



**CAP/CSA/25/4\_Prelim Rem.**

**UNWTO COMMISSION FOR EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC  
UNWTO COMMISSION FOR SOUTH ASIA  
Twenty-fifth Joint Meeting  
Hyderabad, India  
13 April 2013**

**Item 4 of the Provisional Agenda**

**PRELIMINARY REMARKS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

**Note by the Secretary-General**

In this document, the Secretary-General presents to the Members of the UNWTO Commissions for East Asia and the Pacific and South Asia his remarks about (a) International tourism in 2012 and prospects for 2013, (b) Mainstreaming tourism in the global agenda and (c) the Implementation of the general programme of work for the period 2012-2013.

## **Introduction**

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1. The present report to the 25th Joint Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific and the UNWTO Commission for South Asia addresses the following subjects:
  - A. Update on International Tourism in 2012 and Prospects for 2013;
  - B. Mainstreaming Tourism in the Global Agenda;
  - C. Implementation of the Programmes of Work 2012-2013; and
  - D. Administrative and Financial Matters.

## **A. Update on International Tourism in 2012 and Prospects for 2013**

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2. **Overview on the year 2012:** Despite growing global economic volatility, particularly affecting the Eurozone, international tourist arrivals grew by 3.8% in 2012 to reach an historic milestone of over one billion (1.035 billion). Demand held well throughout the year, with a stronger than expected fourth quarter. Emerging economies (+4.1%) regained the lead over advanced economies (+3.6%), with Asia and the Pacific showing the strongest results.
3. **By region,** Asia and the Pacific (+7%) was the best performer, while by sub-region South-East Asia, North Africa (both at +9%) and Central and Eastern Europe (+8%) topped the ranking. The Americas (+4%) saw an increase of 6 million arrivals, reaching 162 million in 2012. Arrivals grew by 6% in Africa to reach a new record (52 million) due to the rebound in North Africa (+9%) and to the continued growth of Sub-Saharan destinations (+5%). Results in the Middle East (-5%) were still on the negative, in spite of the clear recovery in Egypt.
4. Preliminary data on **international tourism receipts for 2012**, not yet complete for the full year, indicate that the growth in receipts may have followed closely that of arrivals. Among the top ten tourism destinations, receipts in the first three quarters of 2012 were up significantly in Hong Kong (China) (+16%), the USA (+10%), the UK (+6%) and Germany (+5%). At the same time, a significant number of destinations around the world saw receipts from international tourism increase by 15% or more – Japan (+37%), India and South Africa (both +22%), Sweden and the Republic of Korea (both +19%), Thailand (+18%) and Poland (+16%).
5. As per **outbound tourism as measured by international tourism expenditure**, although the highest growth rates in expenditure abroad among the ten top markets came from emerging economies – China (+42%) and Russia (+31%) – important traditional source markets showed particularly good results. In Europe, and despite economic pressures, expenditure on international tourism by Germany grew by 3%, while the UK (+5%) returned to growth after two flat years. In the Americas, expenditure by the USA and Canada increased by 7%. On the other hand, France (-7%) and Italy (-2%) registered declines in travel expenditure. Smaller markets with significant growth were Venezuela (+31%), Poland (+19%), Philippines (+17%), Malaysia (+15%), Saudi Arabia (+14%), Belgium (+13%), Norway and Argentina (both +12%), Switzerland and Indonesia (both +10%).
6. **International tourism in Asia and the Pacific in 2012** (+7%) was up by 15 million arrivals in 2012, reaching a total 233 million international tourists. South-East Asia (+9%) was the best performing sub-region much due to the implementation of policies that foster intraregional cooperation and coordination in tourism. Growth was also strong in North-East Asia (+6%), as Japanese inbound

and outbound tourism recovered. Arrivals increased by 4% in South Asia, a slowdown in growth when compared to the 2012 results (+12%) while picking up stronger in Oceania (+4% as compared to a 1% increase in 2011).

