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UNWTO COMMISSION FOR EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC
Fifty-first Meeting
Medellin, Colombia
13 September 2015

Item 6 of the Provisional Agenda

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General submits to the Commission for East Asia and the Pacific information on regional activities since the 27th CAP-CSA Joint meeting in Bandos Island Resort, Maldives, in June 2015

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

This document covers the major activities the UNWTO has undertaken in the Asia-Pacific region since the 27th Joint Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific and the UNWTO Commission for South Asia which was held in Bandos Island Resort, Maldives in June 2015. It also provides some information on on-going and upcoming events scheduled for the rest of 2015 and beyond.

27th CAP-CSA Joint Meeting and the UNWTO Regional Ministerial Conference on Positioning Tourism in a Wider Socio-economic context (Bandos Island Resort, Maldives, June, 2015)

At the joint meeting, apart from statutory issues such as the report of the Secretary-General, discussions centred on public-private partnerships, consumer empowerment, destination management and enhancement, tourism and culture, and the transformative potential of tourism as a socio-economic driver.

The ***UNWTO Regional Ministerial Conference on Positioning tourism in a wider Socio-economic Context*** was organised with two main objectives:

- to take stock of the extent to which UNWTO/WTTC Open Letter initiative has achieved its main objective of advocating that countries duly recognise the socio-economic contribution of tourism to their national economies; and
- to examine national policies that will engender strategies to ensure that the projected growth in tourism demand will translate into socio-economic benefits for non-tourism sectors of Asia-Pacific economies.

The Ministers also shared insights on national and regional policies, experience and expertise, which helped to uncover valuable individual and cooperative solutions to assist tourism leaders in moving their sector and national agendas forward.

Review of India's National Tourism Policy (June 2015)

The Government of India requested UNWTO's technical assistance for the review of the draft of its National Tourism Policy 2015. This document was the outcome of re-visiting the 2002 version of the National Tourism Policy. It seeks to develop a concrete Action Plan aimed at achieving the objectives of the Policy such as attaining growth rates corresponding to India's potential and ensuring job creation for young people.

As part of the recommendations for the policy report UNWTO focused on seasonality, dispersion, market penetration and impact in order to achieve a holistic advancement of the tourism sector. Other recommendations included reinforcing the marketing and

promotion section so that it reflects the wider brand-building and promotion quest of tourism; and the need to ensure that all tourism initiatives and investments reflect market and traveller-based evolution and opportunities.

Mekong River-based Tourism Product Development

Upon the request of the Government of Viet Nam, UNWTO is carrying out a study on river-based tourism with a specific focus on the product development of the Mekong area covering Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam.

This is a follow up to the *UNWTO Report - Initial Situation Analysis on River-based Tourism in ASEAN Countries* which was produced and presented at the ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF) in January 2015 in Nay Pi Taw, Myanmar.

The main objectives of the study include the review of the current situation and existing river-based activities; model routes/itineraries and river-based tourism products in the Mekong area; highlight of specific attractions in the Mekong area related to the model routes/itineraries; outline of best practices of developing sustainable river-based tourism products; and the provision of recommendations for policies and marketing of these products.

The initial findings of this study will be presented at a workshop scheduled to be held in November 2015 in Viet Nam. The final report will be presented at the next ASEAN Tourism Forum in the Philippines in January 2016.

Islamic Culture and its Impact on the Asian Tourism Market

In response to a request from the Government of Brunei Darussalam, UNWTO initiated the study on “Islamic culture and its contribution to the Asian Tourism Market” with 3 main objectives: to draw the world’s attention to the contribution of Islamic culture in the Asia-Pacific region to harmony and peace through tourism; to profile UNWTO’s Asia-Pacific Islamic member countries as attractive emerging tourist destinations; and to explore Islamic natural and cultural heritage sites as newly emerging inbound destinations.

UNWTO will present the main highlights of the study to the Asia-Pacific member States at a regional seminar scheduled to be held in Brunei Darussalam, in November 2015.

7th UNWTO International Conference on Silk Road Tourism (Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, China 18-20 June 2015)

To commemorate over 20 years of tourism development along the Silk Road, the 7th UNWTO International Conference on Silk Road Tourism was organised back to back with the Tourism Ministerial Meeting of Countries along the Silk Road Economic Belt.

The event provided an important forum for Ministers, high level officials and experts to debate on challenges and to examine opportunities for the successful development of tourism along the maritime and continental Silk Road. Participants were from about 25 Silk Road countries as well as major institutions such as UNESCO, the UNWTO ST-EP Foundation and a wide range of public and private tourism stakeholders and related representatives.

The *Tourism Ministerial Meeting of Countries along the Silk Road Economic Belt* brought together Ministers from Europe, Asia and the Middle East to discuss key issues facing tourism development along the Silk Road Economic Belt. At this high-level meeting, the Xi'an Initiative was endorsed – an initiative that declares the Silk Road “a treasure to be shared by all countries along the Silk Road, and an important resource for tourism development”.

At the *7th UNWTO International Meeting on Silk Road Tourism*, experts from the fields of tourism, marketing, investment and heritage management convened to analyse how to raise the profile of Silk Road tourism and drive development that is sustainable, responsible and internationally competitive.

CNN National workshop on branding, (New Delhi, 6 July 2015)

UNWTO partnered with the Ministry of Tourism of India in CNN International's national workshop on branding to enhance India's image as a destination. The workshop brought together national and State tourism leaders to address issues such as the competitive landscape with its challenges and opportunities for destinations; evolution of the 'Incredible India' brand across the world and within India; today's media landscape including traditional, digital and mobile media; and brand expression by State tourism bodies of India.

