SUMMARY RECORD OF THE THIRTY-THIRD MEETING OF THE WTO COMMISSION FOR THE AMERICAS

Merida, Yucatan, Mexico, 26 September 1998

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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE THIRTY-THIRD MEETING OF THE WTO COMMISSION FOR THE AMERICAS

The thirty-third meeting of the Commission was held in conjunction with the activities of World Tourism Day 1998, whose main celebration, on 25 September, was presided over by Dr. Ernesto Zedillo y Ponce de León, President of the United Mexican States. The Officers of the Commission consisted of its Chairman, Mr. Oscar Espinosa Villarreal, Secretary for Tourism of Mexico and the Vice-Chairmen: Ecuador, represented by Mrs. Jaqueline Grard, Director of the Ecuadorian Tourism Corporation; Cuba, represented by Mr. Manuel Lahera Casanova of the Ministry of Tourism; and Uruguay, represented by Mr. Hugo Chiparelli, Director for International Affairs of the Ministry of Tourism. Mr. Victor Cervera Pacheco, Governor of the state of Yucatan, attended the opening ceremony as a special guest.

During the opening ceremony, the Chairman of the Commission, Mr. Oscar Espinosa Villarreal, Secretary for Tourism of Mexico, took the floor and welcomed the participants in this Commission meeting, being held in the world headquarters that the WTO Assembly had designated to celebrate World Tourism Day. He referred to the tasks to be carried out by the Commission, following the criteria of efficiency and coordination with the work of other institutions. Mr. Victor Cervera Pacheco, Governor of the state of Yucatan, also took the floor to emphasize tourism's important contribution to the economy of his state and to the recuperation of its heritage. He also stressed the role of the Mundo Maya in enhancing the international image and the cooperation of the five countries involved in that project. After the words of the Governor, Mr. Espinosa declared the Commission meeting open.

Representatives of fourteen member countries of the Commission, one Affiliate Member, one Associate Member, an observer and an international organization attended the Commission meeting. The list of participants is attached to this document.

1. Adoption of the agenda

The Commission approved the following agenda:

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Speech by the Chairman of the Commission, Mr. Oscar Espinosa Villarreal, Secretary for Tourism of Mexico
3. Preliminary remarks by the Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization
4. Signature of the letter of intent between WTO, the Secretariat for Tourism of Mexico and Visa International
5. Measures taken by the national tourism administrations of Latin America to promote tourism as a subject to be addressed at Latin American Summits
6. Report on the process of harmonizing tourism agendas of regional and subregional bodies on the subject "Tourism as a generator of regional development"
7. Other matters - Report on the progress of the creation of the Sustainable Tourism Area of the Caribbean
8. Place and date of the thirty-fourth meeting of the Commission
2. Communication of the Chairman of the Regional Commission

The Secretary for Tourism of Mexico began by thanking the tourism authorities of the region for their presence, both qualitative and quantitative, and the state of Yucatan for making available to the Commission Members the necessary means for making their stay easier and more pleasant in a territory in which tourism is growing rapidly and successfully meeting important challenges, making it a permanent force for Yucatan's sustainable development strategy.

Throughout his speech, he reiterated that the main purpose of the chairmanship was to strengthen the activities of the Organization for the benefit of the Commission Members from both the public and private sectors.

He stressed the importance that he, as head of Mexico's National Tourism Administration, attached to consolidating the competitive edge of Mexican tourism products and the role played by human resource training in this strategy. Other priority lines of action were to improve tourism promotion systems and processes and to attract resources for tourism development.

He emphasized that the general criteria he would follow would be to avoid the dispersal of efforts and coordinate the programmes of the various organizations that operated in the region and that the States maintained with their contributions.

He also underlined the importance of tourism, the complex nature of the sector, the constant need to foster improvements in the sector's management and his interest in setting objectives that the Commission could realistically meet. In this connection he mentioned the need to expand training activities.

3. Preliminary remarks by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General of WTO, Mr. Francesco Frangialli, by means of an address that was read out on his behalf by the Regional Representative for the Americas, Mr. Augusto Huéscar, spoke with gratitude of the presence of the President of the Republic in the events the day before. After greeting the delegations and thanking the Mexican authorities for their generous support as hosts of both meetings, he congratulated them on their achievements in developing tourism in Mexico.

He made special mention in his address of the Organization's activities since the last meeting of the Commission, with particular reference to the preparation of the programme of work for 2000-2001.

