



ORGANISATION MONDIALE DU TOURISME
WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION
ORGANIZACI3N MUNDIAL DEL TURISMO
ВСЕМИРНАЯ ТУРИСТСКАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ
منظمة السياحة العالمية

Speaker's Biographies

UNWTO CONFERENCE ON MAINSTREAMING TOURISM IN THE MEDIA **Colombo, Sri Lanka / 24 March 2011**

Hiran Cooray, Chairman, Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA).

Mr Cooray is an experienced tourism industry professional with a wealth of experience across the Asia Pacific region. He has taken a very active role in the repositioning of tourism in Sri Lanka and has been awarded the honorary title Sri Lanka Sikhamani for his services to the industry in his native country.

He has displayed remarkable commitment to sustainable tourism and has been serving as Chairman of the Responsible Tourism Partnership of Sri Lanka.

Mr Cooray graduated in marketing from the University of North Carolina. In 1987 he was appointed Managing Director of Jetwing Hotels and has quickly cultured a reputation for creating specialist boutique properties in Sri Lanka.

He has served with distinction as a Board member of the Sri Lankan Tourism Development Authority and also serves on the Board of The Small Luxury Hotels of the World. He was Chairman of the PATA Sri Lanka Chapter before taking over the chairmanship of the whole organisation in April 2010.

Dr Nalaka Godahewa, Chairman of Sri Lanka Tourism

Dr Godahewa is a well-known Sri Lankan business leader with international experience. His expertise in marketing is particularly relevant to his current role and the theme of this seminar.

Dr Godahewa attended the well-known Ananda College in Colombo before studying for a BA in Engineering at the University of Moratuwa and a Masters at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura. He took a PhD at the University of South Australia, with a thesis on "The impact of market orientation on the business performance of manufacturing organizations".

He is a Fellow Member of both the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants and the Chartered Institute of Marketing of the UK.

Dr Godahewa learned the basics of management at Unilever Ceylon and held the position of Head of Business Development at the company. Other important positions include Marketing Director of telecoms company Suntel, General Manager of clothing exporter MAS Shadowline, Chief Executive of two of MAS' overseas operations, in the Far East and Sub-Saharan Africa, and finally CEO of Sri Lanka Insurance.

Oliver Wates, Director, MediaTrain consultancy

Mr Wates, who will be moderating the conference, is an experienced media consultant with more than three decades experience of international journalism. He has trained several hundred staff of UN agencies across the globe in how to communicate effectively with the outside world.

Mr Wates left Birmingham University in Britain with a BA before joining Reuters news agency. He then spent 21 years in South Asia, Latin America, Europe and the former Soviet Union as a correspondent, sub-editor and bureau chief with the agency. For the past 13 years he has worked as a consultant, conducting seminars and workshops for a wide range of UN and other organisations. This work has taken him to some 60 countries, including Sri Lanka, Maldives, India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Thailand.

Mr Wates remains in close touch with media professionals and regularly conducts training workshops for journalists on a wide range of subjects.

Datuk Victor Wee, Chairman of Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board

Dr Wee is a leading figure in the world of international tourism and chairs the Programme Committee of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO). He led the successful campaign Visit Malaysia Year 2007, which saw an increase of 3.5 million tourist arrivals and over \$3.25 billion in tourism receipts in a single year.

He studied Economics, obtaining a BA from the University of Malaya, an MA from Brown University in the United States, and a PhD from Bristol University in Britain. Dr Wee also received training at Harvard, University of Sussex and the East-West Center in Hawaii.

He held important economic posts in the Malaysian government, playing a key role in drawing up national development plans. During the Asian Financial Crisis (1997-98) he was responsible for preparing the National Economic Recovery Plan which served as the blueprint for Malaysia's economic recovery from the crisis.

As the architect of Malaysia's tourism strategy, he was instrumental in establishing the Cabinet Committee on Tourism Malaysia and the Malaysia My Second Home (MM2H) One-Stop Centre at the Ministry of Tourism.

