

**THE 5<sup>TH</sup> UNWTO ASIA/PACIFIC EXECUTIVE TRAINING PROGRAM**  
**ON TOURISM POLICY AND STRATEGY**

13-16 June 2011 / Brunei Darussalam

**1. Course Background**

Boosted by improved global economic conditions, especially in Asia, international tourism recovered strongly in 2010, with total international arrivals registering 935 million, up by 7% on 2009. Although all regions saw growth, the UNWTO noted that the recovery was multi-speed in character with the Asia Pacific (13%), the Middle East (15%), and South America (10%) regions growing at double-digit rates. Europe (3%), North America (8%), and Africa (6%) increased at single-digit rates. However, as recently noted by the Secretary General of the UNWTO, Dr. Taleb Rifai, the growth in 2010 receipts lagged behind the volume growth in arrivals reflecting continuing belt tightening in the wake of the global recession. For 2011, the UNWTO is forecasting more modest growth of between 4% and 5% in light of persistent high unemployment and increasing taxation on travel services as part of ongoing fiscal consolidation in the wake of the recession. The devastating earthquake and tsunami in Japan in March 2011 has severely affected its economy and will also have a negative impact on this modest growth scenario.

Although the long term forecast outlook for international tourism arrivals and expenditure to 2020 is retained, there is concern that the imposition of additional taxes on the sector will impede its growth prospects going forward and impact adversely not only upon the economies of the main tourism generating markets but also on the development possibilities of emerging economies and their tourism sectors.

With 204 million or 22% of the global arrivals market in 2010, the Asia Pacific Region has consolidated its position as the second largest region in terms of global international tourist arrivals. Moreover, driven by the enormous growth engines of China and India, the tourism industry in the region is growing at an unprecedented rate and becoming more crucial to the economy of many countries. As a result, tourism is increasingly viewed as one of the main engines of socio-economic growth for income and employment generation. As noted at the April 2011 meeting between the UNWTO and several UN agencies to establish the “UN Steering Committee on Tourism for Development” that aims to improve the linkage between tourism and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the second source of export earnings of 20 of the 48 least developed countries in the world is derived from tourism.

Recognizing the increasing global interdependencies that have been highlighted by recent natural disasters, health, and economic events, as well as the

importance of cross border facilitation to push economic growth following the European model, many countries have adopted regional and subregional approaches to economic development that include tourism. In the Asia Pacific Region, the Asia Pacific Economic Forum (APEC), the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and South Asia Association Region Cooperation (SAARC) are examples of regional economic cooperation groupings while the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) and the Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia and Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA) are examples of subregional cooperation initiatives. Tourism is included in many of these cooperation initiatives given the fact that a large fraction of global international arrivals (estimated at around 20%) undertakes multi-country visits during their trip. Additionally, the presence of significant regional disparities between countries in their capacity to attract and support tourism markets and the significant positive or negative unintended impacts that one country's tourism policies and strategies can have on its neighbouring countries have spurred these initiatives. In this context, the cooperating countries have sought to work together on policies designed to increase the size of the multi-country tourism markets through cross border facilitation and cooperative marketing, and within each country, developing appropriate destinations and products to obtain a larger share of these markets.

A review of the issues and concerns being discussed at the regional and subregional forums indicates that these issues are increasingly concerned with managing rapid tourism growth so that it is more environmentally and socially sustainable by soliciting the support of the private sector to spread the benefits of tourism to the urban and rural poor; safeguarding natural and cultural heritage; and contributing to the mitigation of climate change. Public sector tourism managers in the region are thus increasingly being challenged to formulate and implement broad, stakeholder-based policies and plans that address key concerns such as:

- How can the benefits of tourism be spread more widely to include the urban and rural poor in aid of the poverty reduction goal of the MDG?
- How do countries best benefit from participation in regional and subregional tourism marketing and development cooperation initiatives?
- How can tourism contribute to the reduction of regional imbalances in economic growth and opportunity, within the country and between countries?
- How can countries better safeguard key natural and cultural heritage of importance to tourism while increasing the carrying capacities of these attractions?
- How can countries improve tourism governance and ensure that tourism development is environmentally and socially sustainable and responsible?
- How should countries respond to the climate change challenge and ensure that tourism contributes to its mitigation?

The UNWTO Asia/Pacific Executive Training Program on Tourism Policy and Strategy was first held in 2006 and has been held annually since 2008. Through a series of lectures, group discussions, debates, and presentations, the training program seeks to provide a forum to assist public and private sector tourism executives in gaining a better understanding of the latest trends in tourism management and provide a knowledge and experience-sharing platform on best practices in successful policy and strategy formulation and implementation. The training program enables its participants to improve their strategic tourism management skills and through the network of contacts, further develop these skills going forward. As a follow up of the training, UNWTO also compiles the conclusions and learnings from the discussion panels in a comprehensive report that can ultimately be used as a guide for future actions and strategies in tourism policy development.