First of all, the Secretary-General referred to tourism trends in the region of the Americas. He made special mention of the session of the Executive Council and the Ministerial Conference on the Oceans and New Tourism Dimensions held at Lisbon. Among other matters, the Secretariat presented the new tourism forecasts up to the year 2020, as well as the evolution of the use of leisure time, whose development affects the tourism market. The Leadership Forum of the WTO Business Council, held at Washington, had served to maintain contacts with the Presidents of the Inter-American Development Bank and of the World Bank with whom new relations had been established.
He recalled how important it was for the Members of the Commission to communicate to the Secretariat their proposals and priorities for preparing the programme of work for the biennium 2000-2001. It was for the States that made up the Organization to shape the final programme, but he was carrying out a broad consultation among all the Full, Associate and Affiliate Members to take into account all valid opinions.

4. **Signature of the letter of intent between WTO, the Secretariat for Tourism of Mexico and Visa International**

The aforementioned signed a letter aimed at coordinating their efforts with a view to imparting training courses for trainers in the region. The purpose of this programme was to enable the technicians attending these courses subsequently to give courses in their own companies for employees in some twenty specialist subjects.

The Chairman of the Commission, taking the floor, thanked Visa for its efforts and stressed the importance of these courses which would benefit in particular small and medium-sized enterprises which represented the majority in the region. The representative of the Secretary-General, after reiterating his gratitude to the other institutions, made a positive evaluation of Visa's input in upgrading its training programmes that were well known and appreciated in Latin America. He mentioned the value of these programmes in that they could be available in English, French or Portuguese and so attend to the needs of the countries of the Americas with these official languages. Mr. Cesar Velasco, Director of Marketing and Corporative Communications of Visa mentioned that, in effect, this programme was a conceptual and methodological update of the one that had been imparted in Latin America since 1988 under the title “Quality is my second name”. A copy of the signed text is contained in the Annex.

On the same subject, Mr. Espinosa announced that a course on “Tourism Product Integration and Development” would be introduced in the region, based on instructional material prepared by the Secretariat for Tourism. The purpose of the manual was to stimulate the integration of tourism products that took account of the need for competitiveness and sustainability.

All the delegates that took the floor from now on referred to the importance for the CAM of having an effective intraregional cooperation programme.

The delegate of Brazil expressed gratitude for the programme that was about to begin and emphasized the interest that the Mercosur countries would take, especially in the course devoted to tourism product development. The delegate of Argentina congratulated the Chairman on his speed in putting into practice what had been promised at the previous Commission meeting. Endorsing the opinion of the delegate of Brazil, he emphasized the multidestination nature of the products being developed in the Mercosur area. He also showed interest in the practical aspects of the programme, both as to content as to the mechanisms available for benefiting from it.
As provided for in the letter of intent, a monitoring committee would be set up to establish the processes by means of which the agreed programmes would be imparted.

The delegate of Ecuador took the floor to stress the importance she attached to a programme capable of generating concrete results. She also positively valued the impact that these programmes could have on the training of human resources in her country.

The delegate of Peru pointed out that it was important for the countries making up the Cartagena Agreement (Andean Pact) to be considered as an area in which to carry out activities of the programmes covered by the agreement.

The delegate of Uruguay welcomed the signing of the letter of intent and supported the words of the delegates that had taken the floor. If the product development course was to be imparted to subregional groups of countries, he asked that the principle of rotation be maintained so that all those involved could benefit. In a similar vein, the delegate of Venezuela spoke about the group of Andean countries, emphasizing the value for them of taking advantage of the already existing means, both in WTO and in other organizations, regional and subregional alike.

The delegate of Paraguay was in favour of the courses being imparted in the already consolidated subregions and suggested that subsequently, in 1999 or 2000, a meeting be held to share the experience acquired in each case. The delegate of Costa Rica endorsed the opinions already voiced; he added that it could be helpful to prepare national seminars for ministers and higher authorities so that interministerial tourism programmes may be supported at those levels. The delegate of Bolivia endorsed the initiative of courses on subregional products, given the existence of products involving more than two countries.

The delegate of Mexico gave the following summary of the statements made under this agenda item:

1. The courses, especially those relating to tourism product development, will be organized on a subregional basis;
2. A report will be prepared on each course to be discussed in fora such as the CAM, so as to identify examples of products capable of complementing those developed in other regions;
3. Support will be given to seminars intended for the authorities of the central administrations of the State to foster their awareness of the importance of tourism and of its positive effects on the national economy. This field of action will include the authorities with executive power, central, regional, departmental and local alike, as well as the elected representatives of the legislative power.
5. **Report of the national tourism administrations on the measures taken to promote the inclusion of tourism in Ibero-American Summits**

The delegate of Mexico read out a letter that the Secretary for Tourism of that country had written to the President of the United Mexican States transmitting this proposal to him. The letter mentioned that the Secretariat for Foreign Affairs was aware of this interest and was expected to lend its support to promoting tourism as a subject to be addressed at Ibero-American Summits and to follow up on the steps taken by other ministries of tourism.

