

**DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE UNWTO COMMISSION FOR EAST ASIA AND THE
PACIFIC AND UNWTO COMMISSION FOR SOUTH ASIA
AT THEIR TWENTIETH JOINT MEETING**

Kobe, Japan, 10 June 2008

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UNWTO COMMISSION FOR EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC AND
UNWTO COMMISSION FOR SOUTH ASIA

Twentieth Joint Meeting
Kobe, Hyogo Prefecture, Japan
10 June 2008

AGENDA

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Communication of the Chairman of the joint meeting
3. Communication of the Co-Chairman of the joint meeting
4. Preliminary Remarks by the Secretary-General
5. Regional Activities
 - 5a – Progress report on the activities of the Organization in the region
 - 5b – Presentation on the activities of the UNWTO Regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific
 - 5c – UNWTO Study on Tourism Labour Market in the Asia-Pacific region
 - 5d – Brief intervention on SNV-UNWTO Collaboration on ST-EP in the region
 - 5e – Country reports on tourism performance in 2007
 - 5f – Brief intervention of the Philippines on the 6th International Forum for Parliamentarians and Local Authorities in Cebu
6. Preparation of the Organization's General Programme of Work for 2010-2011¹
 - 6a – The preparation process of the General Programme of Work for 2010– 2011
 - 6b – Identification of Asia and the Pacific regional and sub-regional priorities for 2010-2011
7. Brief presentation of Iran on the Establishment of a Centre for Handicraft and Tourism in Iran
8. Place and date of the twenty second joint meeting of the region

¹ This agenda item will be presented by Mr. Eugenio Yunis, UNWTO's Director of Programme and Coordination and Dr. Victor Wee, UNWTO's Chairman of the Programme Committee

PREAMBLE

1. The twentieth joint meeting of the UNWTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific and the UNWTO Commission for South Asia was held in Kobe, Japan on 10 June 2008. The joint meeting was scheduled to be held in conjunction with the 51st Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for South Asia, the 47th Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific and the UNWTO Asia-Pacific Conference on Metropolitan Tourism. However, given the fact that all the agenda items on the two separate commissions were covered during the joint meeting, the 51st CSA Meeting and the 47th CAP Meeting were considered to have been held within the framework of the 20th Meeting of the Joint Commission meeting.

2. The meeting was chaired by **Thailand** and co-chaired by **Iran**. There were forty-seven participants representing Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. The Associate Members from Hong Kong SAR and Macau SAR as well as Affiliate members from China, Hong Kong SAR, Japan and the Republic of Korea were also represented. In addition to these, other Member States from the Syrian Arabic Republic and Libyan Arab Jamahiriya attended the conference. A list of participants with the names and contact details of all attendees is attached.

DECISIONS

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Agenda item 1 (document CSA/CAP/20/Prov.Ag.)

3. Upon requests made by the Philippines and Iran, the Secretariat moved that two more items be added to the provisional agenda: 5f for the Philippines' intervention on the Cebu parliamentary meetings and to replace item 7 with Iran's brief presentation on the establishment of a Centre for Handicraft and Tourism in Iran. Therefore the original item 7 which was "place and date of the 22nd joint meeting of the region" on the provisional agenda became item 8 on the agenda.

4. The provisional agenda was **adopted** with these modifications and the final agenda of the meeting is located on page 2.

COMMUNICATION OF THE CHAIRMAN

Agenda item 2 (document CSA/CAP/20/2)

5. **Thailand**, the Chairperson of the two Commissions expressed her gratitude to the Government of Japan for the excellent arrangements of the events and the warm hospitality extended to all participants. She also expressed satisfaction with the fact that Asia-Pacific region is considered one of the two best-performing regions in the world as far as tourism for 2007 was concerned. This in turn has pushed up investment in hotels, new tourism attractions and infrastructure. The hike in fuel prices has favoured demand for short haul trips resulting thus in increase in intra-regional tourism. She also made reference to a number of events taking place in the region including the 2008 summer Olympics in China, the ASEAN Tourism Investment Forum in the Philippines in July and the ASEAN Youth Tourism Summit in Indonesia in September. The Chairperson concluded with an expression of

gratitude to UNWTO for its continued support in the activities of the region including the recently completed sub-regional IMT-GT (Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand-Growth Triangle) project.

