MINUTES OF THE FORTY-FIFTH MEETING OF
THE REGIONAL COMMISSION
FOR THE AMERICAS

Montevideo, Uruguay, 3-5 May 2006

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE REGIONAL COMMISSION

The forty-fifth meeting of the UNWTO Commission for the Americas, under the chairmanship of Brazil, took place in the city of Montevideo, Uruguay, on 4-5 May 2006.

Prior to the meeting of the Commission, the International Seminar on the "Municipalization of Tourism and Local Development" was held, where the majority of the UNWTO member countries of the Americas presented their policies and programmes to strengthen municipal management in the development and competitiveness of national tourism destinations.

Both meetings were attended by representatives from 21 UNWTO member countries, four Affiliate Members and one international organization. The seminar was attended also by some 350 Uruguayan participants. The list of official and international participants is provided in Annex 2.

A. Adoption of the Agenda

Following the remarks of the CAM Chairman thanking the Uruguayan authorities for hosting and organizing the forty-fifth meeting and lauding the positive results of the regional seminar, the meeting proceeded to adopt the following agenda:

1. Communication by the Chairman of the Commission (Brazil)
2. Preliminary remarks by the Secretary-General
3. Presentation of the 2005 edition of "Tourism Market Trends in the Americas"
5. Implementation of the ST-EP programme
6. Actions in the field of crisis prevention and management
7. Other matters
8. Place and date of the forty-sixth meeting of the Commission

Under other matters, the Commission approved the participation of the representative of the Inter-American Development Bank to present the Bank's policy in favour of tourism development, as well as Colombia's suggestion to explain the progress of the organization of the UNWTO General Assembly in the city of Cartagena de Indias in November 2007.

B. Communication of the Chairman of the Commission (Brazil) (document CAM/45/2)

The Chairman of the Commission formally presented the proposal of Brazil suggesting to the Members of the Commission the adoption of a specific programme of work for the region aimed at dealing with matters of particular significance for national and regional tourism development:
(1) the structure and plan of action of the Regional Task Force for the Prevention of the Sexual Exploitation of Children in Tourism;
(2) the link between Climate Change and Tourism in the Americas;
(3) greater development of the Tourism Satellite Account; and,
(4) greater dissemination at the national level of the activities carried out by the Affiliate Members of the region.

The Commission agreed to take up the proposal of the Chair together with agenda item 4 on the Implementation of the General Programme of Work of the Organization.

C. Preliminary remarks by the Secretary-General (document CAM/45/3)

The Secretary-General presented his report describing the situation of the world tourism industry and its outlook for 2006, as well as the challenges and responses in the areas of safety and security, public health (avian flu), the economy (rise in oil prices) and social issues (poverty reduction).

In particular, he stated that despite a series of negative factors and uncertainties, the world tourism industry continued to grow. In 2005 international tourist arrivals increased by 5.5 per cent, following a growth rate of 10 per cent the previous year; the U.S. market recovered, but without reaching the high attained in 2001, and certain regions grew at rates well above the world average, such as the Caribbean and South America, which grew 14 per cent and 13 per cent, respectively. The situation in South America is explained fundamentally by the good performance of its main economies (Brazil, Argentina and Venezuela), although a large part of tourism flows are inter-regional.

Regarding the outlook for 2006, the Secretary-General pointed out that the UNWTO Experts' Group was not very optimistic and is forecasting a moderate rate of growth in international tourism arrivals of around 4-5 percent, and for the Americas region, 3 to 4 per cent. In this regard, he explained that there are two major uncertainties for 2006: health and security concerns on the one hand, and the oil crisis, on the other.