The National Seminar on Tourism and MICE Statistics 2015 (Bangkok, Thailand, 23-24 July 2015)

UNWTO partnered with Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) to organise the National Seminar on Tourism and MICE Statistics 2015. The objectives of the workshop were to outline the UNWTO framework and methodology for developing tourism statistics with emphasis on MICE at the national level; to promote conformance with international standards; to encourage exchange of information, knowledge and expertise among key stakeholders in Thailand through synergies; and to promote consistency in approaches and methodology.

Participants were from National Statistics Office, Ministry of Tourism and Sports, Bank of Thailand, Ministry of Commerce, Tourism Council of Thailand, Thai Hotel Association, Thai Exhibition Association, Thailand Incentive and Convention Association and universities. The workshop served as a good platform for attaining technical skills and knowledge on MICE data collection and analysis of MICE statistics, which will in turn help

with the development and promotion of the Thai MICE industry and to enhance Thailand's competitiveness in the regional and global markets.

UNWTO Technical Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (Kabul, Afghanistan, September 2015)

In response to a request from the Ministry of Information and Culture of Afghanistan, UNWTO undertook a field mission to Kabul with the main purpose of identifying Afghanistan's tourism development potential in the short term and to formulate a strategic approach to tourism development within a longer term perspective.

The mission's findings focus on a series of elements which include planning and policy development which assess the current status of tourism and the structural changes required to achieve the objectives of a strategic tourism plan; analysis of Afghanistan's tourism resources and project development; evaluation of human resources development; marketing and promotions strategy for Afghanistan with special emphasis on the potential of UNWTO's Silk Road Programme; opportunities for tourism development along the Silk Road Economic Belt and of Silk Road product development in a sustainable manner; and SWOT analysis.

UNWTO mission to DPR Korea (July 2015)

UNWTO undertook a mission to DPR Korea to formalise a Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation between DPR Korea's National Tourism Administration and UNWTO; and from the technical perspective, to identify options and possibilities for the development and promotion of tourism in DPR Korea.

The report that emerged from the mission provides recommendations which could support DPR Korea in building institutional and human resource capacity in tourism; in strengthening tourism statistics, data collection and analysis; as well as guidance for the further development of the Wonsan-Mt.Kumgangsan International Tourism Zone.

UNWTO/GTERC Asia Tourism Trends – 2015 Report

The second edition of the UNWTO/GTERC Asian Tourism Trends- 2015 Report is to be presented at the GTEF in October 2015 in Macao. This report analyses the salient features of the Asia Pacific tourism market trends in general with special reference to the inbound/outbound market of the Pacific Alliance countries. This edition also pays special attention to City Tourism with particular emphasis on UNWTO's activities in Asia and Pacific where the growth of cities has been the most rapid and momentous. A case study of Macao identifies the underlying issues of carrying capacity, and diversification that call

for innovative marketing and promotional strategies for the sustainable development of the city.

International Conference on developing sustainable and inclusive Buddhist heritage and pilgrimage circuits in South Asia's Buddhist heartland (Dhaka, Bangladesh, October 2015)

The World Tourism Organization and the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism of Bangladesh will jointly organise the international conference on developing Buddhist heritage.

The main objective of the Conference is to bring together industry leaders, policy makers and marketers as well as relevant stakeholders in an open dialogue to discuss relevant issues and set directions for preparing a road map for the sustainable development and promotion of cross border Buddhist tourism circuits and routes in South Asia.

National Workshop on Tourism Satellite Account (Tehran, Iran, November, 2015)

In response to a request from Iran Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization (ICHTO) for capacity-building in Tourism Satellite Account, UNWTO will organize a workshop on the subject at the beginning of November 2015.

The main aim of the workshop is to provide Iran with an overview of the current state of the necessary elements, technical and non-technical, in developing a System of Tourism Statistics and to lay the foundation for the development of Tourism Satellite Account.

The 9th UNWTO/PATA Forum on Tourism Trends and Outlook (Guilin, China, 19-21 October, 2015)

This 9th edition of the Forum will focus on the theme "Tourism and the Experience Economy" in which tourism policies, industry development, and business/management practices will be discussed in light of the experience economy.

Its main objectives include sharing state-of-the-art research and industry practices in developing tourism in the realm of the experience economy; analysing global and regional tourism trends and challenges in connection with tourism and the experience economy; and exploring new problems for future research on tourism as an experience economy.

Sustainable Cruise Development Strategies: Tackling the Challenges in Itinerary Design in South-East Asia

UNWTO Regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific (RSOAP) has completed research on sustainable cruise tourism development strategies entitled *Sustainable Cruise Tourism Development Strategies: Tackling the Challenges in Itinerary Design in South-East Asia*. The main purpose of the research is to spread awareness of sustainable

development in cruise tourism, catalyze collaboration across South-East Asian region, stimulate the strategic implementation of best practices with a particular focus on the region's ports of call and value chain; and to create a regional network for data-driven collaboration in sustainable cruise tourism.

Developing a Framework to Measure and to Analyze Sustainable Cruise Tourism Development in ASEAN Countries

As a follow-up to the publication on sustainable cruise development strategies, the UNWTO Regional Support Office for the Asia-Pacific (RSOAP) intends to undertake another study on cruise tourism development in ASEAN countries jointly with ASEAN Secretariat, Singapore Tourism Board, UNWTO Knowledge Network, and Japan Tourism Agency.

The objectives of this new study are two-fold: the development of a criteria framework applicable to ASEAN cruise tourism destinations with practical indicators that can be used to measure and report on those criteria along the value chain from the cruise port to the cruise tourism destination; and the formulation of a written report that presents the criteria framework with a comparative analysis of the data collected using the newly developed criteria, indicators, and methods of measurement.

An interim report will be presented during the ASEAN Tourism Forum in Manila (Philippines) in January 2016.