COMMUNICATION OF THE CO-CHAIRMAN

Agenda item 3 (document CSA/CAP/20/3)

6. **Iran, the Co-Chairman** of the joint Commission echoed the Chairman's satisfaction with the fact that tourism in Asia and the Pacific region had maintained a sound growth momentum in spite of unfavourable conditions affecting the economy, finance, energy, security, culture, health and the environment. In 2007, South Asia registered an 8 per cent growth over the previous year. Iran's contribution to this regional growth stems from a number of policies and activities including its visa upon arrival policy, the launching of low-cost carrier service, a buoyant economic situation, as well as the promotion of cultural heritage, pilgrimage and ecotourism in Asian and European markets. Iran is, however, suffering from shortage of rooms in its major metropolitan cities; and the government is taking measures to counteract the situation.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Agenda item 4 (document CSA/CAP/20/4)

7. The remarks of the Secretary-General began with the portrayal of the world crisis situation reflected in the weakening of the global economy, the turbulent real estate market crisis of USA (with repercussions on western stock market and emerging markets in especially Asia), the unprecedented rise in oil prices, the threat of terrorism, the avian flu scare and the prospect of global warming. With this gloomy outlook, it is understandable that many should look at the future with pessimism as our industry finds itself at the point of convergence of all these concerns.

8. However, all these negative factors notwithstanding, tourism in 2007 accelerated paradoxically. It registered a growth rate of 6.2%, which is higher than growth in the preceding years when world crisis situation was comparatively less alarming. These results go to confirm UNWTO's long-term forecasts that international tourism arrivals will reach 1.1 billion in 2010 and 1.6 billion in 2020. They also show that travel and tourism have become a deeply ingrained social phenomenon for which consumers are willing to make sacrifices at the cost of other needs if necessary. We have cause therefore to be less pessimistic about the future.

9. The outlook for 2008 will not reach the proportions of 2004-2007 for reasons already mentioned above. But in spite of the pessimistic views of OECD and the G8, the tourism industry will not collapse but continue growing albeit at a lower pace. In order not to be overtaken by events and to forestall potential consequences of the US economy entering a prolonged recessionary phase, UNWTO has commissioned a high-level expert to carry out a research into different foreseeable scenarios and their possible repercussions on travel and tourism. And should the unexpected occur with respect to situations such as the global economic turmoil or avian flu pandemic, we shall adjust our programme of activities in order to offer the necessary support our member States may need to tackle such an eventuality.

10. Climate change is another serious issue we should not lose sight of. The international community's concern about this was demonstrated through the organisation of the United Nations' Summit on the subject in Bali at the end of last year. UNWTO made its presence felt at this summit by reporting on its Davos Conference on Climate Change of last October as well as on the Ministerial Summit in London. Tourism accounts for 5% of greenhouse gas emissions and happens to be one of the first victims of global warming. The answer to this problem is not stopping travelling, given that it will be to the detriment of especially poor countries, communities and destinations that depend on tourism as their means of subsistence. But there is certainly the need to adopt serious measures to cut gas emissions.

11. As far as the financial situation of the Organization is concerned 2007 was a record year with respect to the receipt of member States' contributions as well as arrears. The surplus will be used to reinforce future programme of activities.

12. With regard to the composition of the Organization, 3 new countries (Montenegro, Tajikistan and Brunei Darussalam) joined during the last General Assembly to increase our number to 153 member countries. New Zealand and Norway are also giving serious consideration to becoming members of the Organization – a fact which could materialise by the end of the year.