7. **Prospects for 2013:** UNWTO forecasts international tourist arrivals to increase by 3% to 4% in 2013, much in line with its long-term forecast *Tourism Towards 2030*: +3.8% a year on average between 2010 and 2020. This outlook is confirmed by the UNWTO Confidence Index included in the January issue of the *UNWTO World Tourism Barometer*. Compiled among over 300 experts worldwide, the Index shows that prospects for 2013 are similar to the evaluation of 2012 (124 points for 2013 against 122 for 2012).
8. **In Asia and the Pacific**, UNWTO forecast a growth in international tourist arrivals between 5% and 6% in 2013, the highest among world regions and much in line with the long-term forecast for 2030 in the region: +5.7% between 2010 and 2020.
9. Considering that the current document was prepared in March 2013, an update of the above information will be provided during the 25th Joint Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific and the UNWTO Regional Commission for South Asia.

## **B. Mainstreaming Tourism in the Global Agenda**

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10. The **‘Open Letter for Tourism’** campaign has advanced substantially during 2012. The campaign, a joint initiative of UNWTO and the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), comprises the presentation of an Open Letter to Heads of State and Government worldwide, seeking their acknowledgement of the relevance of tourism in facing today’s global challenges and their support for policies that stimulate the growth of the sector. Between 28 February 2011, when President Felipe Calderón of Mexico first received the Open Letter and the **end of February 2013, 47 leaders joined the Campaign, of which ten are from Asia and the Pacific:** Brunei, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Thailand and Vietnam.

Three other countries in Asia and the Pacific have confirmed their intention to join the campaign during 2013 - Cambodia, Laos and India.

11. **Travel facilitation, taxation and connectivity** have been identified as **key policy issues** to be addressed during 2012-2013. In this regard, the following work has been carried out by the Secretariat.
  - a) **Travel facilitation:** Following the important reference made to tourism and to the role of visa facilitation in stimulating growth and jobs in the Declaration of the G20 Leaders (June 2012), UNWTO has continued to advocate visa facilitation as a means to grow the tourism sector. The issue was the theme of the 2012 UNWTO/WTM Ministers Summit in London and object of a dedicated debate at the 94<sup>th</sup> session of the Executive Council, which mandated the Secretariat to “maintain visa facilitation as a priority in the work of the Secretariat and advance it through advocacy at the highest political level and the identification and dissemination of case studies” and “to advance it in close cooperation with other international and regional organizations” (CE/DEC/20(XCIV). In this respect, and to support its advocacy work, UNWTO has published in January 2013, an in-depth report on the current “openness” of each world region in terms of visas for tourism ([http://dtxqtq4w60xqpw.cloudfront.net/sites/all/files/pdf/unwto\\_visa\\_facilitation.pdf](http://dtxqtq4w60xqpw.cloudfront.net/sites/all/files/pdf/unwto_visa_facilitation.pdf)).

UNWTO is also working with WTTC to conduct an evaluation of the impact of visa facilitation in the economies of APEC to be finalized by September 2013 and with OECD in the identification of case studies and setting of joint recommendations.

- b) **Taxation:** The Secretariat continues to advocate intelligent taxation, raising awareness of the need to evaluate the economic impact of the raise or introduction of new taxes on travel and tourism. In this regard, a pilot project on a possible econometric model to assess the impact of changes in fiscal policies in tourism is under way.
  - c) **Connectivity:** Considering that 51% of all international tourists arrive at their destinations by air, the Secretariat has also started to work on the promotion of connectivity, particularly in terms of air transport, with the aim of raising awareness at the international level of the importance of a closer relationship between tourism and aviation in order to ensure mutual benefits. In this respect, the UNWTO Secretary-General addressed the Member States of the International Civil Aviation Authority (ICAO) at ICAO's Sixth Worldwide Air Transport Conference (18 March 2013) highlighting issues such as the need to review the current legislative framework, taxation, climate change and consumer protection, and appealing for increased cooperation between aviation and tourism both at national and international levels.
12. Further to the above, the Secretariat continued to focus on advancing the issue of **Consumer Protection** [see point 14. e)] as well as on the overarching priority area of UNWTO's work: **Sustainability** through various initiatives in the areas of research [publication of the several reports – see point 15. b)], training, technical assistance projects and support to the setting of Sustainable Tourism Observatories in China and Greece).
13. The Secretariat also continued to work within the **UN system** and with **other international and regional organizations** such as regional development banks **to move tourism higher on the sustainable development agenda**. In this regard, it is important to highlight UNWTO engagement in the Post Rio +20 UN processes and stress the following collaborations: the UNWTO-led UN Steering Committee on Tourism for Development, the Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism (GSTP), the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), which will from 2013 onwards be located within the premises of the UNWTO Headquarters in Madrid, the on-going participation of the Organization in the Spanish MDG Fund projects and the cooperation with UNESCO on several tourism and culture programmes, including the World Heritage Tourism Programme, among many others.

