

Launch of the Global Report on Women in Tourism 2010
A Joint Report by UNWTO and UN Women

11 March 2011, 10:30 – 12:30

ITB Berlin - International Conference Centre (ICC), Hall 7
Messe Berlin, Neue Kantstrasse, D-14055 Berlin

1. *The Launch of the Global Report on Women in Tourism 2010 (A Joint Report by UNWTO and UN Women)* was held in Berlin on 11 March 2011, in conjunction with the annual ITB Tourism Fair. The meeting, attended by some 70 delegates, featured the presentation of the Global Report, as well as a Panel Discussion entitled “*Pathways to Success - Shaping the Future for Women in Tourism*”.

OPENING REMARKS

2. **Dr. Dawid de Villiers**, Moderator of the event and Chairman of the UNWTO World Committee on Tourism Ethics (WCTE), extended a warm welcome to those assembled. Calling the Launch an important event for both organizations, and an important date in the history of women in tourism, he gave the floor to the Secretary-General.

3. UNWTO Secretary-General, **Dr. Taleb Rifai**, welcomed the participants, especially Ms. Gladys Acosta, Ms. Nilofar Bakhtiar, H.E. Ms. Gloria Guevara Manzo, and H.E. Dr. Haifa Abu Ghazaleh. He expressed his sincere condolences over the tragedy in Japan. Alongside natural catastrophes, he said, there are man made disasters, one of which is gender imbalance. The findings of the Global Report confirm that women occupy an important role in the tourism industry. The problem remains, Dr. Rifai observed, that the work women perform is often poorly paid, low status and may make them vulnerable. Tourism is one of the most effective sectors for first entries into the labour market, he said, and special care must be taken to ensure that women benefit from this.

4. Dr. Rifai then spoke of the history of the collaboration between UNWTO and UN Women, from 2007 in Sri Lanka, with the first Think Tank entitled “*Tourism opens doors for women*”, and UNWTO’s decision to establish a programme on women’s issues which would connect to the core of the Organization’s work: the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism. He informed those present that in 2010, for the first time, three UN resolutions referred to the latter and its role in promoting the MDGs and sustainable tourism. In 2008, the Secretary-General recalled that a Forum on Women in Tourism was assembled at ITB Berlin, precipitating the development of an Action Plan to empower women through tourism, and subsequently, the partnership between UNWTO and UN Women’s predecessor UNIFEM. The Global Report is the first concrete result of this collaboration. He acknowledged that there remains a great deal to be done, but stressed that the Report provides a useful basis on which to build. He then summarized the two key findings of the Report: it confirms that tourism is a strong vehicle for women’s economic empowerment, while revealing that inequalities persist between women and men, particularly when in terms of women in leadership positions. Finally, Dr. Rifai reaffirmed UNWTO’s commitment, as a specialized agency of the United Nations, to promoting MDG 3, “the empowerment of women”.

5. **Ms. Gladys Acosta**, Director of the Latin America Division of UN Women, represented H.E. Ms. Michelle Bachelet, Executive Director of UN Women, the United Nations' entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. She stated that UN Women differed from UNIFEM in that the new Organization has a global mandate, i.e. to be the global champion of the rights of women and girls, and to accelerate progress towards ending gender discrimination. She recalled that in 2008, UNWTO signed a Memorandum of Understanding with UNIFEM to develop a programme on gender equality, based on an Action Plan to empower women through tourism. While tourism is known for its contribution to poverty reduction and development, she lamented that the gender dimensions of the sector have been largely overlooked. On commissioning the Global Report, Ms. Acosta acknowledged that it was already known that the majority of tourism workers worldwide were women, but qualitative research was needed on the gender dimensions of tourism. The aim of the Report, she intimated, was to develop clear indicators for monitoring women in tourism and providing a set of quantitative data on the subject. The Report, she stressed, was intended to serve as a tool for highlighting gender inequality in tourism and generating support to redress this imbalance. She hoped that cooperation between the two Organizations would be reinforced in future to better serve UN Member States, as well as women, who deserve a better place in the tourism industry and in the world.