13. The 17th General Assembly in Colombia was one of the Organization's main events in 2007. Other events that are worth mentioning include the World Tourism Conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; the Forum for Parliamentarians and Local Authorities in Hammamet, Tunisia; the Conference on Climate Change in Davos, Switzerland; and the Conference on Tourism, Inter-cultural Dialogue and Religions in Cordoba, Spain.

14. Events scheduled for 2008 are less in comparison with 2007 because our attention is centred more on the implementation of our programme of activities for 2008 and 2009. In addition to a number of events we have organised or have participated actively in, we are currently preparing for the Forum for Parliamentarians and Local Authorities, which is going to be held in Cebu, Philippines next October. Preparations for our major Conference on Statistics and Tourism Satellite Account scheduled to be held in March 2009 are already underway.

15. After the Secretary-General's remarks, there was a short interlude of questions and answers on the subject of **joining the Commission for South Asia and the Commission for East Asia and the Pacific into one**; and holding meetings between the Asia-Pacific commission and the Middle East, for example. **Iran** was the country that put forward these two proposals, the reason behind it being the enhancement of cooperation between the countries while facilitating exchanges of experiences for the good of tourism development in the Asia-Pacific region.

16. The Secretary-General responded by saying that the geographical distribution of the countries in the Organization is not the same as that of other UN institutions because they have been tailored according to their specific structural needs, and we are not under any obligation to copy them. The grouping of the countries of UNWTO into 5 sub-regions was handed down from IUOTO (International Union of Travel Organizations) the predecessor of the World Tourism Organization. The Secretary-General added that he is not opposed to the idea of joining the two commissions as long as it does not affect Asia's position on the Executive Council. However, the decision does not lie with him but with the two commissions themselves. If there is a general consensus, a recommendation will have to be presented to the General Assembly for approval at its next session.

17. The Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific added that it would be advisable to table discussions on the subject of joining the two commissions by devoting one agenda item to it at their 21st Meeting scheduled to take place in Iran in 2009. A paper for discussion could be prepared on the issue if necessary.

18. The Deputy Secretary-General concurred with the Secretary-General about the fact that different international organizations tend to have different groupings. For example, countries in the Middle East may form part of a European group and following discussions with Iran in Islamabad during the 19th Joint Meeting of the two commissions in April 2007, he has been exchanging ideas with the Secretary-General and the Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific about the subject in question. Two things need to be considered: the organizational structure of the two commissions which needs to follow a certain procedure, and enhancing cooperation between Asia and other regional commissions as suggested by Iran. With respect to the latter, UNWTO has already extended an invitation to countries in Asia to attend the commission meeting of the Middle East this year. The Secretary-General added that UNWTO systematically invites North African member countries to the meetings of the Commission for the Middle East because they happen to be interested in the work of this region.

19. However, as far as the structural change of the two commissions is concerned, the Deputy Secretary-General agreed with the Regional Representative that it become an item for discussion for the next joint meeting because we would need to prepare the necessary conditions and prepare a paper on the proposal. But there is the need for a clear message from the two commissions to give us reason to produce such a paper.

20. In response to this, **Sri Lanka** expresses the opinion that UNWTO should carry out in-depth study on the issue of joining the two commissions into one.

21. **Maldives** agrees with the recommendation of the Deputy Secretary-General and the Secretary-General about making a clear distinction between cooperation between regional commissions and structural changes. If there is going to be any re-structuring of the Organization, particularly in the area of regional groups, it should be a separate subject for discussion and UNWTO should seek the views of the governments concerned.

22. After the close of discussions on the joining of the two commissions and interaction with other commissions outside Asia, **Laos** expressed his appreciation of the growth experienced in the Asia-Pacific region. However, he also expressed his concern about problems such as the suffering of people in China and Myanmar in the aftermath of the earthquake, as well as oil and food price increases, and requested UNWTO's advice on how to cope with the situation.