Regarding health and security, it has been already been demonstrated that the tourism industry is resilient in the face of adverse situations and that consumers are factoring in uncertainties and risks in their regular decision-making. Nevertheless, the Secretary-General pointed out that there is a close link between the magnification of threats or crises such as terrorism, natural disasters and epidemics, and media coverage, which is why it is necessary to work intensely on two areas: crisis assessment and management; and relations with the media and the tourism industry. In this regard, he underlined the efforts being made by the UNWTO in the design and execution of a crisis-management programme, in particular, to deal with avian flu, as well as Conferences on Tourism Communications (TOURCOM). In the case of the Americas, it will be held this year in Rosario, Argentina, from 28 to 30 May.
Regarding oil, he pointed out that an analysis carried out by the UNWTO had concluded that the rise in oil prices was not yet an obstacle for the world tourism industry because, among other reasons, the current price of 70 dollar a barrel was lower in real terms than the prices reached in the 1970s (94 dollars per barrel in current prices) during which period it did cause a crisis in the world economy. Nevertheless, he said that there are two groups of airlines that are being affected by the rise in prices. First, the small airlines of small economies that do not have the financial capacity to make advance purchases; and second, the U.S. airlines that were already been plagued with financial problems due to other kinds of reasons.

In this regard, the Secretary-General emphasized the importance of adequate preparation in order to deal with threats but without forgetting about long-term objectives, including the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. In this regard, he mentioned the UNWTO ST-EP programme aimed at poverty reduction.

In his remarks, the Secretary-General also referred to matters related to the functioning of the Organization itself.

Firstly, he informed about his efforts to continue increasing the number of members of UNWTO, in particular, the rejoining of the United States, the main obstacle to which seems to be due more to budgetary difficulties rather than an unfavourable political decision.

He then reported on the positive financial situation of the Organization, including the decision expected to be adopted at the Executive Council session in June 2006 in Quito, for the use of the special fund of 250,000 euros for crisis management and avian flu, but warned that the continued devaluation of the dollar with respect to the euro and the rising inflation in Spain constituted two serious concerns with regard to the budgetary and financial strength of the UNWTO, whose situation would be worse if the dollar had been used as the currency of account in its budget.

He also discussed the staff situation, saying that the UNWTO needs to prepare for the expected retirement in the period 2006-2007 of various senior officials, including the Regional Representative for the Americas, who has decided to postpone his retirement in order to attend the Executive Council in June. He also introduced Marco Balarezo, as the UNWTO's new collaborator in the Regional Representation for the Americas, to the Peruvian Minister of Diplomatic Services.

He reported on the meeting held at the UNWTO Headquarters in April 2006 of the United Nations Chief Executives Board (CEB), presided by UN Secretary-General Mr. Kofi Annan. In this regard, he said that the CEB had reiterated the central role of the UNWTO as a specialized agency of the United Nations in the field of world tourism, and that it had accepted its proposal to create a new coordination mechanism called UNTEN (United Nations Tourism Exchange Network), through which the different agencies of the United Nations system are to inform the UNWTO about any projects they may be planning or executing in this field.
Finally, the Secretary-General referred to the Conferences scheduled by the UNWTO, stating in particular that the Conference for Parliamentarians and Local Authorities would be held in 2007 in Tunisia, in light of Ukraine's difficulties in hosting it in 2006.

After the Secretary-General concluded his remarks, Colombia took the floor to ask about the future of the Working Group on Travel Advisories. Mexico stated that the Group had achieved its objective with the submission and approval by the General Assembly in Dakar of the Guidelines on Travel Advisories and that what needed to be done at this time was to work on the dissemination of these guidelines in the generating markets in order to transform them into common practice. Mexico also said that emphasis should now be given to the Working Group on Risk Assessment and Management, an opinion that met with the approval of the UNWTO Secretary-General.

Bahamas and Brazil referred to UNTEN and the need to strengthen coordination.

With respect to the expansion of the UNWTO's membership, Brazil recommended that the Council express support for the entry of new members, and that in addition to the efforts of the Secretary-General, all the Member countries of the Commission should individually take steps to facilitate the joining not only of the United States, but also of many of the countries of the Caribbean that are not members of the Organization at this time. Bahamas informed that it was facilitating the entry of Barbados and of Trinidad and Tobago. For its part, Mexico supported the proposal of Brazil and informed that the President of Mexico had promised to the Secretary-General that he would take up this matter with the President of the United States.