## C. Implementation of the Programme of Work 2012-2013

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### C.1 Programme of Work 2012-2013

14. An important number of activities has been implemented since 24<sup>th</sup> joint CAP-CSA meeting and since the report prepared by the Secretariat for the 94<sup>th</sup> session of the Executive Council covering the period up to August 2012 (document CE/94/3(I)(c)). Among these some are worth highlighting:
- a) **Events:** Major global events were held namely:
    - the 2012 World Tourism Day Celebrations and High Level Dialogue on *Tourism and Sustainable Energy-Powering Sustainable Development*, in the Canary Islands, Spain (September 2012);
    - the *Flavours of the Silk Road: International Conference on Food, Culture and Tourism*, in Baku, Azerbaijan (September 2012);

- the 2nd International Congress on Ethics and Tourism, in Quito, Ecuador (September 2012);
- the Tourism Side Events held on the occasion of the 11th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, in Hyderabad, India (October 2012);
- the *International Conference Universal Values and Cultural Diversity in the 21st Century: How can tourism make a difference?*, in Yerevan, Armenia (October 2012);
- the UNWTO/WTM Ministers' Summit on *Open Borders and Open Skies: Breaking Barriers to Travel*, in London, United Kingdom (November 2012);
- the *Global Summit on City Tourism: Catalysing Economic Development and Social Progress*, in Istanbul, Turkey (November 2012);
- the *Tourism and Climate Change Side Event* within the UN Climate Change Conference - COP18, Doha, Qatar (November 2012);
- two seminars on Tourism Accessibility held at FITUR in Madrid (January 2013) and BIT Milan (February 2013); and
- the Twelfth Meeting of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics (March 2013);

b) **Publications:** Among the outputs of UNWTO's extensive research programme during the period under review it is worth highlighting the publication of the following reports:

- Four issues of the **UNWTO World Tourism Barometer** (September and November 2012, Volume 10 and January and March 2013, Volume 11);
- the 2012 Edition of the **UNWTO Compendium of Tourism Statistics** and of the **UNWTO Yearbook of Tourism Statistics**;
- the background report on **Tourism in the Green Economy**;
- the report **Tourism and Intangible Cultural Heritage**;
- the report **Understanding the Chinese Outbound Tourism – What the Chinese Blogosphere is Saying about Europe** as well as a **2012 Update** on the **Chinese Outbound Tourism Report**, both in collaboration with the European Travel Commission (ETC);
- the report on five key **South-East Asian Outbound Markets: Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam** produced in cooperation with Tourism Australia and with the support of the Government of the Republic of Korea;
- a series of **Affiliate Members Reports** covering **City Tourism, Food Tourism and Aviation**, and
- the report on **Domestic Tourism in Asia and the Pacific**.

