



ORGANISATION MONDIALE DU TOURISME
WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION
ORGANIZACION MUNDIAL DEL TURISMO
ВСЕМИРНАЯ ТУРИСТСКАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ

CAM/29/ACT
Original: Spanish
July 1996

REPORT ON THE TWENTY-NINTH MEETING OF THE
WTO COMMISSION FOR THE AMERICAS

Havana (Cuba), 19 July 1996

The proceedings of the twenty-ninth meeting of the Commission began with the official opening of the *Seminar on sustainable tourism development: local planning*, chaired by the Minister of Tourism of **Cuba** and Vice-Chairman of the Commission, **Mr Osmany Cienfuegos**. During the meeting the floor was taken by the **Commission Chairman, Dr Caio Luiz de Carvalho** (President of EMBRATUR/**Brazil**) and by the Secretary-General of WTO, Mr Antonio Enríquez Savignac, who thanked the Minister for his generosity in hosting the meeting of the Commission and the Seminar. The next day, in the opening meeting of the Regional Commission, the floor was taken by the Commission Chairman, **Brazil**, and by the Vice-Chairmen, **Argentina** and **Cuba**.

Present at the meeting were representatives of 15 Commission Member countries, 13 Affiliate Members, four countries that are not Commission members, two international organisations and 14 companies or observer organisations. The list of participants is attached.

Adoption of the agenda

The Commission adopted the agenda as follows:

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Communication of the Chairman of the Regional Commission (**Brazil**)
3. Preliminary remarks by the Secretary-General
4. Presentation of the statistical monograph for the region
5. Application in the region of the general programme of work for 1996-97 and other activities:
 - ◆ technical cooperation
 - ◆ economic statistics of tourism
 - ◆ tourism planning: planned tourist resorts
 - ◆ tourism promotion: the cooperation between public and private sectors
 - ◆ quality of tourism services: hotel classification
6. Place and date of the thirtieth meeting of the Commission

Communication of the Chairman of the Regional Commission

The delegation of **Brazil**, on behalf of the Chairman of the Commission, began by expressing its thanks to the authorities and people of Cuba for the warm welcome received by the delegates and for the facilities provided for ensuring the success of the meeting.

During his speech, the delegate of Brazil stated that his country had acquired ample experience in many matters related to tourism development and that he would like to share this with the other Member countries from the American region. He considered that the Regional Commission was a valid platform for obtaining support and, in general, for covering matters of common interest as well as for sharing national experiences.

Mr Francisco Mayorga, Vice-Chairman of the Commission (**Argentina**), on behalf of those present, thanked the Cuban authorities for their proverbial hospitality and reiterated the words of Brazil concerning the importance of reinforcing the activities of the Regional Commission to the benefit of the public and private sectors.

Preliminary remarks by the Secretary-General

After first welcoming the delegations present and thanking the Cuban authorities for their generous support as hosts to both meetings, the Secretary-General congratulated the latter for their achievements in developing tourism in Cuba.

He then gave a summarised review of the following matters:

- **trends in world tourism in 1995**
- **activities carried out by the Organisation;** and
- **internal situation of the WTO,** from the financial and personal point of view

Firstly, the Secretary-General referred to the previous meeting of the Commission held within the framework of the tenth meeting of the General Assembly in Cairo in October 1995. He recalled the record number of countries represented on that occasion (120) and the high level of the heads of delegation with over 100 delegations being led by Ministers of Tourism or Deputy Ministers. There were also many representatives from the private sector as well as from the media (350 journalists) who gave coverage to the event.

He then referred to what he described as the good performance of tourism in 1995. Worldwide there were 567 million tourist arrivals and receipts of 372,000 million US dollars. In the American region, international tourism reached the figure of 110.6 million arrivals (up 3.3 per cent on 1994) generating receipts of 96,400 million US dollars (up by 0.7 per cent on 1994).

He stressed that the magnitude of these figures is creating awareness at high levels within the States of the region. Proof of this is the constitution of Ministries for Tourism in countries such as Costa Rica and Mexico or the Summit of Central American Presidents (Nicaragua, May 1996) which devoted its proceedings to the subject of sustainable tourism development.

He also stressed that, in spite of the importance being given to the sector, it is still far from receiving proper provisions in terms of human, technical and budgetary resources. At the same time, there is growing support with national and multilateral resources being channelled to the tourism sector in countries in the Middle and Far East and the Pacific which recorded the best results and increased their market shares in 1995.

The Secretariat has continued to work with the Member countries and with countries that are not yet Members to help them develop their specific national situations. On a regional level, support is being maintained for initiatives promoting the content of the meetings of the Regional Commissions or for meetings such as the Summit of Central American Presidents, the second Forum for parliamentarians and local authorities (Bali, September 1996) and the Euro-Mediterranean Conference or for the creation of the MEMTTA (an organisation for the promotion and development of tourism in the Eastern Mediterranean) and the programmes of the University of Tourism for Peace.