23. The Secretary-General agreed that these are serious concerns. Sichuan Province of China (where the earthquake took place last May) is close to UNWTO's heart because it is the first province in Asia that UNWTO assisted in the formulation of a tourism development master plan at a provincial level. The provincial capital of Chengdu also happens to be one of China's three best tourism cities jointly nominated by the World Tourism Organization and China National Tourism Administration in 2007. And we will be pleased to assist Sichuan Province in the redevelopment of its tourism industry at the appropriate time in the near future.

24. With regard to the issue of food and oil crisis, the Secretary-General is of the opinion that it will not affect tourism. He made reference to the unfortunate incident of the tsunami of December 2004 after which UNWTO offered assistance to Thailand, Indonesia, Maldives and Sri Lanka – a gesture which was very much appreciated by these 4 countries. Recovery was very quick and there was almost no reflection of the tsunami on the tourism performance of these countries in 2005. Nor did it have any repercussions at regional or global level. The impact was limited to some parts of the coastal areas of these countries.

25. The food crisis is not directly related to tourism – an impression which was confirmed during the recent meeting of the Chief Executive Board of the UN. And looking back in time, it can be said that the epidemic of SARS in Asia in 2003 had much more and severe impact on tourism than the tsunami. This means that, we should be more concerned about staving off a pandemic of avian flu which could start from this region and the effect of which could be a multiplication of that of SARS. The Secretary-General's major preoccupation is thus with this health threat and the economic downturn.

26. The Secretary-General's answer to Laos' question was followed by **China's** overview of the earthquake that hit Sichuan Province last May. It was the most severe earthquake China had experienced. It was even more devastating than the one that shook Tangshan city in Hebei Province in 1976. Thousands of lives have been lost along with the loss of infrastructure and property. Many thousands of people are still missing. However, no foreign tourists have been affected, even though 53 domestic tourists have been found dead. As far as tourism is concerned, Sichuan Province has lost about 50 billion RMB.

27. China has received a lot of humanitarian aid and support from the international community and the Secretary-General of the United Nations (Mr. Ban Ki Moon) paid a visit to Sichuan to offer condolences on behalf of the UN and to assess the magnitude of the tragedy. The Secretary-General of UNWTO (Mr. Francesco Frangialli) sent a letter of condolence while similar expressions of sympathy were also received from many countries in the form of donations and the like. China expressed his heartfelt appreciation for the international community's support and confidence in the fact that this support coupled with the strong leadership of the Chinese Government will speed up recovery from the heavy losses inflicted by the earthquake.

**REGIONAL ACTIVITIES - PROGRESS REPORT ON ACTIVITIES OF THE ORGANIZATION IN
THE REGION**

Agenda item 5a (Document CSA/CAP/20/5a)

28. The Director of Programme and Coordination delivered the introduction of this agenda item by presenting a global picture of the implementation of UNWTO's programme of work for 2008-2009. This was approved by the General Assembly last November in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia.

29. Unlike 2007, the first few months of this year have been devoted to the delivery of services requested by member States. This includes 35 UNWTO events in all the sub-regions, 31 technical missions and 12 field missions undertaken by the Secretary-General, the Deputy Secretary-General and the Regional Representatives. In the field of technical cooperation or development assistance, 30 technical projects are currently underway including a few ST-EP related ones. Seven MDG (Millennium Development Goals) funded projects have started. With the aim of contributing to the

achievement of the MDG, this has been established by the Spanish Government in collaboration with UNDP for the assistance of a selected number of countries chosen by Spain. UNWTO is involved in 7 of these projects with the possibility of increasing this number to 9. UNWTO has also taken part in 45 non-UNWTO events organised by other UN Agencies, national governments, academic institutions or other entities.

30. The Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific welcomed the members of the two commissions while underlying and thanking them for the fact that the high-level representation among them indicates the importance their respective ministries attach to the meeting as well as their support of the work of the Regional Representation for Asia and the Pacific within the UNWTO Secretariat.

31. He then furnished the two commissions with the activities the Regional Representation for Asia and the Pacific has undertaken in the region since our commission meetings in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia (during the UNWTO's 17th General Assembly) and what has been planned for the immediate future.

