Webinar n°1

World Heritage and Tourism in a Changing Climate

Speakers:  Mr Peter DeBrine, UNESCO World Heritage Center  
Mr Adam Markham, Union of Concerned Scientists  
Ms Helena Rey, UNEP
The importance of tourism to World Heritage Sites and the need for strategies that consider climate vulnerabilities for tourism management, Mr Peter DeBrine, Senior project Officer, Sustainable Tourism, UNESCO World Heritage Center
World Heritage and Tourism in a Changing Climate
World Heritage and Tourism in a Changing Climate

World Heritage sites are unique treasures of all humanity. These natural and cultural wonders have outstanding universal value, represent our past, inform the present, and belong to all.
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World Heritage sites are also important travel destinations with huge potential impact for local economic development and long-term sustainability.
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Simple message – World Heritage sites are under threat from climate changes and this has an enormous impact for both management and tourism.
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World Heritage sites also form an important network in monitoring changing conditions and advancing solutions on the ground.
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Understanding the impacts of climate change and mitigating and adapting to build resilience is critical if we are to protect these iconic sites.
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The case studies offer a glimpse into the impacts that are faced by many other World Heritage properties and illustrate the urgent need to implement the Paris agreement.
Case studies: impacts mitigation of tourism and climate change on the World Heritage Sites,
Mr Adam Markham, main report author, Deputy Director, Climate and Energy Program, Union of Concerned Scientists, Cambridge, USA
Climate Change, Tourism and the Threat to Some of the World’s Most Iconic Places

Adam Markham
Deputy Director, Climate & Energy
Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS)

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2015: The warmest year

Source: NOAA
Climate Risks to Tourism

- Direct impacts: Sea level; extreme weather events; loss of snow; water shortages; wildfires
- Damage to attractions: Beaches; landmarks and landscapes; historic cities; national parks; World Heritage sites
- Increase in insurance costs
- Coastal tourism is at greatest risk – 60% of European trips; 80% of US tourism revenue
- Sea level rise of 1m in the Caribbean would damage 50-60% of region’s tourism properties in including 21 airports and 35 ports. $10-23B cost by 2050.
132 of 700 UNESCO World Heritage Sites Threatened by Sea level rise

Bruges, Belgium

Source: Potsdam Institute, 2014
Strongest Scientific Evidence Shows Human-Caused Climate Change Is Increasing Heat Waves and Coastal Flooding

- Limited Evidence
- Strong Evidence
- Strongest Evidence

Source: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change SREX Report (2012)
If the water rises “too high” THE GATES ARE RAISED

LAGOON
protected

RIISING
tide
Wildfires in Western US Forests worsening
Climate & Tourism

- Tourism 5% of global CO2 emissions
- Carbon emissions from tourism are expected to double in next 25 years
- Rate of increase is even greater from long-distance air travel and accommodation
- Incompatible with the low carbon future nations committed to in the Paris Agreement.
Challenges and opportunities for World Heritage Sites in the 2030 Agenda,
Helena Rey, Programme Officer, Responsible Industry and Value Chain Unit, United Nations Environment Programme, Division of Technology, Industry and Economics
Questions & Answers
Thank you for your time and attention!

For more information on upcoming webinars on tourism and climate change please write to:
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