After the Secretary-General explained that the UNWTO could support activities in non-member countries as long as only extra-budgetary resources are dedicated to them, the Commission decided:

a) to issue a communiqué to the United States inviting it to become a member of the UNWTO;
b) that the member countries would carry out demarches individually; and
c) to issue to Egypt a message expressing its support to the Government and denouncing terrorism (attached in Annex 1 is the declaration of the Regional Commission for Europe).

D. Presentation of the 2005 edition of "Tourism Market Trends in the Americas"

The Regional Representative gave a detailed presentation of the 2005 report on the Tourism Market Trends in the Americas, with the recommendation that the member countries had two weeks to submit any observations or updates regarding it.

Also distributed were the preliminary report on promotional budgets of National Tourism Organizations, which is also subject to observations and comments within a period of two weeks; the study on the effects of the rise in oil prices, the January 2006 issue of the Barometer, and the study on Urban Tourism and Culture.
The member countries lauded the high level of quality of the presentation given by the Regional Representative and made various comments on specific points: Peru recommended that the reasons behind the strong growth of international tourism in South-East Asia be analysed, and the good experiences be replicated. Chile suggested paying greater attention in the report to the state of intra-regional tourism than to the situation of international tourism, as well as to air traffic and growth forecasts.

Mexico agreed with the view expressed by Peru and said that the countries of the Americas had failed as countries and not as tourism destinations, and that in contrast South-East Asia had been able to successfully integrate itself in the globalization of the world economy. He also said that, given that a large part of tourism flows in the Americas is intra-regional, it was not a matter of competitiveness of the destinations, but rather of the strength of the generating markets.

Moreover, the delegate from Mexico underlined the need to have more up-to-date information, as the Report, in contrast to the presentation, covered only up to 2004. He recommended that cross-border tourism be analysed and that emphasis be placed on receipts instead of on the number of international tourist arrivals as the criterion for the evaluation of the situation of international tourism, given that his experience showed that when there is a devaluation of the dollar, there is a rise in the number of tourists but not in receipts. He also observed that that the data on average expenditure for America seemed too high to him and that they should be revised, explaining that in the period 2000-2004 international tourism in North America did not grow but rather recovered.

Nicaragua expressed the need to have more up-to-date information and to improve national statistics through the TSA. Spain observed that a more in-depth analysis of expenditure should be carried out, citing the example of the analysis carried out by the European Union on the effects of the holding of major events on the tourism and the economy of the host country, which were not always positive. Brazil recommended that the UNWTO request member countries to provide up-to-date information and to study the positive and negative effects of large events on tourism, which in its opinion are positive for the host country in terms of tourism promotion due to the strong impact they have in the media.

Uruguay suggested that the Secretariat distribute information on expenditure and agreed with the recommendation of Mexico to adjust the data of the report. It also supported the need to pay greater attention to air transport and rediscovering domestic tourism.

In response to these observations and suggestions, the Secretary-General said that it should be recalled that the structure of tourism is regional and that the only exception is South-East Asia, whose situation will change once India becomes a major generating market. He pointed out that when the Chinese market matures, it will tend to travel to other regions and that this would constitute a challenge for Latin America and the Caribbean given that they do not have many air connections.
The Secretary-General said that indicators of arrivals and receipts each had their limitations and that the best indicator for evaluating the situation of tourism is in terms of overnights, regarding which, however, there remain great difficulties in collecting information. He said that the UNWTO has agreed with the International Monetary Fund on looking at how to improve information on receipts and reiterated the importance of continuing to improve statistics at the local and regional levels through the TSA. Lastly, he said that in the future the report on trends would contain more up-to-date information.

The Regional Representative said that he would send information in PowerPoint format on tourism trends in Central America to the delegates from Central America present at the meeting.

