Concluding the official inauguration, Mr. Óscar Santelices, National Director of SERNATUR, addressed the attendees and expressed his satisfaction at the initiative to have the Seminar discuss the subject of MICE and Business Tourism as this constitutes an important segment for the development of the tourism market, and drew attention to the fact that it coincided with the National Tourism Summit of Chile, a circumstance that would enable local tourism entrepreneurs to receive important information over the course of the lectures.

2. PRESENTATION SUMMARIES

2.1 Presentation of the WTO study “The Meetings and Conventions Market in the Americas”

Fernando Llambi, WTO Consultant and Executive Director of the Association of Exhibit and Convention Organizers and Suppliers of Argentina (AOCA)

He began by explaining certain aspects of the methodology used for the study, including among others: two main specific information sources (ICCA and COCAL), the data-collection date (March 2005), the period studied from which the results were obtained (2000/2004) and the terminology adopted (international meetings).

He gave an introduction on the WTO data regarding international arrivals during the period, and by comparing it to the available data regarding the worldwide market for the segment, and placed the Americas region in this context, pointing out the position with regard to the region, countries and cities, carrying out different analyses and comparisons. He enumerated the causes of the quantitative decline during the five-year period under study, provided a great deal of data regarding the average number of participants, the subjects of the meetings, rankings of countries and cities within the region, seasonality, average expenditure per delegate, average length and size (number of participants) per meeting and the cost of registration.

Under the second subject he discussed, “Tourism Expenditure”, he mentioned the standard classification of tourism activities of the WTO, explained the calculation of average tourism expenditure in various countries, pointed out the increase in such expenditure for meetings tourism vis-à-vis holiday tourism, and then went on to conceptualize the economic impact of tourism, providing the cases of the cities of Buenos Aires and New York as examples.

In the next chapter he described the different types of meetings and the distinctive characteristics of the segment, singling out what he called the "big plus" of that constituting "knowledge tourism"; other characteristics discussed were that of being a type of tourism that is highly profitable for host communities, that contributes to de-seasonalization, its outstanding contribution to the hotel business and to business growth in general, in this case thanks to the contribution of trade fairs and exhibitions.

He discussed the concept of "rotation of meetings" and the importance of its analysis in the task of attracting events.
Under the point on "Promoting a destination", he underlined the need for strong cooperation between the private sector and the state and to have promotional materials with specific characteristics, pointing out the importance of market research actions, the generation of new, creative events, and having the appropriate infrastructure as a "sine qua non".

The study presented dealt with the issue of "actors and the different management models", centring in greater detail on three of them: professional associations, bureaus and the state. Regarding these three, he discussed their composition, objectives, functions and financing means, and discussed the bureaus of Detroit and Rio de Janeiro.

The author identified the specific profiles of PCOs (Professional Congress Organizers), described their characteristics and underlined the impact of their activity on employment creation, highlighting the extensive value chain with regard to the professions and jobs involved, and discussing aspects related to the training of Human Resources specific to the activity.

The study provided a sample of thirteen cities of the region with summarized information regarding facilities offered at convention centres and hotel capacity.

The study presented concluded with "General Considerations", some of which were: the importance of other meetings not included in the statistical data, as a "launching pad" for the growth of the segment in the region, the supporting role of the state, the high sensitivity of the segment to disruptions of a social nature, the comparative advantages of certain subregions of the Americas, the importance of generating regional databases.

It concludes with two premises:

- The importance of joint action by the state and the private sector; and
- the importance of the role of the regional entity for better rotation of meetings.