c) **Technical Cooperation and Development Assistance:** During 2012, a total of 25 ST-EP projects were under implementation in 30 countries; four new projects have started in 2013 (Bolivia, Burundi, Jordan and Timor-Leste). Furthermore in this period, ten technical cooperation projects were in various stages of implementation: projects in Burundi, Egypt, Ghana, Mali, Oman, Romania and Ukraine (Autonomous Republic of Crimea) were completed; projects in India (Punjab), Uganda and the Regional Project in collaboration with RETOSA (13 Southern African countries) will continue in 2013, new projects in Azerbaijan and Saudi Arabia were launched in early 2013 and several more are in the pipeline to be launched in the first months of 2013. In addition, 11 MDG-F Achievement Fund (MDG-F) projects were under implementation during 2012 in Ecuador (2), Egypt, Honduras, Nicaragua (2), Panama, Peru, Senegal, Serbia and Turkey.

d) **Education and Capacity Building:** Through the UNWTO Themis Foundation, UNWTO's executive arm for education, several training courses were held in the various regions covering areas such as statistics and Tourism Satellite Account (TSA), sustainable development,



competitiveness and energy management. Moreover, the 2012 English edition of the UNWTO.Themis Practicum was dedicated to Tourism Communications and Social Media (Andorra/Spain - September 2012) while a special Training Course on Tourism and Biodiversity: Understanding Tourism Trends and Biodiversity Conservation for Innovative Products and Marketing was held in the UNESCO Rhön Biosphere Reserve, in Germany (October – November 2012) organized by the UNWTO Bonn Office.

**e) Special Initiatives and Projects:** Four special initiatives and projects have been further advanced during the period under review:

- **Hotel Energy Solutions (HES):** The Secretariat has continued to promote the use of this tool in several events and meetings and is currently discussing with a number of Member States the adaptation of the HES online toolkit to the national level.

Building upon the experience and expertise of HES, UNWTO is taking part in a new initiative to fight climate change in the accommodation sector. The Nearly Zero Energy Hotels (NEZEH) project will guide and advise hotels on how to reach a “Nearly Zero Energy” level. The methodology, to be developed together with participating properties in eight EU Member States, will use a combined approach of expertise and an adapted version of HES, for hotels to be able to reach the required level of energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources. The NEZEH project was selected by the Executive Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation (EACI) within the priorities of the EU “Energy efficiency and renewable energy in buildings” in the Intelligent Energy Europe call for proposals. The project, with a total value of 1.8 million euros, will start in May 2013. UNWTO is a partner of the project together with research institutions, energy agencies and networks based in Greece, Italy, Sweden, Romania, Croatia, Belgium, Spain and France.

- **Knowledge Network and UNWTO Awards:** The UNWTO Knowledge Network is an inclusive community of knowledge within the UNWTO Affiliate Members Programme where knowledge generators, policy makers and practitioners interact to bridge ‘Theory and Practice in Tourism’. As of January 2013, the Knowledge Network is composed of 130 institutions, organizations and enterprises from 48 different countries. During this period, a series of initiatives was carried out in the scope of the Knowledge Network. These include the 1st Meeting of the UNWTO Knowledge Network in the Americas held in Campeche, Mexico (October 2012), the UNWTO Knowledge Network Session & UNWTO Knowledge Network Symposium, held in Istanbul, Turkey (November 2012) and the attribution of the 2012 UNWTO Awards for Excellence and Innovation in Tourism, comprising the first edition of the UNWTO Award for Lifetime Achievement. The 2012 UNWTO Awards Ceremony took place in the framework of the Global Summit on City Tourism, the UNWTO Knowledge Network Session and Symposium in Istanbul, Turkey (November 2012).
- **Legal instrument on tourist/consumer protection:** The 94<sup>th</sup> session of the Executive Council requested the UNWTO working group on the protection of tourists/consumers and travel organizers to continue the elaboration of the text of the convention and present a report on its progress to the 95<sup>th</sup> session. The Executive Council also decided to broaden the scope of discussions and consultations with all Member States, namely, through the Regional Commissions’ meetings. In this respect, this issue will be an agenda item to be discussed at all Regional Commission meetings.