PRESENTATION OF THE GLOBAL REPORT BY UNWTO AND UN WOMEN

6. **Dr. De Villiers** announced the presentation of the **Global Report on Women in Tourism 2010**, and briefly introduced the speakers who would partake therein.

7. **Ms. Louise Twining-Ward**, who prepared the Global Report, began by relating the story of a 43 year old mother of four named Sarah, living in Vanuatu, who faced difficulty in securing formal employment with only a primary-school level of education. After opening a market stall with the aid of a small loan, she now earns up to 100 US dollars a day when cruise ships visit her city, enabling her to send her children to school. Dr. Twining-Ward expressed her excitement at uncovering that many women like Sarah are earning a living and bettering their lives thanks to tourism. **Presentation of Ms. Twining-Ward**

8. Dr. Twining-Ward stated that the aim of the Global Report was to establish a set of indicators to monitor the performance of tourism as an empowerment agent for women, to give recommendations for change, and, most importantly, to inspire action. Since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, she observed that international organizations have worked to eliminate discrimination against women. The Millennium Development Goals are in many respects being reached, suggesting that women are now in a much better position in terms of health, education and employment than they were in 1990. Yet the top jobs, she said, particularly in developing countries, overwhelmingly go to men. Women remain poorer than men, and are relegated to more vulnerable forms of employment. This is where tourism, she felt, as the largest and fastest growing sector of the world economy, can be involved. To illustrate this, she noted that in 2007, tourists spent 295 billion US dollars in developing countries alone, almost three times the level of international development assistance.

9. The five main themes of the Global Report, Dr. Twining-Ward explained are: employment, entrepreneurship, education, leadership, and community. As extensive fieldwork was not possible, ILO's Laborsta database constituted the main source of data, alongside UNESCO's statistics on tourism education. In both cases the focus was on the hospitality industry in developing countries.

10. Dr. Twining-Ward then elaborated on key findings related to each of the Report's five themes. Regarding **employment**, the aim was to discover whether tourism was creating jobs and equal opportunities for women. Findings demonstrated that women made up about half of tourism workers,

however they were paid on average 7-13 % less than men due to their engagement in lower status work (twice as many men were found to work at the professional level). She gave the example of Colombia, where 84% of the service level hotel and restaurant jobs go to women, whereas only 45% of the professional jobs follow suit. In terms of **entrepreneurship**, indicators revealed the positive trend that 1 in 3 women are employers in the hotel and restaurant sector, as opposed to an average of 1 in 5 in other industries. The Report also measured graduates in tourism education, finding about half to be women. With reference to **leadership**, women were found to hold more ministerial positions in tourism than in any other field, but still only 1 in 5 ministers of tourism are women. She pointed out that results for Africa, 1 in 3, are higher than average, and that in the case of Tanzania, for example, once women began occupying leadership positions, the trend had only continued and strengthened. Finally, she informed the gathering that most women in tourism are informally employed - 60% in developing countries are own account workers, while 70% of contributing family members are women – which may leave them vulnerable.

11. While statistics are essential, in Dr. Twining-Ward's opinion it is the personal stories of women presented in the Report that most clearly demonstrate the power of the tourism industry to change lives, build communities and to lift women out of poverty. These stories, she felt, are the kind of information which can inspire change. She gave several examples thereof, from the case of Mayan women who set up a "Jungle Jams" business in Mexico, that of the Sun and Sand Beach resort in Kenya, and that of the challenging of gender stereotypes by the Chhetri sisters of Nepal who train women to enter the lucrative field of mountain guides and porters. She warned, however, that there remained far more work to be done, both in terms of monitoring trends and in terms of empowering women. She cited eight areas in which action needs to be taken if tourism is to be an effective stepping stone for women, in addition to making gender issues a priority in the agendas of governments and tourism businesses. These are: 1) strengthening the legal protection for women in tourism employment; 2) facilitating women's access to land, credit, and resources; 3) increasing the participation of women in tourism education; 4) developing a targeted training programme for women tourism professionals; 5) promoting women leaders in tourism at all levels; 6) helping self-employed women upgrade their businesses; 7) improving the monitoring of women in tourism; and 8) implementing UN Women's "Women's Empowerment Principles". She concluded by observing that better information leads to better action. **Presentation of Ms. Twining-Ward**

12. **Dr. De Villiers** thanked Ms. Twining-Ward for her presentation and called the Report's finding an excellent starting point. He then invited Senator Bakhtiar and Ms. Gladys Acosta to speak.