2.2 Situation of the World Market

Arnaldo Nardone, Chairman of the Latin American Confederation of Congress Organizers (COCAL) and of the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA)

After giving a brief characterization of the ICCA, Mr. Nardone provided an extensive set of data, defining what the concept of "international meeting" means to the ICCA, and classifying the market into two segments:

- *Non-corporate*: (professional associations and government organizations)
- *Corporate*: Corporations

The world data provided by the speaker were:
• Average expenditure of conventional tourists versus average expenditure of meetings tourists
• Estimated average daily expenditure
• Areas of rotation of events
• Percentage of venues, by region
• Percentage by number of participants
• Average number of participants by region and year
• Percentage by number of participants according to region
• Seasonality
• Average duration
• Percentage by type of venue used
• Percentage of suppliers used according to specialty
• Percentage according to subject
• Ranking of countries and cities according to number of events (world and Latin America)
• Ranking of countries and cities according to number of participants (world and Latin America)
• Average cost of registration and total expenditure per delegate

To conclude his presentation, Mr. Nardone mentioned the following concepts:

• The great importance of having databases built up through systematic research, pointing out that attracting meetings is clearly a task of marketing

• He characterized the associations market as the most important for the Americas and the corporate market as the weakest one

• He stated that the geographic location of international associations (outside the Americas region) was a factor that made it difficult to attract meetings

• He expressed the importance of using the professional services of PCOs.

• He highlighted the concentration of the international meetings market in the top ten countries of the ranking, which account for 45%, and the fact that no Latin American country is in the top ten, with the leading Latin American country being Brazil.

Lastly, he expressed the need for teamwork in the region or subregions.
2.3 The Meetings and Conventions Market in Chile. The public-sector perspective
Oscar Santelices, National Director of SERNATUR

The National Director of the host country began by mentioning that 2004 had been a "historic record year" for inbound tourism to Chile, mentioning the important role played in this result by the granting to the sector of the status of National Policy/State Policy based on the principles of: sustainability, credibility, innovation, fairness, collaboration, identity and facilitation. In relation to this "record year", he also considered the following factors as very important for this achievement: economic growth, political stability, economic openness, foreign investment, level of accessibility, development of telecommunications, security.

He reported that out of the total number of business tourism arrivals, 9% corresponds to participants of meetings and conventions, who had an average daily expenditure of US$ 346 (three times more than a holiday tourist).

Regarding 2004, he cited the following growth percentages with respect to 2003:

- 58% + in the number of meetings
- 63% + in the number of participants
- 3% + in the number of participants per meeting

Regarding organizational aspects, he mentioned as specific elements within the framework of SERNATUR (National Tourism Service) the CPT (Chile Tourism Promotion Corporation) whose mission, he explained, was "to promote and execute the International Marketing Plan" and the Chile Convention Bureau, which he defined as an official body, receiving official funds, whose objective is "to promote Chile as a venue for international meetings", focusing on the proactive search for opportunities through intensive work with national and international associations. As for results, he showed a 66% “success rate” in winning bids for 2004.

Lastly, among the keys to the success the Bureau has been garnering, he highlighted:

- Strong cooperation between the government and the private sector
- Existence of the Convention Bureau
- Excellent quantity of direct air links
- Very good work by PCOs and specialized TOs.

2.4 Private-Sector Experience, from the Perspective of a Convention Centre or Convention Bureau
Ana Maria Montes, Chairman of the Tourism High Council

Ms. Montes highlighted among the benefits of meetings and conventions tourism, aside from the economically positive results, the intellectual benefits generated by meetings, scientific enrichment and growth, the meeting of cultures and overcoming differences.
Among the actors in the segment, she highlighted the figure of the PCOs and underlined the magnitude of what she called the "chain of consumption".

She pointed out that technology had not replaced the need for meetings and the personal exchange they provide.

She enumerated a very large number of hotel investments in the course of implementation and brought to the meeting very interesting indicators with respect to the growth in sales in general and in particular the growth in credit card sales and gastronomic consumption during various international meetings held in Chile.

Among the challenges she enumerated, two can be highlighted:

a) Meeting quality standards throughout the chain of commercialization.
b) Professionalizing the human resources linked to business tourism.

### 2.5 The Business Traveller Market in the Americas

**Hernán Somerville, Chairman of the Production and Trade Confederation of Chile, and Chairman of American Express Chile.**

Mr. Somerville placed the emphasis on pointing out important factors for success in the development the meetings business such as political stability, economic stability and legal certainty.