The delegate of Argentina, which has taken similar measures, reported that various countries had made the same request but tourism could not be incorporated since it was not a subject originally provided for. It was hoped that it could be included in the next meeting.

The delegate of Paraguay spoke in similar terms, indicating that it should be included permanently in the Rio Summit.

Taking the floor again, the delegate of Mexico said that steps should be taken to prevent tourism's removal from the agendas in which it was already included (e.g. Latin American/Caribbean - European Union Summit).

6. **Harmonization of the agendas of regional and subregional bodies on the subject “Tourism as a generator of regional development”**

The Commission Chairman read out the corresponding paragraphs of the documents approved at the previous meeting of the CAM and made a summary of them, pointing out the importance of avoiding duplication of effort and the need to make more efficient use of the resources that the countries assigned to the various organizations of the sector.

The delegate of Brazil, agreeing with the previous speaker, suggested that this was a subject to be addressed at a gathering preceding the next CAM meeting to seek formulas for coordinating efforts. The delegate of Costa Rica wondered how this idea could be sold and considered that regional development was not an issue that could arouse great interest. He proposed that this should be done by existing regions within the various countries. Uruguay mentioned that both LAIA and OAS, through their bodies specialized in tourism, were to meet to study the impact of tourism on integration processes, that this meeting would be held in the first half of December and that it would be a good opportunity to begin launching the idea of putting together programmes.

The delegate of Mexico asked for the floor to say that this matter was going to be reviewed and supported the holding of a workshop prior to the next meeting of the CAM.

7. **Creation of a Sustainable Tourism Area in the Caribbean**
7. **Creation of a Sustainable Tourism Area in the Caribbean**

Ambassador Simon Molina Duarte, Secretary-General of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) announced that a Memorandum of Understanding and a document with twelve strategies had been drawn up with a view to creating an ACS programme of work in the tourism sector. These strategies would be analysed by the Caribbean Ministers of Tourism, under the chairmanship of the Secretary for Tourism of Mexico, in Antigua and Barbados on 9 and 10 November. Both documents would be revised by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs next December and, if approved, submitted to the meeting of Heads of State of the Caribbean in the first half of 1999. Ambassador Molina stressed the importance of creating a Sustainable Tourism Area in view of the economic, social and environmental effects of tourism in the Caribbean countries.

The delegate of **Venezuela** thanked **Mexico**, **Costa Rica** and **Jamaica**, the countries making up the Working Group coordinated by Venezuela, for establishing one of the aforementioned strategies and expressed his desire that the working groups be more practical and capable of meeting the commitments they took on in due time and form.

8. **Congress on gastronomic and cultural tourism heritage**

The delegate of **Mexico**, announcing that the above-mentioned Congress would be held, under the sponsorship of UNESCO and the Secretariat for Tourism, between 30 September and 6 October 1999 in the city of Puebla, suggested that the CAM participate as a body in this event. The proposal was accepted.

9. **Place and date of the thirty-fourth meeting of the Commission**

The delegate of **Brazil** confirmed that the thirty-fourth meeting would be held in his country. The place and date would be decided with the WTO Secretariat, and the Commission Members would be given sufficient notice. The Members of the Commission had been consulted in order to be able to determine the main topic of the Seminar to be held in conjunction with the thirty-fourth meeting. Most had voted in favour of "**Cultural tourism: new products**". The delegation of **Mexico** said it would be helpful if the Commission meeting could be held before the joint meeting between the European Union and Latin America.

The Vice-Minister of Tourism of **Bolivia** repeated his country's interest in hosting a Commission meeting on a future occasion. The delegate of **Peru** also invited the Commission to hold a meeting in her country.

The delegate of **Ecuador** emphasized the importance her country attached to the preparation of its Tourism Development Plan, expressing the desire that WTO cooperate in its preparation. She also stated that the tourism authorities of Ecuador gave priority to the setting up of a tourism promotion fund with a view to improving and expanding Ecuador's promotional activity in the international tourism market. She recalled that, in the last week of November, an important congress on adventure and
ecotourism would be carried out in her country, as well as the National Tourism Congress. Finally, she exhorted all the countries of the region to give the necessary support to ensure that the peace process between Ecuador and Peru would shortly be concluded for the benefit of tourism in both countries and the rest of the region.