13. **Ms. Nilofar Bakhtiar**, Chair of the UNWTO Women in Tourism Task Force and former Minister of Tourism of Pakistan, called the day an important one in the history of UNWTO. Recalling the Plan of Action developed by the Organization in Sri Lanka, she explained that the idea behind the initiative was to help provide equal opportunities for women – in terms of wages, education, and skill development –, to protect them against discrimination and exploitation, and to demonstrate their potential. The Report reveals, she said, that women can contribute in an extraordinary manner to tourism, and in so doing, improve their own lives, those of their dependents, and of society as a whole. She lamented that women's issues are often overlooked and suggested a joint call of action by UNWTO and UN Women, with tourism integrated as a part of UN Women's initiatives and gender placed on the agenda of all UNWTO undertakings. Ms. Bakhtiar highlighted the importance of awareness raising and government involvement, since policy makers are responsible for enacting legislation. She also recommended liaising with high-profile women worldwide who could act as Ambassadors for the cause of women's empowerment in tourism. She stressed the need to involve other institutions alongside tourism ministries, and expressed the hope that a joint call for action would not fall on deaf ears. She emphasized that women the world over need and deserve the help and consideration of the international community.

14. **Ms. Acosta** thanked Ms. Bakhtiar and expressed the hope that the Global Report should inspire action. Suggesting that the slogan for the day should be “it’s time for equality”, she reaffirmed UN Women’s support for UNWTO’s vision of women’s empowerment in the tourism sector. Women, she argued, must achieve political and economic autonomy, and tourism had the power to help them achieve this end. She reiterated the desirability of a joint call of action and spoke of the need to change the private sector’s organizational culture. She also indicated that both organizations had an obligation to monitor improvements and challenges in tourism while supporting decent work for women, remarking that their partnership would surely contribute to achieving these goals.

PANEL DISCUSSION: *Pathways to Success - Shaping the Future for Women in Tourism*

15. **Dr. Dawid de Villiers** introduced the theme of the Panel discussion and, after briefly introducing the panellists, invited the first speaker to take the floor.

16. **H.E. Ms. Gloria Guevara Manzo**, Secretary of Tourism of Mexico, explained that tourism represents 9% of her country’s GDP, its third largest source of revenue, with 80% of the benefits of the industry go to small companies, numbering some 43,000. In 2009, UNWTO statistics revealed Mexico to be one of the top 10 countries in terms of tourist arrivals. Half of the 2.5 million workers employed directly in tourism, and half of the 5 million indirectly involved therein, are women. Tourism, she indicated, offers immense opportunities to Mexican women, with several notable women in high government positions related to tourism. In Mexican universities, women are well represented in tourism degrees, they often lead the local representation of airlines, and most small boutique hotels are owned by them, etc. Based on her own extensive experience in the private tourism sector, the Minister spoke of the challenges and opportunities which exist therein, such as the difficulty of balancing the obligations of their personal lives and their work. She noted that communities felt the benefit when women were empowered in the tourism industry. To illustrate this point, the Minister referred to the case of P’urhépecha (Purépecha) women, whom the Ministry has helped to train and support as entrepreneurs. She concluded by recalling President Calderon’s observation that if women had been more involved in the history of Mexico, and of the world, we would live in a very different society, a far better one than that which we have today.