He said there was an indispensable need to have a "smart" tax system that favours and does not hinder or discourage the growth of the sector.

He concluded by describing international meetings as "the great business of the country", thanks to its enormous and positive socio-economic implications.

### Canada

#### 2.6 Systems of Organization and the Results Obtained

**Pierre Labrie, General Manager of the Québec City and Area Tourism and Convention Bureau**

The Director of the Québec City and Area Tourism and Convention Bureau began by providing quantitative data regarding economic results for his country, for the international and domestic segments, and especially the contribution or significance of the United States market in relation to Canada, and compared in these aspects leisure tourism and meetings and convention tourism. Using these data, he explained why his country puts a priority focus on the United States market.

As for the structure that handles tourism in Canada, he mentioned that it was mixed, public and private, that the federal government defines national tourism policy and that it approaches the market as a whole. He added the Canadian Tourism Commission carries out focalized national marketing, whose role consists of research and information
and whose mission is to support the Canadian tourism industry, carrying out marketing of the market, to promote cooperation between the public and private sectors, and to provide information to both. The Commission's members are mostly from the private sector, with a minority representation of regional public sector entities, and its mode of operation is through specific committees according to segment, with the notable inclusion of sales offices abroad.

As for the Committee on the Congress and Incentive Travel Market, he reiterated its public-private composition, with its Chairman being the CEO of the Metro Toronto Convention Centre and its members including hotel chains, airlines, suppliers, and DMOs (Destination Marketing Organizations).

Its permanent objectives are: to generate new businesses, to increase the profitability of its members, and to augment e-capacity. Among the priority "targets" he mentioned were professional organizers of associations and corporations, and the CEOs of associations and corporations.

As a demonstration of the good results obtained, comparing 2004 and 2003, he cited the growth of the average "size" (number of attendees) of the meetings and the economic benefits confirmed, which increased from 16 to 20 million in these two years. He also pointed out the fact that nine Canadian cities appear among the leaders in the world ranking of cities hosting international meetings.

Among the factors contributing to good business prospects for the segment he mentioned: the performance of the US economy, absence of travel restrictions on business travel between the United States and Canada, the favourable exchange rate, competitive prices, and the synergy of the already consolidated "Canada" brand in the tourism market.

Brazil

2.7 The Brazilian Market and the Experience of ANHEMBI

Caio Luiz de Carvalho, President of ANHEMBI

The President of ANHEMBI began with an analysis of the expansion of international tourism worldwide and in the Americas, according to WTO data, and included a mention of business tourism at the world level, and concluding this first part with data from the World Travel Tourism Council regarding Latin America and business tourism.

He then referred to data for Brazil; he cited that the business, trade fair and meetings segment in 2004 accounted for a share of 49% of total travel and 61% of total accommodation, with growth of 49.53% of business/corporate tourism in 2004 with respect to 2003, designating Sao Paulo as Brazil's business tourism capital and as the biggest centre of business tourism of South America, indicating that this segment represents 26% of tourism for the country as a whole, but 42.7% of tourism in Sao Paulo. In the specific case of fairs and exhibitions, out of a total of the 170 held in Brazil, 140 were held in this city, with the participation of 65,000 enterprises.
He concluded this part of his presentation by describing what the city offers in terms of leisure possibilities and infrastructure.

Lastly, he pointed out the close relationship between economic growth and corporate tourism, the importance of meetings of no more than three days (relating this to the trend toward shorter travel stays) and the need to generate original and exclusive products, applying large amounts of creativity.

### 2.8 Attracting and Promoting International Events: The Recent Experience of Brazil

**Vaniza Schuler, Events Coordinator, Business Tourism Directorate, EMBRATUR**

Ms. Schuler, as an EMBRATUR official, explained that the exclusive function of the institution is to carry out promotional, marketing and commercialization support actions of Brazil abroad, and that to this end, with regard to business and events tourism, it has a Business and Events Tourism Directorate with the following priorities:

- Exclusive and personalized assistance for attraction actions
- Production and dispatch of specific materials for attraction
- Attendance of EMBRATUR professionals where venue is established
- Stands, promotional shows
- Allocation of financial resources appropriate to the event to be attracted
- Other priorities: preparation of calendar of events, capacity-building actions, awareness-raising at the government level, upgrading of infrastructure and facilities

She pointed out the importance of research with regard to the each event's potential to generate business, the conditions for candidature and available resources and the systematization of all these data through an attraction and promotion file.