The Chairman of the CAM warmly welcomed these words and expressed the readiness of all to support that process.

As the meeting was drawing to a close, Mr. Espinosa spoke of the need to pool the efforts of the public and private sectors to enhance the quality of tourism services. He recalled, once again, that WTO's data revealed notable increases in the number of arrivals in the countries of the Americas but that greater efforts were needed to attract more investments in international tourism. To this end, the ongoing concern to improve the competitiveness of tourism enterprises and, at the same time, to attract more financial resources for the sector were decisive elements. He suggested exploring the possibility of setting up a Ibero-American Tourism Investment Exchange, building on the existing Mexican Financing and Investment Exchange. This initiative could be furthered by a seminar to study in depth the modalities and feasibility of tourism investments.

The WTO Secretariat recalled that it was important for the countries to return as soon as possible the questionnaires that were sent to them for structuring the general programme of work for the period 2000-2001, since this was a good opportunity to voice their concerns and indicate their priorities. Similarly, as the delegate of Venezuela had previously mentioned, the Secretariat reiterated the importance of receiving the legal texts that progressively came into force in the countries of the region so as to update its tourism legislation data bank. At present the Secretariat had available legal texts from thirty-eight American countries.

Lastly the Secretariat expressed gratitude to the Affiliate Member Visa International for its generous contribution benefiting the countries of the Americas, to Spain for its support to cooperation programmes in the region and to Mexico for the more than generous hospitality extended to all the participants.

The final words of the Chairman of the Commission were to express gratitude for the presence of the National Tourism Administrations of the Americas in Yucatan, which he interpreted as a recognition of the effort his country was making to develop tourism and as a stimulus for performing the proposed tasks in this connection.
# LISTA DE PARTICIPANTES/LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

## PRESIDENTE DE LA COMISIÓN/CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMISSION

**MÉXICO/MEXICO**

Lic. Óscar ESPINOSA VILLARREAL  
Secretario de Turismo

## MIEMBROS EFECTIVOS/FULL MEMBERS

### ARGENTINA

Lic. Carlos E. GUTIÉRREZ  
Director Nacional de Economía Turística y Relaciones Institucionales  
Secretaría de Turismo

### BOLIVIA

Dr. Juan QUESADA VALDA  
Viceministro de Turismo  
Ministerio de Comercio Exterior e Inversión

### BRASIL/BRAZIL

Sr. Humberto FIGUEIREDO  
Supervisor de Proyectos y Acuerdos Multilaterales  
Instituto Brasileiro de Turismo (EMBRATUR)  
Ministerio de Industria, Comercio y Turismo

### COSTA RICA

Lic. Bary ROBERTS  
Director Ejecutivo  
Instituto Costarricense de Turismo

### CUBA

Sr. Manuel LAHERA CASANOVA  
Representante del Ministerio de Turismo de Cuba en México

### ECUADOR

Sra. Jacqueline GRARD  
Directora de la Corporación Ecuatoriana de Turismo  
Biol. Salvador CAZAR  
Funcionario del Ministerio de Turismo

### EL SALVADOR

Lic. Arturo MORALES  
Director de la Junta de Turismo  
Corporación Salvadoreña de Turismo  
Emb. Guillermo PAZ LARÍN  
Embajador de El Salvador en México
JAMAICA

Emb. Cordell WILSON
Embajadora de Jamaica en México

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Secretario de Turismo

Lic. Javier VEGA CAMARGO
Subsecretario de Promoción Turística
Secretaría de Turismo

Lic. Héctor FLORES SANTANA
Subsecretario de Desarrollo Turístico

Lic. Vicente GUTIÉRREZ CAMPOSECO
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Unidad de Servicios Turísticos

Lic. Pedro HOTH
Director General de Asuntos Internacionales
Secretaría de Turismo

Lic. Olga CONTRERAS
Directora General de Desarrollo de la Cultura Turística

Lic. Guillermo TARRATS
Director General de Desarrollo de Productos Turísticos

NICARAGUA

Arq. Lorenzo GUERRERO
Presidente Ejecutivo
Instituto Nicaragüense de Turismo

PARAGUAY

Arq. Hugo CATALDO CARRIZO
Director de Turismo y Presidente del Consejo
Dirección General de Turismo
Ministerio de Obras Públicas y Comunicaciones