E. Implementation of the ST-EP programme (document CAM/45/6)

The Secretary-General presented the report on the implementation of the UNWTO ST-EP programme. He explained that this initiative, aimed at the eradication of poverty, is funded through three sources: the regular programme; the creation of a multi-donor trust fund that has already received a contribution of two million dollars from the Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV) and the ST-EP Foundation, created with the contribution of five million dollars by South Korea. He pointed out that ST-EP is basically geared toward the 48 least developed countries, but without excluding other developing countries especially in the region of the Americas, essentially the Central American countries, the Andean countries, and small island states.

He reiterated that the ST-EP programme constituted a unified strategy and policy of the Organization aimed at the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, especially through projects that make it possible to strengthen horizontal and vertical links among the national sectors that make up the tourism industry in order to reduce economic leakages.

Ecuador then took the floor in its capacity as the representative of the region on the Board of Directors of the ST-EP Foundation in order to inform that the Commission had to propose before its meeting to be held in June in Quito,

(1) possible candidates for the Presidency of the Foundation and
(2) candidates of the region for the Council of Governors of the Foundation.

He said that, at the aforementioned meeting, the decision would also be taken to initiate the funding of projects on the part of the Foundation, for which four projects had already been selected--one of them in the region--out of a pool of over 140 projects.

Speaking for itself, Ecuador raised two concerns regarding the future path of ST-EP. Firstly, regarding the structure of the financing of the programme that could entail the creation of a bureaucratic model with two "heads" and, secondly, the fact that it is not known what specific role the regional coordinators of ST-EP would be and the possible duplication of functions with the Regional Representation for the Americas. For its part, Nicaragua expressed that the role of National Tourism Administrations was also important in the application of the ST-EP programme, as until now they have not
been consulted or involved in the process and that the UNWTO should keep them informed. A representative of an Affiliate Member from Peru did not agree with the NTAs having to previously approve ST-EP projects and inquired about the role of the Affiliate Members in the matter. Brazil, Nicaragua and Ecuador expressed the need to have a manual that transparently explains the programme, the procedure and the requirements for the submission of projects and the priorities of the UNWTO. Argentina expressed the opinion that before designating candidates to the Council of Governors, the profile of the candidate desired should be known, which was supported by Uruguay, asking, for example, whether or not the post was remunerated. Lastly, Uruguay suggested that the UNWTO promote ST-EP projects at international fairs to give greater visibility to the programme.

In response to some of these observations, the Secretary-General said that what was needed was to identify the names of several persons who could form part of the Council of Governors of the Foundation and that this task was not easy in the Americas. Regarding the Trust Fund and the Foundation, he explained that the latter is distinguished from the former in that it makes it possible to obtain financing from the private sector and that it would allocate resources for research activities. In any case, for the time being, this structure was not generating difficulties, but that in the future the Foundation should be kept from being emptied of content or left without resources.

Regarding the regional coordinators he said that their function was to maintain relations with other agencies in the field, to monitor the execution of projects and to facilitate missions for the preparation of a portfolio of projects.

At the conclusion of the discussion of this agenda item, the Commission decided:

1. to request the Sustainable Development of Tourism Department and the Technical Cooperation Service of the UNWTO to prepare and distribute a Reference Handbook on the ST-EP Programme with clear information on the requirements for the submission of projects and the internal approval procedure;
2. to clarify the role of the regional coordinators relative to the responsibilities of the Regional Representation; and
3. to request the profile of candidates for the Council of Governors of the Foundation.

F. Presentation of the Inter-American Development Bank

At the invitation of the UNWTO, the IDB representative gave a presentation on the Bank's policy in support of the development of the tourism sector of Member countries of the region of the Americas, which discussed the different modalities of financing as well as the different phases and priorities that such policy has undergone, including the shift from a strong emphasis on financing for the development of destinations in the 1970s and 1980s, especially in Mexico and Brazil, toward greater support in the last decade for the development of basic infrastructure and services.
The presentation clearly showed the firm commitment of the IDB in the area of tourism, the Bank’s importance as a source of financing and cooperation, and the need for closer links and cooperation between the UNWTO and the IDB for the financing and execution of activities and projects.