She especially underlined EMBRATUR "commitment" to attracting events "not for any specific domestic destination", but rather to attracting events "for the country" clearly pointing out that EMBRATUR does not specify the destination and explaining the mechanisms used for the subsequent assignment of the event (in cases where it has not been previously defined) with the intervention of the Federation of Bureaus of Brazil, the different Bureaus and Official Tourism Bodies.

She concluded her presentation with an example of how the contribution of a reasonable sum of dollars (US$ 5,000), for the attraction of an event could lead to participant expenditures at the candidate venue of US$ 12 million.
Uruguay

2.9 Montevideo - MERCOSUR Capital, a Potential Hub for MICE Tourism
Benjamin Liberoff, Advisor to the Minister of Tourism and Sports of Uruguay

The representative of Uruguay developed an innovative concept, that of "being a capital".

To this end he mentioned the benefits that could accrue for a city when it is the headquarters of a process of regionalization, or the epicentre of multilateral bodies, thanks to the positive impacts that such status brings.

He cited different examples, such as Brussels, Geneva, New York, Miami and London.

He underlined the need to meet certain requirements in order to aspire to being a "capital", such as a high standard of living, competitiveness and multiculturalism.

In the case of Montevideo, aside from being the administrative headquarters of MERCOSUR and its Permanent Secretariat, it also hosts the headquarters of over 30 International and Regional Organizations, which implies significant numbers of personnel of different nationalities with substantial expenditures, the allocation of substantial budgets, and more significantly, the generation of numerous events. Furthermore, the need to develop certain infrastructure elements and services generates specific capacity-building actions originating from the status of being a "capital".

To conclude his presentation, Mr. Liberoff underlined the need to generate strategic alliances to achieve better rotation of events in the region.

Spain

2.10 Instruments for Measuring the Meetings and Conventions market
Andrés Contreras, Deputy Director General of Tourism Cooperation and Coordination, General Secretariat of Tourism of Spain

Mr. Contreras in his presentation, started off with two premises:

- Money that is poured into research is not an expense, but rather an investment

- It is necessary to answer three questions: What is being sold? Where is it sold? How is it sold?

- Cooperation between the private sector and the public sector with reliable information is essential.
He mentioned two surveys that are taken in Spain:

- FRONTUR (tourist movements at borders, distinguishing purpose of trip)
- EGATUR (total expenditure, average per person, by purpose of travel)

He went on to describe METURE or "Statistical Measurement of Meetings Tourism in Spain", which means that this segment is specifically measured in this country.

METURE collects information on the 38 cities that are members of the Spain Convention Bureau, plus data from convention centres, hotels and other venues. The report analyses supply and demand and evaluates tourists, which makes its data compatible with those of national and international statistics.

In summary, METURE provides data regarding the following variables, among others:

- Number of meetings and participants by Autonomous Community.
- Percentage of meetings by origin of registered participants.
- Type of meeting by geographical area of origin of registered participants
- Percentage according to types of venue used
- Seasonality
- Average number of participants
- Average duration and median duration
- Survey of "level of satisfaction of registered participants"
- Average daily expenditure
- Economic impact of participants and of accompanying persons (distinguished)

As can be seen, METURE provides an absolutely detailed evaluation that is valuable for decision-making.

