

WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION

**EXECUTIVE
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RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

(a) Coordination mechanisms

Note by the Secretary-General

In this document, the Secretary-General reports to the Executive Council on the participation of the UNWTO in the principal coordination mechanisms of the United Nations system as well as on joint activities with United Nations specialized agencies, programmes and funds and on the ratification of the Convention on Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies.

RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

(a) Coordination mechanisms

1. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has continued to increase its participation in the different Inter-agency mechanisms and networks set up by the United Nations, as well as in meetings and events organized by UN entities that have relevance to the tourism sector. The objective is threefold:

- a) ensuring that the potential of tourism is fully recognized at the international level, as a multidisciplinary sector capable to contribute to economic growth, sustainable development and poverty reduction;
- b) getting support to tourism from other agencies in their respective fields of responsibility; and
- c) avoiding duplication of efforts and ensure optimal utilization of resources within the UN system.

A. Participation in UN System Substantive Issues and Activities:

A.1 UNWTO regularly liaises with the **World Health Organization** (WHO) in the area of International Health Regulations (IHR), becoming as of December 2008, the focal point for IHR and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) on travel and health issues. UNWTO is also a member of the United Nations System Influenza Coordination (UNSIC), which issues regular reports with UNWTO's support.

A.2 The **United Nations Statistical Commission** (UNSC) forms an essential part of the UN Statistics Division (UNSD) entrusted to the coordination of international statistics programmes and activities. As an active member of the commission, UNWTO was represented at the 40th Session of the UNSC, held at UN Headquarters in New York from 24-27 February 2009. One of the key outcomes of that session resulted in the approval of a document on System of National Accounts (*SNA93 rev. 1*), which in a specific chapter includes the Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) as proposed by UNWTO.

A.3 The **Inter-agency Task Force on Statistics** of International Trade in Services (TF-SITS), a newly formed branch of the UNSD, held its last meeting from 10-11 March 2009 in Bangkok, Thailand. The UNWTO Chief of Statistics and TSA was present at this meeting. Participants of the TF-SITS agreed upon the design of an implementation plan for the new Manual on SITS, to be presented for official adoption at UNSC in March 2010.

A.4 UNWTO, the UN Statistical Commission and the **International Labour Office** (ILO) joined forces to convene the 5th International Conference on Tourism Statistics, which this year focused on Employment issues. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between UNWTO and ILO in December 2008, to increase cooperation in various common areas of interest, and especially on the measurement of employment and on the promotion and improvement of working conditions in tourism.

A.5 As a participating member of the **UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)**, UNWTO contributed to the formulation of a 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production, in the context of the Marrakech Task Force. Contribution was also provided to the preparation of a policy paper, in the framework of the International Marrakech Task Force on Sustainable Tourism, for discussion at the UNCSO.

A.6 Ongoing collaboration with the **United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)** and the **Global Environment Facility (GEF)** in the preparation and implementation of the Regional Project on Sustainable Coastal Tourism Development, addressed to reduce the environmental impacts of tourism in 9 African destinations.

A.7 The long standing collaboration with the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** has continued in the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between UNEP and UNWTO on sustainable tourism. UNWTO is an active collaborator in the International Marrakech Task Force on Sustainable Tourism Development, including the preparation of background material which is being widely disseminated.

A.8 Cooperation with the **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)** has continued, specifically in relation with Sustainable Tourism at World Heritage Sites. A joint Technical workshop was held in February 2009 (France) and another one is planned in April 2009 (India).

A.9 Cooperation with **UN Foundation** in the preparation, promotion, dissemination and observance of the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria launched at the IUCN Conservation Congress (Barcelona, October 2008) and in the establishment of the Stewardship Council on Sustainable Tourism.

A.10 Ongoing cooperation with the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Secretariat** has continued on issues related to biodiversity and tourism, in particular the User's Manual for the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development and the preparation of the International Year of Biodiversity (2010).

A.11 Continued participation of UNWTO in the Nairobi Work Programme on Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation, as a follow up to the activities undertaken at the **UNFCCC COP** in Poznan, 2008.

A.12 The implementation of Climate Change Adaptation Projects in Small Island Developing States, in collaboration with **UNDP and UNEP**, has continued with the support of **GEF**.

A.13 In October 2008, UNWTO and the **United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)** signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that seeks to further develop and strengthen the cooperation between the two organizations, more specifically in areas relating to MDG 3 and Women in Tourism. A significant breakthrough in this cooperation is the commissioning of a "Joint Global Triennial Report on the Role of Women in Tourism", already underway. The primary objective of the study is to raise awareness of the socio-economic opportunities that tourism can offer to women, highlighting the need to promote women's empowerment and protect women's rights in the context of tourism development. In parallel, the First Meeting of the Women in Tourism Task Force, established by UNWTO and involving UNIFEM, is planned for June 2009 in conjunction with a private sector Roundtable on the role of women in the hospitality industry.

B. Participation in UN Meetings

B.1 UNWTO participated in the meeting of the **International Task Team on HIV-related Travel Restrictions**, which has the role of assessing the overall situation of discrimination affecting persons with HIV on their travel. A final report was submitted to the 23rd Meeting of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board, which met in December 2008. A number of the recommendations from the report include the support for all countries to eliminate HIV-specific restrictions on entry, stay and residence and ensure that people living with HIV are no longer excluded, detained or deported on the basis of HIV status. Members also agreed not to hold meetings of the Programme Coordinating Board in a country with an HIV-specific restriction.