Emb. Efraín ENRIQUEZ GAMÓN
Embajador de Paraguay en México

Dip. Ernesto ZACARÍAS IRÚN
Presidente
Cámara de Industria, Turismo y Comercio
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<td>Dra. María del Rocio VESGA GATTI</td>
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<td>Minister of Tourism, Curacao Tourism Development Bureau</td>
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<td>MIEMBROS AFILIADOS / AFFILIATE MEMBERS</td>
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<td>VISA INTERNATIONAL (México)</td>
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Lic. César VELASCO  
Director de Mercadotecnia y Comunicación Corporativa
Lic. Primitivo SÁNCHEZ CALDERÓN  
Consultor en Mercadotecnia

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Emb. Simón MOLINA DUARTE  
Secretario General

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<th>ORGANIZACIÓN MUNDIAL DEL TURISMO / WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION</th>
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| Sr. Augusto HUÉSCAR  
Representante Regional para las Américas |
| Sra. Carmen GAYO WALDBERG  
Asistente del Representante Regional |
LETTER OF INTENT
BETWEEN
THE WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION
AND
THE SECRETARIAT FOR TOURISM OF MEXICO
AND
VISA INTERNATIONAL
FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A TRAINING PROGRAMME
FOR
INSTRUCTORS AND A TOURISM PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT
AND
MARKETING COURSE IN THE REGION OF THE AMERICAS

At Merida, state of Yucatan in the United Mexican States, at a meeting held on
the twenty-sixth day of September 1998,

Mr. Francesco Frangialli, Secretary-General, representing the World Tourism
Organization, hereinafter referred to as "the Organization",

Mr. Oscar Espinosa Villareal, Secretary for Tourism, representing the
Secretariat for Tourism of Mexico, hereinafter referred to as "the Secretariat"; and

Mr. César Velasco, Director of Marketing and Corporative Communications,
representing VISA International, hereinafter referred to as "VISA",

Considering that tourism training in general and the training of suppliers of
tourism services in particular are priority aims among the activities of the Organization,
the Secretariat and VISA,

Bearing in mind the vocation of the said institutions to foster the enhancement
of the quality of tourism services by means of human resource training, as well as of
the quality of tourism products, and

Desirous of working together and cooperating to improve the training of tourism
professionals in Latin America and the Caribbean and to ensure that such training is
accessible to the greatest possible number of countries, especially the developing
ones,
DECLARE

First

The interest of the Organization and of the Secretariat in supporting the programme "La Calidad Soy Yo" ("Quality is my second name"), developed by VISA as an integral part of the training activities that the Organization carries out in the region of the Americas;

Second

The intention of the parties to cooperate in carrying out an Instructor training programme of VISA International and a Tourism product development and marketing course, based on the Programme "How to develop competitive tourism products", devised by the Secretariat for Tourism of Mexico;

Third

The courses will initially be imparted in Spanish and may be imparted in other languages depending on the availability of the appropriate instructional material;

Fourth

A maximum of twenty-five (25) people may participate in each of the sessions to be carried out under the Instructor training programme. For the courses on Tourism product development and marketing, the maximum number of participants shall be established in each case;

The participants should be proposed by the enterprises benefiting from this Programme and, in the case of staff of tourism administrations, by the National Tourism Administration of each country;

The parties reserve the right to make the final selection of the participants in each course;

Fifth

For the implementation of the Instructor training programme and the Tourism product development and marketing course, the parties shall provide the necessary teaching staff, instructional material and support in accordance with what is agreed for each type of programme;

In a subsequent exchange of letters or in the form determined by mutual agreement, the contribution of each of the parties shall be specified;
Sixth

A Monitoring Committee, comprising one representative of each of the parties, shall be set up. This Committee shall resolve any doubts that may arise about the performance of the same. The doubts shall be resolved with regard to the present clauses;

Seventh

The Letter of Intent shall enter into force on the date of its signature;

Eighth

The present Letter of Intent shall be rescinded in the case of failure to comply wholly or in part with any of the clauses it contains. It shall also be rescinded at the request of any of the parties;

Duly read by the parties themselves, and as proof of conformity with its contents, the present Letter of Intent is hereby signed by the following in six copies, in the Spanish language, on the aforementioned date.

VISA International  Ministry of Tourism  World Tourism Organization

WITNESSES

(Ecuador)  (Cuba)  (Uruguay)
Vice-Chairman of the CAM  Vice-Chairman of the CAM  Vice-Chairman of the CAM

WTO Regional Representative for the Americas