2.11 Management of a Congress and Exhibitions Centre
Yolanda de Aguilar, General Manager of the Malaga Convention Centre
Malaga, Spain

Among her first concepts, Ms. Aguilar pointed out the following conditioning factors for trade fair activity:

a) infrastructure (communications, urban, exhibit)

b) capacity to provide services (enterprises, human capital)

c) drawing power or attractiveness

She highlighted the contribution of fairs to the development of cities, enumerating the following principal impacts:

a) increased direct and indirect employment
b) increase in investment
c) improvement of infrastructure and communications systems
d) de-seasonalization of tourism
As for economic impact and development:

- each euro spent by attendees generates income of between 8 and 12 euros
- 37% of trade fair income is reinvested in the host city/region, leading to the opening up of new markets
- characterized by a high level of loyalty of the participants, who also return on holiday
- strong effect on external trade
- contribute to upgrading technology
- have a long value chain or productive linkages, with qualified jobs

The speaker mentioned the importance of having an economic viability plan and an infrastructure plan when deciding to build a convention centre of fairground, although she also mentioned the alternative possibility that such projects may not be economically profitable but would serve as a factor of social and community development, in which case it would be necessary to determine previously the extent to which this "lack of profitability" is acceptable for the sake of the "social profitability" sought.

She also expressly mentioned the need for good public-private understanding, but placed the emphasis on "entrepreneurial attitude" and referred to common sense, patience, and "buying into the project" as keys for entrepreneurial management.

Lastly, she underlined the importance of local professional associations as the first step on the road to attracting meetings.

**Mexico**

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<th>2.12 The Meetings and Conventions Market</th>
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<td><em>Francisco Madrid, Under-Secretary of Tourism Operation, Secretariat of Tourism of Mexico</em></td>
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Mr. Madrid discussed the size of the meetings and convention market in his country, saying that it represented 2.6% of "national tourism consumption", and providing various indicators. He gave an interesting breakdown of the average expenditure generated by the segment, differentiating according to whether or not such expenditure included air transport, for the nearby North American market as well as the domestic market.

He described the United States as the main actual and potential market and Canada as the main competitor.

He pointed out the existence of the Congress and Convention Bureau in the framework of the Tourism Promotion Council, with the mission of "promoting Mexico for congresses, conventions, incentives and exhibitions" with an international role – to facilitate PCO/destination communication – and a national role – to ensure that events stay in Mexico.
He placed special emphasis on the existence of the zero VAT tax rate for meetings and conventions, estimating that this represented added savings of between 10 and 15% with respect to other destinations/competitors. Regarding the zero VAT rate, he mentioned that work was under way to extend its benefits to fairgrounds and incentive travel.

Another aspect that was mentioned by Mr. Madrid was the need to professionalize and certify entrepreneurs and providers, with the responsibility of doing so falling on AMPROFEC (Mexican Association of Trade Fair, Exhibits and Conventions Professionals).

He described a few of the strategies provided for in the Marketing Plan of his country for attracting meetings, considered the joint work of the Secretariat of Tourism and the Tourism Promotion Council of Mexico to be key, and concluded by stating that meetings and conventions constitute a viable option for Mexico, insofar as they represent a significant flow of visitors and consumption of services for the domestic market and the international market, with the only reservations with regard to the latter market being the need for improvements in infrastructure, quality of service and communications.

Argentina

### 2.13 National and International Experiences in Attracting Meetings and Conventions to a Destination

**Jorge Castex, President, Congresos Internacionales S.A. and Honorary President of COCAL**

The speaker differentiated meetings into association, corporate and governmental, especially for the purpose of pointing out those who make the decisions with regard to the venue/destination, being, respectively, assemblies, the management of companies (in this case aspects related to the costs of a venue/destination weigh heavily) or governments or assemblies. This is an essential piece of data to take into account in order to determine on whom to influence in each case.

Another matter that he pointed out in his presentation was the importance of studying how the rotation of the event we are interested in has happened in its past editions, since it is improbable that it will be held again in the same region or subregion for editions separated by only a short period of time. He also underlined the need to adopt the norms specified by the associations for presentations and the evaluation of candidatures, as well as the "quality" of the presentation.