On the internal situation of WTO, the Secretary-General stated that, while it benefits from the good performance of tourism activity worldwide, it is suffering the consequences of governmental restructurings which are not always favourable to tourism, and this is also reflected in the decreasing allocations to multi-lateral development funds. In this respect, he confirmed the withdrawal of the United States of America from WTO resulting from the disappearance of the national tourism authority (USTTA) and the budget restrictions imposed by the US administration. Withdrawal will take effect as from December of this year.

Nevertheless, WTO maintains its influence worldwide and is extending its presence in the private and operating sector. The Secretary-General stressed the efforts made to increase the quantity, quality and diversity of the Organisation's publications.

With respect to finance and operations, he stated that while the general panorama for inter-governmental organisations was one of deficit, WTO had recorded a surplus of two million dollars for the 1992-93 financial year which most of the Members had decided to apply to the reduction of their future contributions.

For 1994-95 it is estimated that there will again be a surplus in spite of the investment made in equipment (for document reproduction and computers) which will not have to be repeated for several years.

However, the Secretariat will continue to carry out strict cost control (the objective being to reduce fixed costs in 1996 by 16 per cent) while maintaining the activities of the general programme of work.

Presentation of the publication Tourism Market Trends in the Americas: 1995

The Secretariat presented this document which was well received by the Members of the Commission and which analyses the figures for international tourism (1995). The document comprises three sections: arrivals and receipts worldwide, the American region and its sub-regions and countries. The second part gives the tourist arrivals in American countries from eleven generating countries. The third summarises the information provided by 24 countries on the positive and negative factors influencing their tourism development during 1995.

The Secretariat again requested that the Commission Members send in to the corresponding section the largest possible quantity of broken-down tourism statistics so that the data given in the statistics publications is as precise as possible. The delegation of **Chile** stressed the need to correct the trend towards low-spending tourism flows. The delegation of **Venezuela** emphasised the importance of following up variables such as average spending in order to achieve the right approach by tourism institutions and of using the latest methodologies to calculate the economic returns of tourism.

Application in the region of the general programme of work for 1996-97

The Secretariat presented a summary of the activities carried out within the framework of the general programme of work with special reference to its application in the CAM.

The first point covered was that of **cooperation for development** and this led to the mention of the missions being carried out in eight countries of the region and of the financial difficulties of the UNDP which have not yet allowed the start-up of projects for technical cooperation.

The Member countries were reminded that the Secretariat can be present in national development projects taking a monitoring and supervisory role in all or some of the phases of such projects. It was also stated that the Secretariat could collaborate in the processes of horizontal technical assistance that are being implemented in **Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico and Venezuela**, amongst others.

After a description of the activities of the Secretariat in the areas of **statistics and marketing**, including a mention of the regular publications and those of a methodological type, it was stated that this department would soon be publishing a document giving the budgets for tourism promotion (1994-95) of over 100 countries. It would give global data, itemised data and targets.

A detailed presentation was also made of the application of the manual of satellite tourism accounts drawn up by WTO with decisive support from institutions of the **Dominican Republic** and especially from its Central Bank, the Secretariat of State for Tourism and tourism business associations in this country. The experience acquired in this field will be made available to other countries in the region through seminars and specialist publications.

With respect to **training and education in tourism**, special mention was made of the programme of courses carried out by the Secretariat. Of special importance were the courses in Educating the Educators and others that have been prepared for use as correspondence courses. A site on INTERNET is being prepared for suppliers and seekers of tourism training which will replace the Directory of Training Institutions. For the first time a Training Course in Tourism for Diplomats is being organised, in principle only for Latin American countries. It is to be held in the headquarters of the Organisation and its main aim will be to increase the knowledge of the diplomatic representatives on the Spanish tourism market in their areas.

Information was given on an activity carried out by WTO in several stages with the Secretariat for Tourism of Argentina and the International Labour Office with a view to determining the situation of the tourism labour market in Argentina (job seekers) and the supply of the tourism training system in that country.

On the programme for the **environment and planning**, the Commission was informed of the activities of the Secretariat in this area and of the publications already out and those soon to be published. Special reference was made to the desire of the Secretariat to progress in establishing environmental markers with a view to facilitating the planning of sustainable tourism development, based on criteria that are objective, reliable and relatively easy to calculate.

On the subject of the **quality of tourism services**, the Argentinian delegation provided well-documented support and presented the system of hotel classification adopted by its country. This system incorporates certain new features of interest and is especially concerned with the evaluation of the quality of the services offered by Argentinean hotels. The Secretariat informed on the activities carried out since the last meeting of the Commission, especially in areas such as the liberalisation of trade in tourism, tourist safety, quality of tourism services, support for programmes to eliminate undesirable practices (sex tourism) and promotion of specific forms of tourism (tourism for the elderly).