He is a regular speaker at tourism conferences around the world.

Sheldon Santwan, Editor – Travel Division, of Saffron Media Pvt Ltd

Mr Santwan is a publisher and journalist specialising in tourism with over 16 years of publishing experience at the heart of India's travel and hospitality industry.

He has been instrumental in many innovations in the travel media publishing space. He spearheaded TravelBiz Monitor, which was India's only weekly travel publication as well as a live news portal for the travel and hospitality industries. He also played a leading role in instituting the industry's travel awards *Galileo – Express TravelWorld* in 2003 and *The Navigator Series – an Annual Strategy Manual* for the industry.

Prior to his current assignment, he was the Associate Publisher and Editor for Express TravelWorld and Express Hospitality of the Business Publications Division of the Indian Express Group.

Mr Santwan has been on the advisory panels of various associations and organisations to help in conceptualising and establishing many exhibitions and international conferences in the Travel and Hospitality industry within India. He has received many awards for his contribution to travel journalism.

Alejandro Ossa, Colombian Attaché and Director, PROEXPORT Asia

Mr Ossa spearheads the Colombian government's campaign to improve the country's image in Asia, developing new markets for Colombian products and attracting investment. He is economic and commercial attaché in China and head of the Colombian export promotion organisation PROEXPORT in Asia.

Mr Ossa holds a bachelor's degree in International Business from the University of Applied Sciences in Furtwangen, Germany, and from Universidad Eafit in Medellin, Colombia, and an MBA from Rutgers University in New Jersey, United States. He has also worked in Argentina, as sales manager at IBM, and was nominated for its New Leaders programme in 2006.

He has twice been named "Most Valuable Adviser" for his professional service to PROEXPORT Colombia, where he was responsible for promoting non-traditional Colombian exports to overseas markets. Along with the Colombian commercial office, Mr Ossa has worked to launch the branding campaign "Colombia is passion" in China, seeking to improve his country's image to the world since 2007.

Susan Warren, Director, MTW Associates

Ms Warren is a seasoned international professional in communications and sustainable tourism with a career history spanning 25 years in destination branding, broad public relations and marketing, coupled with technical tourism experience in the field. She is a former journalist.

She is a New Zealander and studied at the University of Canterbury. For the past nine years she has lived and worked in the UK, and then in European emerging markets with a focus on advancing tourism as a powerful economic, cultural and environmental force, working with numerous country aid programmes.

Ms Warren is passionate about sustainability and authenticity. She has just returned to New Zealand to be Business Director for the country's most famous cook and lifestyle personality and she sees this a natural extension of sustainable tourism. Susan continues to advise the Sri Lanka government on its country branding and the practical implementation of the *Refreshingly Sri Lanka Visit 2011 campaign* which she helped develop, designed to unite stakeholders at home and "refresh" international perceptions of Sri Lanka with a focus on its outstanding tourism offers.

Michael Schuman, Asia business correspondent, TIME magazine.

Mr Schuman has been an international business journalist for nearly two decades, specialising in Asia. He is the author of an important history of the continent's economic rise, *The Miracle: The Epic Story of Asia's Quest for Wealth*, published in 2009.

He has a BA in Asian history and political science from the University of Pennsylvania and a Master's in international affairs from Columbia University. Before taking up his post with TIME, based in Hong Kong, Schuman worked for six years as a correspondent for The Wall Street Journal in South Korea and southeast Asia.

He has reported extensively from 12 countries in the continent, including India and China. Assignments have taken him into Gobi Desert sandstorms, Malaysian mosques, Indian call centres, Chinese shirt factories and a North Korean state dinner (attended by the late President Kim Jong Il). Schuman has interviewed several heads of state, including the current presidents of South Korea, Taiwan and the Philippines, and has written on subjects ranging from the 1997 Asian financial crisis to global agriculture to the future of the dollar.

He is a contributor to TIME's popular business blog, the Curious Capitalist.