B.2 UNWTO is a member of the **UN Inter-Agency Knowledge Sharing and Information Management (UNKSIM)** since 2004. This working group was created with a view to ensure the exchange of experiences through utilizing up-to-date information technologies, promoting best practices for the flow of information and continuously seeking new and better ways of diffusing information worldwide. UNWTO participated at the Group's last meeting in October 2008, hosted by UN Vienna and IAEA. In the context of the MDGs and in the spirit of "One UN", the Vienna meeting focused on ensuring that relevant institutions in countries lacking suitable information technology infrastructure can obtain free access to information and knowledge from the United Nations organizations. UNWTO will collaborate in the area of knowledge sharing with other institutions and seek to improve its capacity-building on information management.

B.3 The New York-based UNWTO Representative to the United Nations participated in a briefing session of 19 new **UN Resident Coordinators** who recently took up their positions in the following countries: Barbados, Belarus, Bolivia, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Congo, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Mauritania, Mongolia, Montenegro, Paraguay, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Swaziland and Syrian Arab Republic. During the briefing, the UNWTO representative informed about the role played by UNWTO in support of tourism development and encouraged the newly appointed UN Resident Coordinators to consider and give support to tourism in the development assistance activities of the UN in the countries under their responsibility.

B.4 The New York-based UNWTO Representative has also participated in a wide range of other coordination meetings held at the UN headquarters in New York, including among others those of the UN Development Group, the preparatory meetings for the IV UN Conference on Least Developed Countries, etc.

C. Participation in UN Administrative Issues

C.1 The 5th **UN Inter-Agency Travel Network (IATN)** meeting, held at the UNWTO Secretariat in October 2008, included officials working directly in travel policies, procedures and practices within UN system agencies. The meeting addressed some issues such as: presentation of carbon calculator, creation of a joint interlinked Database on hotels and the creation of a common Travel Manual.

C.2 The **UN-CEB Finance and Budget Network** held its last meeting through videoconference in February 2009. Main issues discussed were: capital budgeting, cost recovery, common treasury services and IPSAS. UNWTO Budget and Finance staff participated in the videoconference.

C.3 UNWTO participates in the **Multi Donor Trust Fund Office of UNDP** in the execution of several MDTF projects. UNWTO Budget and Finance staff attended the MDTF workshop on financial processes held in November 2008.

C.4 The **Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Network** works towards a system-wide approach to leveraging advanced technology to support the goals of the UN. In addition to its primary mission as an advisory body to the HLCM on matters of information technology services, the network functions as a forum to coordinate system-wide ICT policy and practices. The last meeting of this body was held in October 2008, with participation from UNWTO.

C.5 The **Joint Inspection Unit (JIU)** is the common internal audit facility to UN bodies. A first JIU Audit of UNWTO was undertaken in April 2008, referring to Management and Administrative practices at the UNWTO. A preliminary report has been sent to the UNWTO, which has been submitted to the Committee on Budget and Finance and the Executive Council in a separate document.

C.6 The **Human Resources Network (HR Network) of the United Nations** brings together senior human resource managers of the UN Common System with a view to provide strategic advice to its Chief Executives on human resource management developments, ensuring best practices across the system, and to prepare on behalf of the CEB, input and exchange with the International Civil Service Commission responsible for the regulation and coordination of the conditions of service of the United Nations Common System of organizations. Meetings of the HR Network are usually hosted by the UN or its specialized agencies. A HRM Strategic Group met in November 2008. The Organization's involvement has been further enhanced through its invitation to host the 17th Session at the UNWTO Secretariat (Madrid, March 2009) which brought together more than 60 participants representing around 40 organizations.

C.7 Finally, the Secretary-General, the Director of Programme and Coordination and the Director of Administration have continued to participate, respectively, in the three most senior coordination mechanisms of the UN System, namely the **Chief Executive Board (CEB)**, the **High Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP)** and the **High Level Committee on Management (HLCM)**.

D. Ratification of the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialization and acceptance of the annex relating to the UNWTO

D.1 The Members of the Council will recall that at their eighty-third session (Jeju, June 2008), in accordance with the mandate received from the General Assembly of Cartagena de Indias (November 2007), the text of the Annex to the 1947 Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies received final approval.

D.2 Through his communication of 30 July 2008, the Secretary-General transmitted to the Secretary-General of the United Nations the final text of Annex XVIII to the above-mentioned Convention and also informed him that the World Tourism Organization accepted the standard clauses of the Convention, as modified by the aforementioned Annex, and undertook to give effect to sections 8, 18, 22, 23, 24, 31, 32, 42 and 45 of the Convention.

D.3 On 16 September 2008, in accordance with the provisions of section 37 of the Convention, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, acting in his capacity as the depositary of the Convention, communicated to the Member States a certified copy of the final text of Annex XVIII communicated by the World Tourism Organization.

D.4 The Annex to the Convention relating to the UNWTO is now submitted for the approval of the States. This comes at a time when the United Nations as a whole is encouraging its Members to ratify this important Convention and the texts attached thereto. The UNWTO has joined this campaign, in accordance with decision 7(LXXXIV) adopted at the last session of the Council, and has circulated to the Member States a communication explaining the interest of ratifying it, if need be, or of proceeding with the acceptance of the Annex relating to the UNWTO.