Among the notable elements for the success of a candidature he enumerated, among others:

- having a local association or person connected with the international association to which the candidature will be submitted
- importance local precedents related to the theme of the event one is bidding for
- adequate infrastructure in terms of quality and quantity
- good air connection/accessibility
- stability of the country and security
- knowledge of possible competing destinations
a destination that is attractive in terms of tourism/culture/art

He said that one intelligent strategy was to offer grants for the attendance of young professionals from developing regions.

Lastly he cited the following as factors that should be taken responsibly into account:

- being objective in the evaluation of the type of meeting the destination can receive
- not to go too far in the price/service ratio

Chile

2.14 Business Tourism Development Strategy

Abel Bouchon, Sales Manager, LAN

The Sales Manager of LAN began his presentation with three questions that would serve as its unifying thread:

- How does LAN see business tourism?
- What is the risk of a marginal weight of the region?
- Is there a possibility of a coordinated regional vision?

In order to respond to these questions, he said that LAN's definition of business tourism was broad, and said that the region had a small weight in the world context in terms of the number of arrivals of international passengers for business purposes and affirmed the need for regional cooperation.

He pointed out that for his company there are three stages in the development of the strategy for inbound business tourism:

- **The Individual stage**, in which there is no defined strategy for the market, business is developed through the inertia of the outbound demand and there are no specialized bodies. In this stage, the airline acts with reactive sales according to the demand, with a low level of competitiveness.

- **The Emerging phase**, where market intelligence begins to be developed, a strategy is defined, a governmental convention bureau is created, and infrastructure begins to grow; under such circumstances, the airline creates specific areas, generates a methodology for the evaluation of possible events operated by it, participates in fairs and congresses, supports bids, and in parallel develops other products for outbound accounts.

- **The Consolidation phase**: in this stage, with regard to the market, intelligence regarding the market is deepened, ad hoc products are developed, the convention bureau takes on a prominent role in day-to-day operations, PCOs consolidate, international incentives enterprises appear, profitability and investment increases. In these market conditions, the airline consolidates its sales of products for the segment and forges strategic alliances with the varied actors of the industry.
The speaker mentioned the following actions as desirable: the preparation of a calendar of fairs and congresses in order to be promoted in all the international offices of the airline, and the production of pre and post tours especially conceived for the business segment.

Finally, he introduced the possibility of a fourth stage:

- **The Regionalization stage**: in this stage, the market begins to share information, alliances are produced among the different convention bureaus, regional alliances arise among PCOs and TOs, and regional products are generated. As for the airline, it mainly reacts with the emergence of regional tourism products.

### 2.15 Closing ceremony

*Ximena Rincón González, Mayor of Santiago*

The Mayor of the Metropolitan Region, gave a speech to conclude the Seminar.

In her speech, she described Santiago, Chile, as a "tourism capital" and as "the best city to do business".

She based these affirmations on various facts, including:

- its renovated infrastructure
- substantial improvements in environmental conditions
- excellent indices of security and transparency
- good supply of quality services
- site of the headquarters of important multinational companies and corporations
- the carrying out and application of tourism marketing studies with international assistance

### 3. **COMMENTS AND GENERAL CONCLUSIONS**

#### 3.1 The choice of the theme “MICE Tourism and Business Tourism” was a good one for the holding of the Seminar

- In light of the quality of the presentations and the importance of the qualitative and quantitative data provided, it was clear that the segment analysed was highly relevant for tourism in the Americas.

- On the other hand, this importance that was placed in clear focus led the Seminar to express the urgent need for the region to design strategies to achieve substantial development that makes it possible to significantly increase the very small share of the international meetings market currently being captured by the Americas.
Another strong point that contributed to the success of the Seminar was the variety and quality of the subjects and origins of the speakers. This made it possible to hear a wide spectrum of issues related to the segment, enriched by the different realities of the countries of origin of the speakers.

### 3.2 The Basic Introductory Report of the WTO and the Presentations

It was important to observe in the course of the presentations, which as mentioned before corresponded to different realities, that the contributions, judgments and evaluations of the Report were repeatedly validated by the concepts of the different speakers.

Undoubtedly, this circumstance, which will be reflected throughout these conclusions, enormously enhances the significance and contribution of the document, which is perhaps the first to deal with the issue of meetings and conventions tourism in an integrated manner and using such varied approaches.