As already stated by the Secretary-General, WTO is making an effort to be present in the **mass media** and in presenting **publications** that are attractive both for their content and for their format. This has led to greater circulation of the image of WTO, wider distribution of the skills acquired and a source of diversification of the Secretariat funds. At present, monthly income under this heading is between 10,000 and 20,000 US dollars.

The presence of WTO on INTERNET is being reinforced for dissemination of the information generated by the Secretariat or by the Member States towards the tourism professionals. There are now WTO sites on the World Wide Web for each of the Member States (60) that have provided information.

Place and date of the thirtieth meeting of the Commission

The Secretary of Tourism for the **Republic of Argentina**, Mr Francisco Mayorga, offered to host the thirtieth meeting of the Commission in the town of San Carlos de Bariloche in the month of May 1997. The Commission expressed its thanks for this generous offer which was unanimously accepted.

Before drawing to a close the procedures of the Commission, **Mr Mayorga** paid a warm tribute to the Secretary-General of WTO, **Mr Antonio Enríquez Savignac** who, for personal reasons, was leaving his post as from September 1996. He mentioned the changes that had been seen in the Secretariat's activity in recent years, the determination to understand the reality of every individual country and the special support felt in the American region for their efforts to improve tourism development and promotion.

The words of tribute received the full support of those present who stood to applaud them.

REPORT ON THE SEMINAR ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: LOCAL PLANNING

Havana (Cuba) 18-19 June 1996

The Seminar, convened by the World Tourism Organisation with the support of the Ministry of Tourism of Cuba, was opened by Mr Osmany Cienfuegos, Minister of Tourism of Cuba and by Mr Antonio Enríquez Savignac, Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organisation.

First of all, mention must be made of the hospitality and efficiency of the Cuban Ministry of Tourism in the organisation of this seminar held within the framework of the twenty-ninth meeting of the WTO Commission for the Americas. In addition, there was a high standard of quality in the papers presented on several national cases and especially in the debates led by the Ministers and delegates of the various WTO Members present. The following are preliminary conclusions and try to give a general overview of the matters discussed during the seminar.

1. During the working sessions, it was clear that delegates are very concerned about the process of administrative decentralisation and especially the roles of the State, departments or provinces and local administrations in decisions on tourism.
2. A remarkable range of national cases was mentioned by all the delegates and ministerial representatives on the configuration of authority on matters of tourism and the formulae for cooperation and horizontal and vertical coordination in the field of tourism administration.
3. The term 'cooperation' was much used for the links for tourism handling, promotion and organisation between the State administrations, the regions which are increasingly involved in and responsible for tourism, and the local administrations.
4. The local administration is the final destination in the tourism chain and as such should reinforce its specialisation in the provision of general and individual tourism services, but especially its capacity for planning and management for the sustainable development of its tourism resources and products.
5. There are many and varied cases in Latin American experience in the local handling of tourism production but both in places with a high level and capacity for tourism and in places where tourism is still being promoted, there is a clear need to:
 - . strengthen local tourism administration and draw up agreements and collaboration with other administrations;
 - . formalise strategic, flexible, viable and sustainable plans;
 - . establish capacity for leadership, negotiation and planning in the private sector; and
 - . draw up mechanisms for tourism actions giving priority to the sustainability and improvement of the standard of living and the local community.

6. In the sustainable development of tourist towns, it is essential that there should be active participation by the local community and local awareness of the tourist activity; this can best be fostered when the local residents directly participate in the benefits from tourism.
7. The various cases and experiences described by the speakers, those present and the delegates show that it is necessary to train local administrators in taking tourism decisions.

There are many shortcomings in this area and these must be corrected through inter-municipal collaboration (bringing together local administrations for specific programmes) and inter-administrative collaboration since tourism is becoming rapidly more dynamic in the Americas.

8. In the training of those responsible at a local for facing the challenges of sustainable development and tourism competitiveness, the experience of Latin America shows that we should build up systematic programmes for tourism training on a national scale that can create regional products and territories with the following aims: the diagnosis of local problems, the design of local plans and projects and the commercialisation of the local image and tourism resources. The modernisation of human resources in tourism administration must be a widespread priority.
9. Territorial structuring and problems of funding are key elements in the process of decentralisation at a local level, especially in tourism. Physical planning and rehabilitation of the cultural heritage are mechanisms which, if properly managed, can help to fund a tourist town. In addition, apart from decentralised funds, it is essential to try out new formulae to finance the needs for infrastructure and tourism services in the town such as a tourism activity tax, joint ventures, agreements for collaboration or private sponsorship.
10. In summary, it became clear throughout the debates of this seminar that Latin America is undergoing a complex process of tourism decentralisation at two levels:
 - . in public administration by trying to strengthen tourist towns to make them really responsible for the quality of the final destination; and
 - . in the coparticipation of the public and private sectors in drawing up projects, in environmental and cultural sustainability and in the financing of tourism activities.

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10

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11

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12

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