Presentation of H.E. Ms. Guevara Manzo

17. **H.E. Dr. Haifa Abu Ghazaleh**, Minister of Tourism & Antiquities of Jordan, highlighted the milestones in women’s issues at the international and regional level, among which she counted the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, and the Launch of the Global Report. Development challenges facing Arab women, she noted, concern issues of empowerment and gender imbalance. Tourism is a central economic pillar of Jordan, representing 14% of its GDP. Women’s participation in the industry, however, remains limited. The Minister offered explanations of this phenomenon, including a negative image of the industry and the disapproval among families for women’s involvement therein (ex: many feel a balance between work and family life would be impossible), as well as the fact that women are encouraged to engage in less high-paying tourism jobs (ex: air hostesses or receptionists). Given these trends, she indicated that 80% of tourism employers report fewer women than men applying for work in the sector. The Minister stressed the need for all stakeholders, from governments to the education system, employers, civil society and the media, to remove obstacles impeding women’s lucrative employment in tourism. She suggested media campaigns, training, and education as tools to change perceptions, eliminate discrimination, and influence mindsets. The Minister further highlighted various initiatives in Jordan that have opened doors for women in the sector. Among these were awareness campaigns that targeted over 1.5 million students at the secondary school and university levels, as well as field visits for families of women planning on joining the hospitality sector to encourage their support. She noted the encouragement provided by the Jordanian government to young women entering the industry, taking the form of scholarships, courses to encourage entrepreneurship, practical training, internship opportunities, child care facilities, and training centres to support the transition of women into all-male work

environments. H.E. Dr. Abu Ghazaleh pointed to projects in Petra and stressed that there exist many successful stories which are important to replicate. **Presentation of H.E. Dr. Abu Ghazaleh**

18. **Ms. Rosette Rugamba**, Managing Director of Songa Africa Tourism Company, and former Director General of Rwanda's Office of Tourism and National Parks (ORTPN), recalled that the Global Tourism Forum in Andorra had emphasized the importance of quantitative data, and expressed her pleasure that the Report provided the beginnings of such data on women in tourism. She felt that the importance of two UN agencies working together to champion women's rights should not be underestimated. Having headed ORTPN for eight years during an extremely challenging period in the 1990s, Ms. Rugamba put forth Rwanda as a case study to validate the Report's findings. When she was offered the post of Director General, she was six months pregnant and the encouragement of Rwanda's President was decisive in motivating her to take the job. Despite challenges, she called the position a privilege because of the commitment of Rwanda's leadership to women's empowerment. The government far surpassed their target of ensuring that 40% of leadership positions were occupied by women by 2010, with the figure reaching 47.5% in 2008. She felt that tourism was now the number one foreign exchange earner for Rwanda precisely because of the government's commitment to women. Although other African countries have shown similar trends, Ms. Rugamba acknowledged persistent challenges. Among these was the fact that some governments have not made tourism a priority, as well as a dearth of recorded case studies that illustrate the success of women in tourism. To this end, she recommended the creation of a database featuring real success stories. She also emphasized the need to champion women leaders as role models, noting that many had been inspired by her example. She echoed the statement of the Jordanian Minister of Tourism on changing mindsets and overcoming negative perceptions of women's work in tourism, stressing the need for their empowerment to be part of the global economic agenda. In her capacity as a private sector worker, Ms. Rugamba pledged to ensure that women's issues are taken into account in every policy and initiative she engages in. What women need, she concluded, are opportunities and encouragement. When provided this basis, she said, women clearly perform professionally and capably. **Presentation of Ms. Rugamba**

19. **Ms Sabine Gürtner**, Director of the Programme for Promoting Gender Equality and Women's Rights of the German Agency for International Cooperation-GIZ (formerly GTZ), said GIZ considers the tourism industry an entry point for an integrated development approach, linking sustainability with economic growth, employment opportunities for women, their empowerment, and the elimination of discrimination. She noted that tourists are ever more sensitive to problems in the areas they visit and display greater willingness to contribute to development, as in the case of those wishing to visit and show solidarity with Tunisia even in the face of a travel ban. She expressed GIZ's desire that tourism act as an agent for change, increasing employment opportunities, providing training and high-skill employment, creating infrastructure and supply chains that benefit local entrepreneurs, and stimulating the expansion of modern industries and development. Ms. Gürtner pointed to GIZ's activities in Cuzco, Peru, one of the most attractive tourist sights in South America, which nonetheless has an exceptionally high poverty rate (57% as opposed to 32% elsewhere in the country). The agency assists local communities and farmers in terms of rural development skills and linking local supply chains to the demands of the tourist industry. She further recommended the promotion of Codes of Conduct that can help guide the process of women's empowerment, and drew attention to a GIZ programme in Albania. Poised to be a popular tourist destination, women remain generally excluded from the traditional fora and networking sites key to successful entrepreneurship. Initiatives to remedy this situation include the promotion of strong female role models in the media, as well as support for women's entrepreneurial associations. Ms. Gürtner was of the opinion that the Report and its presentation came at an excellent strategic point in time, and welcomed both its content and recommendations. As the tourism industry does not exist in a vacuum, she called for cooperation to be linked to good government, transparency, anti-corruption, justice, and development. Above all, she remarked, it was important to address the issues of cultural heritage and national identification, which she believed that the UN family is well-placed to do. **Presentation of Ms. Gürtner**