Mexico took the floor to discuss its national experience and the important role played by the IDB in the development of Cancún; El Salvador and Chile recommended greater interaction between the IDB and the NTAs. Chile also proposed that the IDB consider the financing of integrated tourism circuits.


The Regional Representative gave a detailed presentation of the Report on the execution of the UNWTO general programme of work, after having informed that only one country had responded to the survey sent out by the Organization to identify the priorities of the region. In order to remedy this situation, it was decided to once again distribute the survey and to set 15 May 2006 as a new deadline for the submission of responses.

The Secretariat also recalled the commitment of each member country to send a list of consultants to the UNWTO.

The Secretariat submitted the document “Impuestos a los que se ve afecta la actividad turística: sector hotelero y transporte aéreo” (Taxes affecting tourism activity: hotel sector and air transport).

After the presentation, El Salvador inquired about the efforts being carried out by the UNWTO in the area of trade liberalization and in the negotiations with the World Trade Organization. Spain brought up the need to improve the report, transforming it from a mere list of activities into a document useful for planning and evaluation by including indicators of satisfaction and results. This would help the UNWTO apply strategic planning based on results and Spain will put forward this proposal at the Programme Committee and the Executive Council.

For its part, Brazil addressed the proposal of the Chairman (Document CAM/45/2) indicating that its intention is to establish a specific programme that would make it possible to strengthen the relationship among the Members of the Commission and to meet the challenges of the region. In this regard, he pointed out that in the field of the fight against the sexual exploitation of children in tourism, Brazil is already working with the UNWTO and other countries in the framework of the South American Community of Nations. As for climate change and tourism, it suggested that the affected countries could share their experiences so that the rest of the Members could be in a better position to carry out mitigation and prevention programmes.
Regarding the Tourism Satellite Account, it raised the need for statistical harmonization through a tighter collective process and information exchange, as well as the holding on the part of Canada of a Seminar so that it could share its experience in the development of the TSA, given that it is one of the most advanced countries in terms of its development and application.

Ecuador suggested that the Report be revised before its presentation given that it contains certain inaccuracies, specifically with regard to a technical assistance mission to its country. Mexico suggested a revision of the mechanism for the convening UNWTO seminars and conferences, as it is done in a mass manner, without discriminating the target audience. It also said that the questionnaire was complicated and did not produce the desired outcome, and that the mechanism for identifying priorities should be revised. It proposed, as did many other Members, that more time be dedicated to the discussion of the Programme of Work and in general to meetings of the Commission; it was proposed to bring up this matter at the meeting of the Programme Committee through Argentina, the representative of the region.

Regarding the proposals of Brazil, Mexico and Uruguay they recommended that they be elaborated and inserted in the general programme of work, and not to create a specific programme for the Commission. Brazil responded that the point was to set priorities, in which regard Mexico pointed out that other priorities that the other Members would surely communicate should also be included.

Brazil proposed that the meetings already established in the region be utilized to concentrate efforts with a view to advancing the agenda of the programme of work. Uruguay suggested to move the dates of the 3rd Summit of Ministers and Authorities of Tourism and the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean to 4, 5 and 6 September in order not to coincide with the Meeting of Iberoamerican Tourism Ministers, scheduled for 7-9 September in Colonia, Uruguay.

Colombia said that the Group on Travel Advisories still had work to do and proposed that an evaluation be carried out of what has been done and what will be done. Ecuador suggested that the subject of crisis management should be dealt with in an overall manner and not just in terms of avian flu.

Following this exchange of views, the Commission agreed:

(1) on the need to develop a new way of planning that includes indicators of results, requesting Argentina to bring this matter to the Programme Committee;
(2) to request the Secretariat to report on the Group on Travel Advisories, in particular, regarding its future programme of work; and,
(3) to approve the proposal of Brazil regarding the priorities that should be addressed in the region, along with all the other initiatives of which the Chair is informed.
H. Actions in the field of crisis prevention and management (document CAM/45/7)

The Secretariat explained the measures that the Organization has been taking to create a programme of action in the area of risk assessment and management in general and to deal with the avian flu crisis in general.

