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Communication of the Chairman of the Commission (Colombia)

It would take too long to mention each and every natural wonder, cultural tradition or gastronomic attraction that our beloved region of the Americas has to offer to tourists from the world over.

We have the good fortune of being surrounded by the world's biggest oceans and having the largest tropical rainforest on earth. Our geography easily ranges from tall mountains to immense valleys, or from imposing glaciers to vast deserts.

Because of all these treasures, our region continues to attract increasing numbers of tourists from all corners of the world, many of whom, thanks to the great diversity of incomparable destinations, visit not only one of our countries but have the pleasure of getting to know several of them.

It is projected that worldwide tourist arrivals will grow by 3.3% annually (2010-2030), reaching 1.8 billion tourists per year in 2030. Based on these projections, it is estimated that tourism arrivals to emerging destinations will grow at 4.4%, double the expected growth rate of developed destinations. Arrivals to emerging destinations could surpass those to mature destinations by 2015.

With these figures in mind and convinced that tourism is a factor of prosperity for our peoples, our respective governments have made significant commitments to the strengthening of the sector and of the tourism image projected by the Americas to the rest of the world.

As a result of the joint effort and work of the Americas region, we have succeeded in attracting two of the UNWTO's most important events in the world: the celebration of World Tourism Day in 2014 to be held in Mexico, and the General Assembly in 2015, whose host city will be Medellín, Colombia.

In this regard, Colombia reiterates its special gratitude to all of you for the unconditional support received in order to obtain the hosting of this, the 57th meeting of the Regional Commission for the Americas, and of course, the General Assembly in 2015.

Without a doubt, actions such as these highlight the strong unity that prevails among our governments at this time and our capacity to work in a joint manner with view to attaining our common goals.

It is vitally important that we share among ourselves successful experiences that enable us to achieve rapid yet sustainable development of the tourism sector in each of our countries. We must continue to take advantage of the cultural ties that unite us in order to pursue joint actions that will allow us, as a region, to consolidate the Americas as the most important tourism destination at the world level.