- **DEVCO Project:** The European Commission (Directorate General Development and Cooperation – DG DEVCO/EuropeAid) has requested UNWTO to prepare a Guidebook on Sustainable Tourism as an engine for development, trade in services, job creation and poverty reduction. The Guidebook will enhance the understanding of tourism in all its dimension, how it relates to the EU Agenda for Change so as to enable EU services in Brussels as well as the EU Delegations in 180 countries and other development institutions to include sustainable tourism development in their programme cycles. The Guidebook is currently on a testing phase in six countries (Botswana, India, Kenya, Vietnam, Senegal and Timor-Leste) and is expected to be publicly launched together with the EU authorities in early June 2013 (Brussels).

## **C.2 Specific UNWTO Activities in Asia and the Pacific**

15. In line with UNWTO's global concerns in the areas of travel facilitation, taxation, sustainability and air connectivity, the activities of the Regional Programme for Asia-Pacific since the 24th CAP-CSA Joint meeting have centred on the following:

- a. **Visa facilitation:** A study on the impact of visa facilitation on the economy and employment of the APEC economies is in preparation with WTTC. This report will complement the recent UNWTO research on regional "openness" which shows Asia as one of the most open region where visa facilitation is concerned. It will also complement the on-going Travel Facilitation Initiative (TFI) of APEC highlighting the benefits of travel facilitation from the tourism sector's perspective. A special Tourism Ministerial session of APEC will be held at the beginning of October 2013 with travel facilitation as its main focus. At the invitation of the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy of Indonesia, UNWTO will provide technical input to this Ministerial meeting, during which the UNWTO/WTTC study will be presented.
- b. **Air Connectivity:** UNWTO is preparing a study on air connectivity and its impact on tourism development in Asia in collaboration with PATA and TPO (Tourism Promotion Organization for Asia-Pacific Cities). In the light of the growing importance of aviation in the Asia-Pacific region as forecasted by the International Air Transport Association (IATA), UNWTO is undertaking this study with a three-pronged objective: 1) to examine the linkages and synergies between aviation and tourism; 2) to evaluate the resultant increase in tourist traffic stemming from improved air connectivity; and more specifically 3) to examine the development of aviation infrastructure especially in second tier hub cities and its impact on tourism. The study will be a compilation of case studies and will invite contributions from countries as well as key international organizations including IATA and ICAO.
- c. **Sustainability:** With the recent international tourism growth, the issue of sustainability has become a greater imperative. The promotion of sustainable tourism development requires long-term impact monitoring, and necessary preventive and corrective measures. The need for specific monitoring techniques has become equally important. In this respect, UNWTO has been promoting the use of sustainable tourism indicators since the early 1990s, as essential instruments for policy-making, planning and management process at destinations. In 2004, the UNWTO published the *Indicators of Sustainable Development for Tourism Destinations: A Guidebook* which is the most comprehensive resource on this topic and which guided the development of the concept of the Global Observatory of Sustainable Tourism (GOST). After the successful launch of the first Observatory in Yangshuo (China)

in 2006, with the technical support of Sun Yat-Sen University of China (SYSU), UNWTO signed an MOU with the University to establish, manage, and monitor the existing and future sustainable tourism observatories in China and possibly in the Asia-Pacific region. From 2006 to 2012, five observatories have been set up in China and plans are underway to extend these to Bhutan and the Philippines in 2013. Apart from the observatories, the forthcoming *UNWTO Conference on Sustainable Tourism Development* to be organised in conjunction with the 25<sup>th</sup> CAP-CSA joint meeting in Hyderabad (India) is also intended to further the Organization's sustainability agenda in Asia and the Pacific. The main aim of the Conference is to evaluate UNWTO's achievements in sustainable tourism and readjustments that may be required for the adaptation of UNWTO's sustainability agenda and actions to the currently fast-changing world and the needs of the Member States. The Conference shall draw attention to the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (GSTC) and examine the on-going strategic action to strengthen this certification process.

