The Secretary-General

NV/RPAP/12/11

Note Verbale Invitation to:

24TH JOINT MEETING OF THE UNWTO COMMISSION FOR EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC AND THE UNWTO COMMISSION FOR SOUTH ASIA

&

UNWTO HIGH-LEVEL REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON GREEN TOURISM

Chiang Mai, Thailand

3-5 May 2012

The Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization presents his compliments to the member States of the two commissions of Asia and has the honour to invite them to the 24th Joint Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific and the UNWTO Commission for South Asia. This will be held in conjunction with the UNWTO High-level Regional Conference on Green Tourism in Chiang Mai, Thailand, from 3-5 May 2012.

At the joint commission meeting, we will present the analysis of our new long-term forecast for international tourism, i.e. Tourism Towards 2030 which assesses the development of tourism up to the first 30 years of the 21st century. We will place special emphasis on the latest findings on the Asia-Pacific region. Another important item on the agenda will be the election of two candidates to represent each commission on the Programme and Budget Committee following the approval of its constitution by the 19th General Assembly.

As is our usual practice, the theme of our conference for this year has been selected to reflect contemporary issues of global as well as regional interests. The steady growth of travel and tourism is set to continue as our 2020 forecast has proved year after year. With the 980 million record of 2011, international tourist arrivals are sure to cross the 1 billion threshold by the end of this year. However, the development and rapid growth of both international and domestic travel and tourism come with some significant challenges. Energy intensive transportation is increasing the non-renewable energy dependence of tourism and is contributing 5 per cent of global greenhouse emissions.

Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that if tourism adds to environmentally-related problems, it can fortunately, also make a significant contribution to the solution. This can be achieved through the greening of tourism as it involves efficiency improvements in energy, water and waste. But there is more to green tourism than just reduction of the cost of energy and waste management, and this is the bedrock on which the theme of our conference rests.

The Secretary-General extends a warm invitation to recipients of this note to attend the commission meeting in order to be apprised of what is in store for our industry in the next 30 years. They are also urged to come and take part in discussions which promise to provide insights into why we see green tourism as the way to go if we are to contain the climate change threat and protect our environment from unsustainable practices. The conference on green tourism will be akin to a warming-up exercise and an opportunity for us to advance the green economy agenda as the world prepares for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro next June.
Please find attached the Preliminary Programme for the conference and the Provisional Agenda for the joint commission meeting. The General Information Note and the Registration Form for both events shall be sent to you shortly.

Hoping that it will be possible for recipients of this note to join us in Chiang Mai, the Secretary-General avails himself of this opportunity to renew to the member States of the UNWTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific and the UNWTO Commission for South Asia, the assurances of his highest consideration.

1 March 2012