in order to promote crisis management skills.

9. He reflected that due to the events of the past few years, the tourism industry was characterised by three main traits: **volatility, availability and malleability**. Due to the globalized nature of the tourism market with many competing destinations offering similar products, the industry was volatile as consumers could easily switch choices in destinations at very short notice and with no constraints. Due to the vast range of tourism products available to consumers, consumers could afford to be more selective. And, finally, tourism has demonstrated its malleable nature by being able to adapt to crises and the resultant changes in consumer behaviour.

10. Finally, the Secretary-General informed the members of the steps taken in the transformation of WTO into a specialised agency of the United Nations – a process which has now reached its final stages. In response to a query from the representative of **Malaysia**, the Secretary-General recalled to the Members that there were no financial implications for members regarding this transformation and that the greatest benefit from the transformation would be WTO's, and thereby the tourism industry's, greater visibility on a global basis.

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**GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION OF DRAFT PROGRAMME OF WORK AND BUDGET  
FOR THE PERIOD 2004 – 2005 FOR THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION**

## Agenda item 5 (document CAP/CSA/18/5)

11. The WTO Regional Representative for Asia presented a document which highlighted the main focus areas of the Secretariat within its programme of work for the period 2004-2005. Through the activities planned for 2004-2005, WTO hopes to anticipate and reflect the rapid transformation of the industry and to respond effectively to changing needs. The programme also aims to promote greater public-private sector partnerships as well as to foster greater cooperation between various levels of a country's tourism industry and between ministries. The ultimate idea is to concentrate on fewer activities based on the priority areas already identified by members.



12. The representative from **Fiji** commented on the need to raise the awareness of the Pacific islands particularly with regard to environmental preservation, civil aviation and market diversification and requested WTO to visit the region and make more efforts to obtain more members from the Pacific area. The Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific informed the Fijian representative of the various technical assistance projects which WTO implemented for the South Pacific countries and agreed to pay closer attention to the needs of the countries in this region.

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**STATUS OF WTO ACTIVITIES FOLLOWING THE  
WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Agenda item 6 (document CAP/CSA/18/7)

13 Based on the mandates given to WTO at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) which was held in Johannesburg, South Africa in August 2002, WTO, in collaboration with UNCTAD has embarked upon an ambitious plan: the **Sustainable Tourism – Eliminating Poverty (ST-EP Initiative)** which aims to provide capacity building for local communities to be able to start and successfully operate tourism enterprises; promote local suppliers so as to avoid leakages in tourism industries, and, support the placing of e-commerce facilities for small tourism operators. The Commission appreciated the initiative taken by the Organization and pledged its full support to the Secretariat's activities in this field.

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**OTHER ISSUES**

Agenda item 7

14. With the approval of the Chairman, the representative from **UNESCAP** addressed the Commissions by first thanking both WTO and the Government of the Philippines for their invitation to UNESCAP to participate in the meetings. He commented on the excellent relationship between WTO and UNESCAP and on their joint programmes and activities. He then informed the members of several of UNESCAP's programmes including the Plan of Action for Sustainable Tourism Development in the Asia-Pacific region (PASTA), the Network of Asia-Pacific Education and Training Institutes in Tourism (APETIT), and the Working Group of the Greater Mekong Sub-region Tourism Sector – a programme executed in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank.

15. The representative from Hong Kong, China then took to floor to invite all the members to the WTO/Boao Forum for Asia Conference on Revitalising Asian Tourism which would be hosted by the Government of Hong Kong SAR from 14-15 July 2003. He reiterated the importance of a meeting of this nature particularly for Hong Kong which had been one of the destinations most adversely affected by SARS.

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**PLACE AND DATE OF THE 19<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE JOINT COMMISSIONS**

Agenda item 8

16. No decision was taken on the venue of the 19<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Joint Commissions. This will be decided at the forthcoming session of the WTO General Assembly in Beijing in October 2003 once the Commission for South Asia and the Commission for East Asia and the Pacific elect the venues for their next meetings.

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