## **2. The Take Home Value of the Training Program**

This program is meant to help develop tourism managers who are able to develop effective and responsive policies and strategies that adopt to changing priorities and concerns at the national, regional, and subregional levels.

## **3. Training Program Objectives**

The overall objectives of the training program are to:

- Deepen the participants' understanding of: (i) the important role that tourism can play in contributing to socio-economic development at the country and within-country destination level focusing on the MDGs of poverty reduction and private sector participation, (ii) how to manage rapid tourism growth so that it is more sustainable and responsive to safeguarding natural and cultural heritage; and (iii) how to optimise the benefits of regional and subregional cooperation in the development of international tourism.
- Share successful tourism policies of several countries regarding their policy making and implementation in the above areas.
- Provide insights and broaden policy options as well as opportunities on tourism policy making in these areas.

## **4. Provisional Programme**

To achieve the aforementioned aims and objectives, the 5<sup>th</sup> training program is designed to specifically focus on a more practical rather than theoretical implementation of tourism policy.

### **Session 1 – Tourism and Socio-economic Development--Poverty Reduction Through Private Sector Participation:**

- Speaker: Madam Narzalina Zaldivar Lim, Former Secretary (Minister) of the Department of Tourism, Philippines.

- Preparation Questions:
  - How are your country's socio-economic development goals reflected in the tourism policies of your country?
  - Is there a link between poverty reduction and private sector participation in the tourism policies of your country?
  - Is poverty reduction through private sector participation integrated in the tourism policy of your country?
  - Do you have examples in your country of how tourism has been used to help reduce poverty through greater private sector participation?
  - What approaches would you adopt for future projects of using the tourism private sector to reduce poverty?

### **Session 2 – Recent Tourism Trends in Asia & the Pacific and Comparative Analysis on the Tourism Development in this region**

- Speaker: Mr. Xu Jing, Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, UNWTO
- Preparation Questions:
  - What are the recent tourism trends in your country?
  - Has your country recently announced any tourism development plan? If so, what are the main issues in it?
  - What are the key factors to make your recent tourism development plan to be successfully implemented?

### **Session 3 – Optimizing the Benefits of Regional and Subregional Cooperation in Tourism:**

- Speaker: Mr. Steven Schipani, Social Sector Specialist, Asian Development bank.
- Preparation Questions:
  - Has your country participated in regional or subregional multi-country tourism cooperation initiatives? If so, which ones?
  - What are the perceived benefits of participation in regional or subregional cooperation in tourism of your country?
  - Is regional or subregional cooperation in tourism a component of your country's tourism policies?
  - What are some examples of the regional and subregional cooperation initiatives that your country has participated in?

### **Session 4 – Tourism's Role in Sustainability for the Heart of Borneo:**

- Speaker: Dato' Dr Mikail Kavanagh, Special Advisor for Brunei Darussalam to WWF(World Wildlife Fund)'s Heart of Borneo Programme.

- Preparation Questions:
  - What is HOB's unique selling proposition for tourism? How do you plan where to develop tourism and where not to?
  - What is the role of government in developing tourism? Why not let the private sector get on with it?
  - How do you stop tourism from damaging pristine natural environments, without shutting out the tourists?
  - Is tourism in competition with other industries in the HOB area and will this limit the growth of the tourism industry?
  - Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, and Indonesia are competing with each other for the tourist market. Why should they want to cooperate? Are they in fact actually competing with one another?

In addition to the training, a one-day technical tour to a natural or cultural heritage site with importance to tourism will take place at the end of the program. (details to be announced)

### **Participants' Involvement**

Participants should be at least senior director level from the national tourism administrations and have an excellent command of English.

In order to increase the participation level and to have a useful and practical learning experience, all the participants are required to prepare a short presentation on the best practices of their tourism policy making and implementation. Any tourism policy issue would be welcome as a topic of the presentation such as poverty reduction through tourism, sustainable tourism development, multi-national cooperation in tourism development, tourism marketing plan, destination management strategy, long-term tourism master plan, and innovation in tourism. The recommendations have to be included in the presentation for the other participants to obtain the practical lessons from each best case of our member states. The presentation file should be submitted not later than 31<sup>st</sup> May 2011. Some participants will be invited to deliver the presentation during the sessions.

All the presentation files will be distributed to participants to facilitate efficient discussion. Participants are also required to be prepared for answering all the preparation questions listed in "4. Provisional Program."