20. **Ms. Lyndall de Marco**, Adjunct Professor at Griffith University in Australia, former Corporate Director of Pan Pacific Hotels, and former Executive Director of the Prince of Wales International Business Leaders' Forum's International Tourism Partnership, claimed that as a senior woman in a male-dominated tourism industry, she had not felt marginalized thanks to the attitudes and support of her family. She was of the opinion that women did not occupy many management-level positions in the sector because they do not have many opportunities to engage in "frontline work". She asserted that she was only able to act as the General Manager of major hotels because of her past experience working in housekeeping and at the front desk. She disagreed that such jobs should be referred to as lowly, claiming that they were an essential basis for building an understanding of management duties. She raised the issue of poverty reduction, saying that there is a conflict of interest in developing countries where employed women may be seen as taking jobs away from men and thereby preventing them from providing for their families. She also spoke of the need to be creative in offering services and facilities to women employees. Ms. De Marco then presented the case of the Youth Career Initiative (YCI), which commenced its operations in Thailand in 1995 to address the issue of child sexual exploitation. At the time, 85,000 children under the age of 15 were being exploited sexually each year. YCI embarked on a programme of training young women to enter the work force and procure gainful employment. The feeling of empowerment this generated contributed to this figure falling to 20,000 some years later. She was of the opinion that by equipping women with the necessary training and skills, by changing policies, and giving women confidence, they would undoubtedly achieve success. **Presentation of Ms. de Marco**

22. **Mr. Gabriel Viloría**, Programme Director for Sustainable and Solidarity Tourism for Africa and Latin America of the Banesto Foundation, explained that Banesto is a private non-profit organization belonging to a prominent Spanish bank. Their activities focus on the promotion of entrepreneurship, innovation and the application of technologies in small and medium scale enterprises in Spain. Banesto's project related to gender and development, entitled "*Sustainable and Responsible Tourism in Africa*" constitutes its only project outside Spain. The initiative followed a 2006 meeting, supported by the Spanish government, which called for support for businesswomen and entrepreneurship in Africa. Banesto launched a project to this end in Madrid the following year, intended to contribute to the social and economic development of African countries by supporting women entrepreneurs in the tourism sector, given the general potential of tourism as a tool for social development, as well as its specific potential to support small business projects. Since this time, Mr. Viloría recounted, the Foundation has promoted their sustainable and responsible tourism network, which identifies and evaluates accommodation that complies with the main goals of the project (women's employment, local supply chains, environmental sustainability, etc.) The project also works to develop "routes" within which these accommodations are included. Above all, he stressed the importance of the project's support of small-business projects promoted by women, especially those working in associations or cooperatives. Banesto's initiative now spans 14 African countries, with over 300 accommodations included in their network, and with 25 new routes planned in Africa and South America. Mr. Viloría explained that the Banesto Foundation works to market and promote these destinations, offering information for travellers through their web platform and the media, while also collaborating with tour operators. They train people involved in the network, especially in terms of tourism entrepreneurship and vocational training, and are also involved with financing, offering opportunities for women to access funds when starting businesses. He called Banesto's volunteer programme, in place for three years, essential to the Foundation's work, and mentioned the significance of their collaboration with public and private organizations worldwide. **Presentation of Mr. Viloría**

23. **Dr. de Villiers** thanked the speakers for their enriching presentations and expressed the hope that the present initiative would create not only more awareness, but also more partnerships and more cooperation, to help achieve women's empowerment through tourism.