- d. **Membership:** Myanmar re-joined the UNWTO family in 2012 after it withdrew its membership in 1999. Their decision to re-join was announced to UNWTO by the President of Myanmar on the occasion of the Secretary-General's official visit to the country in May 2012. A special UNWTO mission was undertaken in July to produce a report on future directions to guide the development of Myanmar's tourism sector. The Asia-Pacific Programme has also continued its interactions with non-member States including Singapore on the occasion of TravelRave 2012, ASEAN Tourism Forum of January 2013 and ITB Berlin of March 2013.

## **D. Administrative and Financial Matters**

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### ***D.1 Financial Matters***

16. Despite the zero nominal growth, preliminary information on the financial implementation for the year 2012 indicates that the closing of year has been balanced at 12,276,000 euro according to the approved regular budget expenditure plan complemented with some 5,784,000 euro on extra-budgetary funds. The final 2012 financial information will be presented to the Programme and Budget Committee Meeting (2-3 May) following the approval of the 2012 accounts by the auditors and thereafter to the 95<sup>th</sup> session of the Executive Council.
17. The Secretariat has noted with appreciation efforts made by the large majority of Member States to keep current on their financial obligations and, in some cases, to advance the payment of accumulated arrears, particularly in the current economic context. Without the continuous financial means provided by its Members, it would not be possible for the Organization to operate adequately.
18. Regarding the financial situation for 2013, the Secretariat has elaborated a plan of expenditure based on prudent financial estimates to present to the Programme and Budget Committee Meeting (2-3 May) and thereafter to the 95<sup>th</sup> session of the Executive Council.
19. Notwithstanding, the main issue we continue to face is the challenge of transforming a zero nominal growth of the Organization's budget in place for the last six years into an opportunity to further rationalize expenditure and programme delivery. While the Organization has done well in this regard so far, a continuation of such policy into the 2014-2015 biennium may jeopardise its capacity to deliver in volume and quality. The Secretariat remains naturally actively engaged in avoiding negative impacts from such risk.



20. The Secretariat also continues highly committed to strengthening the efforts in raising extra-budgetary funds for technical cooperation activities as well as for other programmes and would like to remind all Member States that as reported to the 19<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly, UNWTO now is recognized as an ODA Eligible Organization for Bilateral Aid, which means that funds channelled through UNWTO for projects in ODA eligible countries can now be considered as an official development assistance amount. The Secretariat also continues to work with the DAC Committee of the OECD in order to transform UNWTO into a full-fledged ODA eligible international organization.

## ***D.2 Administrative Matters***

21. In view of the objectives of improving working conditions in the Organization, and pursuant to the decision of the Executive Council [decision (XCIV)] to establish an Ethics Function at UNWTO, the Secretariat is currently taking the necessary steps to implement the function internally.
22. In the area of Human Resources, six vacancy announcements were released, five of which have been filled - Programme Director, Statistics and Tourism Satellite Account; Programme Officer, Technical Cooperation and Services; Programme Officer, Information and Communication Technologies; Senior Programme Assistant, Risk and Crisis Management (now part of Sustainable Development of Tourism); and, Programme Assistant, Communications. The selection process for the post of Regional Director for Africa is currently being finalized. Furthermore, the Organization encourages its Members to avail themselves of the existing capacity-building scheme whereby Members may propose to loan to the Organization, on a non-reimbursable basis, a national official. This arrangement, which would be formally done through a Memorandum of Agreement, would allow the Organization to profit from the collaboration of this official while the official, in turn, would benefit from hands-on training and familiarity with the Organization's activities.

## ***D.3 Legal and Procurement***

23. In the area of legal and contracts, the UNWTO Basic Documents have been revised and updated to reflect all amendments approved by the Governing Bodies since their last publication in 1994 and to include new Basic Documents that constitute the main legal framework of the Organization. The new edition of the UNWTO Basic Documents will be presented to Member States before the 20th session of the General Assembly.
24. In the area of procurement, the Detailed Financial Rules have been revised to align them with UN procurement standards and practices and a draft text will be submitted to the 95th session of the Executive Council for approval. Meanwhile, a procurement manual, templates for contract and other bidding documents are being finalized together with a procurement implementation plan to apply progressively the new rules to the procurement activities of the Organization.