The main message of the presentation was to inform about the UNWTO's firm decision to adequately prepare itself to deal with crises that could affect national and international tourism; the need for the member countries to include the tourism dimension in the elaboration of national plans for the assessment and management of avian flu; to communicate to the General Secretariat the national coordinator designated for avian flu and to maintain constant and close coordination; and, that avian flu does not currently represent a threat for tourists and there is nothing to justify travel restrictions.

Peru took the floor to thank the Secretariat for the presentation, followed by the Dominican Republic which offered its support to the rest of the Members given its experience in managing crises, especially with respect to the media and the international image of destinations, which includes, among others, the approval of a National Tourism Health Plan, the holding of nine seminars on natural disasters and a Conference on Safety and Security in Tourism in the Caribbean.

I. Other matters

Under this agenda item, Colombia informed about the progress of the preparations for the next UNWTO General Assembly to be held in Cartagena de Indias, and whose dates have already been set for 20-28 November 2007; Brazil informed about the Tourism Fair – Roteiros do Brasil to be held in São Paulo, from 2 to 6 June 2006, and the Third Annual Meeting of the World Tourism Forum for Peace and Sustainable Development, from 29 November to 2 December 2006 in Porto Alegre and Bahamas reiterated the invitation to the Conference on Tourism and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to be held in Nassau on 7-9 June 2006.

Moreover, Colombia, supported by Argentina and Chile, put forward a motion for the Commission to propose to the Secretary-General to extend, respecting the Organization's Statutes, the term of office of the Regional Representative for the Americas, Carlos Gutierrez, until the holding of the UNWTO General Assembly in November 2007. The Members of the Commission supported this motion by acclamation, and at the same time noted that it is the Secretary-General who appoints the staff of the Secretariat, and it was decided that the Chairmanship should issue a communication to the Secretary-General in these terms.
J. Place and date of the forty-sixth meeting of the Commission

The Commission decided to hold its forty-sixth meeting in El Salvador, in the spring of 2007 on a date to be determined between the UNWTO Secretariat and the host country.

Finally, the meeting was adjourned, thanking the host country, Uruguay, for all the attention received on the occasion of the Commission meeting and the Seminar.
The Seminar was attended by representatives from 21 UNWTO member countries, four Affiliate Members and some 350 Uruguayan participants.

The sessions gave rise to various points underlined by the participants, and which are listed below in the form of basic ideas:

(a) Globalization vis-à-vis the possibilities of local development of how to insert itself in global processes on the part of local societies.
(b) Decentralization as an indisputable concept in the improvement of the conditions of the citizenry of Latin America and the Caribbean.
(c) Therefore, gearing the re-dimensioning of the Latin American state towards better coordinated management of the decentralized tourism administrations down to the purely municipal level.
(d) The Internet (the Web) as a recommendable alternative to the relations established in tourism markets.
(e) The need for local entities to assume leadership in taking on processes of tourism development and improvement, in a context of public-private cooperation.
(f) And sustainability as a general concept, that can be extended to issues not only of environmental quality but also to economic profitability and cultural authenticity as the vertices of the triangle of tourism objectives, for local development.

We can group together the conclusions into five major areas, based on their treatment in the presentations and debates in this International Seminar.

