

"MAINSTREAMING TOURISM IN THE MEDIA"

(Colombo, March 24, 2011)

Introduction

The rise of tourism over the past 60 years has been one of the most remarkable economic phenomena of our times. Since 1950, the number of international tourist trips has grown by an average +6% a year, yielding revenue growth of +11% a year. The benefit to the economies of many developing countries has been enormous.

But the international news media are more likely to portray tourism as a succession of palm-fringed beaches, ancient monuments and spectacular wildlife, than as an industry injecting skills, capital, employment and opportunity into societies. Does this matter? What impact does the way tourism is portrayed have on the nature of tourism itself? How can the international news media be encouraged to promote greater awareness of the social and economic value of tourism and its potential to contribute to sustainable development?

These questions will be discussed at "Mainstreaming Tourism in the Media", a one-day seminar at the Hilton Hotel, Colombo, on March 24. H.E. Mr. Basil Rajapaksa, the Sri Lankan Minister of Economic Development and Tourism, and the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) will be joined by marketing and branding experts, and journalists from the travel and international media, ranging from Condé Nast to the BBC.

Tourism-sensitive reporting: the impact of the media on destination image

Unfavourable media coverage affects the reputation and attractiveness of a destination, resulting in serious impacts on the tourism sector. Reduced tourist numbers have significant and long-lasting consequences for the millions employed in the sector, the billions of dollars in income streams and the attainment of global development goals.

The conference will debate the necessary elements for a fair and responsible coverage of events which, without denying a reality of many social challenges, is capable of distinguishing content so that the image and reputation of the destination is treated with a balanced and differentiated approach.

Tourism for development and the role of the media

Tourism is one of the world's largest and fastest growing economic sectors. It accounts for 5% of the world's GDP, one in twelve of its jobs and 30% of its services exports. It delivers on economic growth, development, employment and wider objectives, from social and economic inclusion to attracting enterprise and investment.

While the press cannot be told what and how to write, it can and should promote greater awareness of the social and economic value of tourism and its potential to contribute to sustainable development.

Covering tourism – and beyond

While intended as a comprehensive debate on the overall role of the media in tourism, the seminar takes Sri Lanka as its specific case study. It will look at the relevance of tourism for the country's development after three decades of political and social unrest and subsequent negative headlines around the world.

The debate will naturally concentrate on tourism as a key vehicle to rebuild the country's image with a direct impact on its tourism positioning, but also with positive spill-over effects on Sri Lanka as a marketplace, including its international political profile.

Venue:

Hilton Colombo
No.2, Sir Chittampalam,
A Gardiner Mw,
Colombo 2, Sri Lanka 02

Confirm your attendance:

UNWTO Principal Media Officer:

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UNWTO CONFERENCE - "MAINSTREAMING TOURISM IN THE MEDIA"

(24 March 2011, Colombo, Sri Lanka)

PROGRAMME

- 09:30 – 10:00 **Opening Ceremony**
23RD JOINT MEETING OF THE UNWTO COMMISSION FOR SOUTH ASIA,
THE UNWTO COMMISSION FOR EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC AND THE
UNWTO CONFERENCE "MAINSTREAMING TOURISM IN THE MEDIA"
- Welcome address**
 H.E. Mr. Basil Rajapaksa
 Minister of Economic Development and Tourism, Sri Lanka
- Congratulatory address**
 Mr. Hiran Cooray, Chairman, Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA)
- Opening address**
 Dr. Taleb Rifai, Secretary-General, UNWTO
- 10:00 - 10:30 **Tea & Coffee Break**
- 10:30 - 13:00 **Part 1 – General Overview – Image building in tourism**

Media coverage has an effect on the reputation and attractiveness of a destination, having a proven impact the contribution of the tourism sector to economic growth, development and job creation.
- 10.30 - 10.40 **Introduction**
Moderator, Oliver Wates, Media Train
Marcelo Risi, UNWTO Principal Media Officer
- 10.40 - 11.10 **The role of media in the development of regional tourism**
Dr. Nalaka Godahewa, Chairman, Sri Lanka Tourism
- 11.10 – 11.40 **Successful promotion: Visit Malaysia Year Project**
Dr. Victor Wee, Chairman, Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board
- 11.40 – 12:10 **Promoting and informing - The perspective of the travel media**
Sheldon Santwan, Editor, Travel Biz Monitor, India
- 12:10 - 13:00 **How relevant is tourism promotion to journalists?**
Panel Discussion with participating international media (Daily Mail, Conde Nast Traveller, BBC Fast Track), PATA and NTAs (Maldives, Sri Lanka)
- Q&A**
- 13:00 - 14:30 **Lunch**

14.30 – 17.45 **Part 2 – Tourism for development**

While the press cannot be told what and how to write, it can and should promote greater awareness of the social and economic value of tourism and its potential to contribute to sustainable development.

14.30 - 14.40 **Introduction**

Moderator, Oliver Wates, Media Train

14.40 - 15.10 **Overcoming adversity: When the only risk is wanting to stay**

Alejandro Ossa, Proexport Colombia, Director of China Bureau

15.10 – 15.40 **Successful country branding for Sri Lanka**

Susan Warren, Director, MTW Associates

15.40 – 16.10 **How to sell your story: reaching out to the mainland media**

Michael Schuman, International Business Correspondent Asia, Time Magazine

16:10 - 17:00 **Sri Lanka after the war: positioning tourism as a vehicle for development**

Panel Discussion with participating global media (Deutsche Welle TV, La Repubblica, Wirtschaftswoche) and NTAs (Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Thailand)

Q&A

17:00 - 17:30 **Closing Session**

Conclusions and recommendations

Closing remarks by Mr. Zoltan Somogyi, Executive Director, UNWTO

18:30 **Leave hotel for welcome dinner**

19:00 - 21:00 **Welcome dinner at the Jetliner Cruise Ship**

Hosted by the Sri Lanka Tourism Authority