Aside from the aforementioned coincidence with the content of the Report, it bears pointing out the breadth of the aspects that it tackles, allowing a complete illustration of the specific subject, while at the same time making it possible to constantly compare and relate it with aspects of tourism in general.

- Tourism Expenditure and Meetings and Conventions Tourism Expenditure
- Economic impact of tourism and economic impact of the segment
- Development of a destination for meetings and its relation to the development of the destination for tourism in general
- The impact of meetings and conventions on employment and its comparison with the same impact on tourism in general

Lastly with regard to common aspects, the relation in the questions raised for the training of human resources

With regard to specific aspects of the congresses and conventions segment, the range of subjects tackled by the Report was likewise very broad, including aside from those already mentioned:

- Positioning of the Americas region in this segment of the world tourism market
- Characteristics of the meetings and conventions market
- “Actors” specific to the segment
- The PCO as a leading actor with a specific profile

and an illustrative and concise table of infrastructure for a sampling of countries of the region.
3.2 Concepts of the Basic Introductory Report validated by the different realities presented by the speakers. Its consequent value as natural conclusions of the Seminar

- Contribution of the segment to augmenting tourism expenditure
- Contribution of the segment to augmenting average length of stay
- Contributes to the expansion of recreational/leisure/holiday tourism, due to the return of attendees of international meetings to the venue, whether alone or accompanied by family, friends or colleagues
- The segment accounts for 20% of all international arrivals
- De-seasonalizing effect
- Factor for the creation of jobs, mainly skilled
- The value chain specific to the segment expands the value chain of tourism
- Prominence of "scientific" meetings
- Average expenditure per participant of meetings and conventions tourism at least three times the expenditure of "holiday" tourists
- Prevalent size in terms of number of participants: Between 0 and 2000 registered participants, 85% of total (important data for gauging infrastructure size)
- Specific "plus" unique to the segment, that of being knowledge tourism; encounters with a view to the exchange of knowledge
- Technology at the service of meetings, not at their replacement
- Favours business generation, especially in the case of fairs and exhibitions
- The hotel sector, a privileged partner of meetings and conventions tourism
- Inescapable, strong cooperation between the private sector and the public sector
- Importance of the tasks of marketing/research: setting up databases
- Essential: infrastructure and facilities of appropriate size and quality and good connectivity and accessibility
- Importance of the professional role of PCOs
- Importance of the existence of convention bureaus
- Need for political/social stability for the development of the segment, due to its high sensitivity to these factors
- Segment mostly composed of SMEs, which are highly significant in the economies of the countries of the region
- Careful role of the State with regard to non-interference in "the business", but rather as facilitator.
- Importance of agreeing on, implementing and respecting systems for the measurement of the sector that are common to the entire region, fed with reliable information.

Expanding the meaning of the title of this heading, the circumstance of the coincidence of no less than these twenty-three preceding "characterizations", appearing in the Basic Introductory Report of the WTO, and also expressed in the presentations and concepts of fourteen expert speakers of different countries of origin, make them deserving of being considered valid conclusions.
3.3 Final conclusions

3.3.1 The meetings and conventions segment is of extreme importance for the growth of tourism in the region and therefore for its economic and social development.

3.3.2 The region, especially Latin America, the Caribbean, and Central America, has enormous potential for growth in terms of attracting the international meetings market.

3.3.3 The large number of meetings that do not qualify according to international criteria, but which are held in the region, constitute a base critical mass for the growth of the segment and for capturing a larger share of the world market.

3.3.4 Essential in the initial stages of capturing this larger share of the world market are:

- Strong backing of the State.
- Joint action by the private and public sectors.
- Effective action by the regional body, aimed at improving the rotation and coordinating the preparation of databases.

It is expected that the initiative expressed in the Seminar will serve as a trigger for the necessary steps to be taken, at the regional level and at the level of the different governments of the region, in order to undertake the challenge of progressively increasing the number of international meetings held in the Americas.