1. The richness of experiences, and variety in the regulation and legislation in local tourism development in the Americas. There seems to be a clear desire in the region to explore the possibilities of endogenous development in tourism as a practical way to address the needs of citizens (poverty, employment, investment expectations, etc.), the qualification of tourism destinations and the role of municipalities in designing, leading and negotiating the establishment of tourism in their territories. We can distinguish three major groups of experiences in terms of approaches to local development processes with certain specialization in tourism:

- Pilot initiatives, that is to say, those that are clearly conducted or overseen by the central government, with a vision of cooperation with the regional and municipal administrations, of the national governments. Practically 85 per cent of the experiences have this format.
Those initiatives that are voluntarily created with a view to the better establishment of tourism, at the own initiative of the municipalities; through voluntary association of municipalities; that due to thematic or itinerary-related reasons or owing to geographic or social proximity, get together to exchange experiences and call for areas of tourism decentralization. This is the case in 13 per cent of the experiences reported.

Lastly, those processes of tourism municipalization that originate from self-regulation and efforts established by private initiative; where the agenda is prepared from such private initiative and calls for the collaboration of public entities.

2. In light of the above conclusion, it seems that the majority case in the Americas is geared toward providing a clearly local and municipal perspective to tourism development via public policy, administrative management, and in the interest of the qualification of private initiative. The issue that was widely debated in this seminar was that of the technical and political capacity of municipalities, that is, their maturity in terms of tourism when it comes to dealing with tourism establishment processes at the local scale. Because of this, whether in terms of strategies, de-concentration or decentralization, there is an absolute need for cooperation among the different levels of government. At the same time, there has to be a vision for the top-down planning and management of tourism municipalization. The local tourism space ends up as the product finally consumed by non-resident, that is to say, visitors and tourists, and is where revenues and income must stay, for the better endogenous development of tourism services and production. The dilemma arises when the municipality must lead the processes of conversion of resources into tourism products, and harmoniously manage the development of private infrastructure and public facilities to satisfy the motivations of non-residents in the municipal context.

In this regard, a field for public decision-making opens up with respect to the distribution of responsibilities, policies, administrations and management regarding the capabilities of municipalities in order to reliably and efficiently lead and guide such processes. In any case, whether already sufficiently capable to develop a qualified local tourism space, or through learning and cooperating with other administrations for this purpose, from the perspective of both policy and administration, as well as in terms of the citizenry, local participation is indispensable in these new times.

3. Tourism municipalization, in light of the above conclusions, in all its diversity, complexity and richness of experiences in the Americas, requires certain basic conditions, which we can classify into four groupings:

a) Better organization in the cooperation with the different levels of government and of the tourism and non-tourism public administration. The central and regional governments should facilitate, as has already been underlined, the coming of age, tourism-wise, of the municipalities. It is necessary to keep in mind that a large part of the competencies and decisions that have to do with tourism development are not decisions that are related strictly speaking to the tourism sector itself, but rather cover a wide range of horizontal actions: safety and security, health, infrastructure, accessibility, facilities, city planning, scenery, etc.
b) Sustainability appears as the concept that summarizes the strategy that is to be realized. But this concept, beyond the rhetoric, must be made real not just in the environmental sense, but also particularly in three major contexts: local development, and thus the fight against exclusion and poverty; social efficiency, and therefore integration between residents and non-residents of a municipality; and cultural authenticity, understood as the strengthening of the hallmarks of cultural identity that the community has historically provided to itself, and which can be turned into an opportunity and distinguishing factor for tourism.

c) One of the most important deficiencies detected in this Seminar consists of the disconnect that exists in Latin America and the Caribbean between territorial planning proposals and municipal tourism development. As observed in more mature tourism societies, territorial planning can become the most powerful and proven instrument for balanced planning, complementing other sustainable local development economic activities in the environment, culture and local society. The most advanced municipalities consider territorial planning as their most important operational tool for the collection of revenues and the negotiation of the establishment of new tourism operations for the orderly zoning of land use.

d) The return of renewed planning, that is neither rigid nor exclusionary, that as we mentioned before is based on a top-down articulation to approach endogenous development should have a philosophy that is more participatory, more egalitarian in gender relations, with negotiation capacity between public and private actors and technically imaginative given the scarce resources of the majority of the municipalities of Latin America and the Caribbean. The local tourism plan should identify actors that are committed to the development of the community, include a catalogue of viable projects that are concrete and specific and with the material foundation of territorial planning, issue strategic messages to both investors and the local community itself.

