



**COMMITTEE ON STATISTICS
AND THE TOURISM SATELLITE ACCOUNT**

Twelfth meeting

UNWTO Headquarters, Madrid, Spain
27-28 January 2011

Statement by the Chairman of the UNWTO Committee on Statistics and the Tourism Satellite Account¹ at the closing of the twelfth meeting

1. During these two days of meeting, members of this Committee made very important remarks and suggestions to improve the Compilation Guide of International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics 2008.
2. We also had the opportunity to follow up the initiatives taken by UNWTO to implement Recommendations made at the last Meeting of this Committee, in 2010.
3. I would like to remark some of the main questions and recommendations for your comments and to evaluate the UNWTO Programme of Work for next months.
4. We started this Meeting following the words of UNWTO Secretary-General, Mr. **Taleb Rifai**, on the contribution of tourism to create employment, even during the last financial crisis. He also stressed the importance of tourism for GDP.
5. Mr. Marcio Favila, Executive Director of UNWTO, participated at almost all the meetings, giving many important contributions to improve methods and tourism statistics and also asked for more regional TSA.
6. During the session on the Compilation Guide of International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics 2008, we had some important contributions to improve this document. I would like to stress some remarks:
 - a. The need of a paragraph with a clear proposal to define the frequency that allows trips to be considered as tourism trips;
 - b. It is also necessary to define Duration of trip or Duration of Stay;
 - c. IRTS should be the main reference (Standard Manual) to provide comparable international statistics on tourism. For me, this statement has to be a clear message of UNWTO;

¹ Mr. Eduardo Nunes Pereira, President of IBGE / Brazil, was elected Chairman in 2006. His term of office was renewed for the period 2008-2011.

- d. This question was discussed by many delegates. Some of them made a comment on possible flexibility, transparency and credibility of some alternative concepts and data;
 - e. However, the Compilation Guide has to take into consideration that the main objective of this IRTS is to produce national and international comparable time series of tourism statistics. That is to say, comparability of procedures, concepts and data has to be the main purpose of this Guide;
 - f. On the methodological side, we have to follow a Standard Guide. But, on the statistical practice for collecting data, we can be more flexible, by using CATI, PDA for household and border surveys and other technology and methods;
 - g. Another subject of discussion was about the concept of distance to measure kind of transports used by the traveler;
 - h. Classification of types of tourism products is another issue. The next draft of the Compilation Guide has to conciliate UNWTO classification with international classification of products to be comparable. UNWTO has to make a new consultation to the UNSD;
 - i. Good concepts and classification contribute to measure better tourism.
7. To include these remarks made by country members, as well as comments already sent by other countries, UNWTO and UNSD will prepare a new draft of this Compilation Guide to be released, by beginning of March, for world-wide consultation.
 8. The Compilation Guide will include concrete examples of national good practices of compilation of tourism statistics, including experience of reconciliation of data.
 9. The approval of the Compilation Guide will be a strong support for the Compendium of Tourism Statistics. This will be a long term process and UNWTO has to prepare a document to explain how to move to this new objective.
 10. Another step will be the preparation a long term programme of capacity building and technical assistance to build national TSA. It will be necessary to promote more integration between Minister of Tourism and National Statistical Offices.
 11. A complementary initiative of UNWTO to promote capacity building program was presented to the country members. UNWTO has created a system of *e-learning* course about tourism statistics. The Committee received very well this initiative and was proposed to create a Pilot Project with 15 volunteers to be part of this pioneer program.
 12. At the **second day**, the Committee started with a presentation of a Glossary of Tourism Terms included into the UNWTO documents. This initiative contributes to clarify some Concepts, even for non experts on this vocabulary, and helps to understand better Tourism as an Economic Sector (Activity) and its contribution for employment, GDP growth, Balance of Payment and social and environmental aspects.

13. Country members gave strong support to this approach because it contributes to disseminate and educate public on the importance of tourism. It was also stressed the importance of this information for media, government and academia and to better integrate statisticians with the users.
14. It was also stressed the importance of regular information, even of short term data to create a public culture of reading and using tourism information, not only tourism figures or tables.
15. After the session on Glossary, the Committee had a Round Table with six presentations (Austria, Egypt, Ireland, Spain and the regional government of Madrid, Sweden).
16. The last, but the most important topic of this Committee was the recognizing of all country members on the very important contribution of Antonio Massieu for the development of Tourism Statistics during the last years. I am sure that we will miss you, because you are a great leader and a great friend.
17. Sincerely, I hope you a very good retirement, but we also hope to continue counting on your intelligence, friendship, experience, expertise and advise on tourism statistics.
18. Thank you very much.