4. This call for public-private collaboration and for the transversality of actions and interventions that tourism development needs for its full implementation, has an ideal place to be experienced and practiced within the municipal space. The tourism system needs both of these elements: public leadership, guidance and investment, and on the other hand, the capacity of municipal tourism resources to attract private tourism supply and marketing. The tourism sector is clearly a private activity but whose optimal development depends on public support, particularly at the municipal scale. The municipality should act as a facilitator of private investment through specific projects identified in its process of negotiated and participative planning (strategic planning). This tourism facilitation should be radically linked to the tying of the revenues from the consumption of non-residents in the municipality that receives the visitor flows; to the environmental sustainability of tourism resources; and to the fostering of the cultural traditions, differences and identities of the locality. It is in the municipality and in local tourism development that public-private collaboration in the tourism sector truly and concretely crystallizes.
5. While one of the most recognized topics in the tourism planning methodology at the local scale has been and continues to be that of the identification and management of tourism itineraries, sites and corridors, in this Seminar, fortunately, new ways of reconsidering this push for municipalization were discussed. Firstly, we will highlight the new marketing methods for showcasing, at tourism fairs organized by local entities, the path taken by the municipalities in the planning and creation of new products that can be marketed at such "ad hoc" fairs. These are initiatives where the effort to improve municipal tourism products is rewarded in the form of the possible promotion and marketing of such results.

A second way is to support projects for which public administrations can provide incentives, that is, to recognize the drawing power and the susceptibility to emulation that certain projects (marketing, alternative products, infrastructure and tourism services) carried out at the local level can have in the improvement of the conditions of the population. Therefore, the possibility of arranging in a systematic and regulated manner well-determined calls to foster tourism projects at the local scale is recognized as an administrative practice.

Thirdly, good practices that are shared and explained as a method to learn and understand tourism qualification actions. Municipalities can learn, with less effort and greater effectiveness, methods of tourism development through comparative experiences and through observing their successes and failures. It is not advisable to invent what is already known but rather to emulate what had been successful.

Fourthly, undertaking actions that, going beyond mere public tutelage, raising awareness of the need to plan interventions that foster the competitiveness and quality of municipal tourism developments. In other words, the aim is to support initiatives that are not dependent solely on public investment for infrastructure, but rather contain an element of economic effectiveness (competitiveness). In order to ensure tourism success it is necessary to strike a balance between social policies and policies for competitiveness and quality in municipalities.

Lastly, matters having to do with tourism marketing were addressed in this Seminar in an indirect or tangential manner. It is true that conventional and traditional formulas such as participation in Fairs or pure tourism advertising were reiterated in the debates. However, municipalities must recognize that the best way to promote themselves is by improving their product and that the Internet is their best ally. Local marketing should be based on criteria for the segmentation of demand appropriate to their resources. Therefore, ways of coordinating tourism promotion and marketing in the most effective manner remain to be explored, perhaps in subsequent meetings.
DECLARATION OF SUPPORT TO THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT

The members of the World Tourism Organization’s Commission for Europe, gathered together in Almaty, Kazakhstan, on 25 April 2006, express their shock and profound sorrow in the wake of the horrible attack perpetrated against a tourist resort in Egypt, which claimed numerous victims among the local population and foreign visitors.

They condemn with all their strength this new terrorist attack, which with the greatest cowardice was targeted at innocent foreign tourists and the places where they stay in order to maximize the impact of their dreadful acts and harm a major economic activity of a developing country.

They wish to convey their most sincere condolences to the families of the victims, and express their solidarity with the public and private leadership of Egypt’s tourism sector. They are counting on the UNWTO, with its accumulated experience in crisis management, to provide its assistance as it did following the previous attacks in Taba and Sharm el-Sheikh.

They affirm their confidence in the capacity of Egypt’s public authorities and the leaders of the country’s tourism industry to overcome, once again, the consequences of this new tragedy.
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