32. The activities that have been carried out were grouped under three main headings: technical cooperation, conferences, seminars and workshops and regional cooperation. Under the first group of activities the Regional Representative highlighted UNWTO's continued assistance to countries in the implementation of Tourism Satellite Account at the national level. Three workshops have been held in Papua New Guinea, Vietnam and Brunei. With respect to China, UNWTO undertook a mission to inspect and evaluate a number of major hotels in Qingdao City (in Shandong Province), as part of the preparations for the Summer Olympic Games in Beijing in August. In addition to this, UNWTO carried out a mission to Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand within a sub-regional cooperation initiative of the 3 countries called IMT-GT project (Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand – Growth Triangle). The aim was to assess the tourism development potential of some designated areas in these three countries.

33. With respect to conferences, seminars and workshops, the Regional Representative spoke about the 2nd Executive Training Programme for Asia and the Pacific Senior Tourism Officials and the Workshop on Integrating Tourism into Adaptation to Climate Change in the Maldives; both of them were graciously hosted by the Maldives. The Executive Programme was organised with the financial support of the Government of the Republic of Korea. UNWTO also organised a special session on "Destination Branding Strategies" in collaboration with Korea Tourism Organization within the framework of the 2008 Korea Travel Conference which was held in Cheongju, in the Republic of Korea.

34. Apart from these, the Organization participated actively in a number of events including the International Mayor's Forum on Tourism in Zhengzhou, China; the 4th International Forum on Chinese Outbound Tourism in Beijing, China; the Inbound Tourism Seminar on Industrial Tourism in Nagoya, Japan; and the 2008 Tourism Futures National Conference in Gold Coast, Australia.

35. And in order to foster closer collaboration with other tourism-related international and regional organizations, UNWTO and UNESCO jointly organised the International Conference on Sustainable Tourism at World Heritage Sites in Huangshan, China. During the event, the Huangshan Declaration was adopted and Huangshan was designated the second UNWTO Sustainable Tourism Observatory. UNWTO also participated in the 11th Meeting of ASEAN Tourism Ministers in Bangkok, where an MOU was signed between the two organizations for collaboration in technical and research matters;

the 5th APEC Tourism Ministerial Meeting in Lima, Peru, and PATA CEO Challenge, also in Bangkok. In New Zealand UNWTO demonstrated its strong commitment to the subject of climate change by joining UNEP in its celebration of World Environment Day.

36. With regard to activities planned for the immediate future, mention was made of the *Seminar on Expansion of Tourism for Socio-Economic Development in India*, in Assam at the end of June. This is an initiative of UNWTO's Regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific in collaboration with UNESCAP. Members were especially encouraged to attend the forthcoming UNWTO Workshop on Developing Tourism Statistics and the Tourism Satellite Account which is scheduled to take place in Cebu, Philippines from 21-22 October 2008. It will be held in conjunction with the Sixth International Tourism Forum for Parliamentarians and Local Authorities (22-25 October 2008). Members were also informed that from next year onwards, UNWTO's Statistics department is going to embark on a capacity-building programme on tourism statistics in Asia. A special word of thanks was given to the Government of Australia which has agreed in principle that in the execution of this programme it would provide the technical input, while members were urged to consider hosting the various stages within this programme.

37. Another major event the Commission was informed about and invited to attend was the *Fifth UNWTO International Conference on Tourism Statistics* to be held in Bali, Indonesia in March 2009. It will be the first time that the subject of employment in tourism will become the main focus of a UNWTO conference at a global level. Thus, its importance to National Tourism Administrations and their tourism industries cannot be over-emphasised.

38. **Publications** which have been produced within the period under review include the three conference reports: International Conference on Tourism and Handicrafts and two reports on International Conference on Metropolitan Tourism (Shanghai and Busan versions). Other publications include *Tourism and Community Development: Asian Practices*, UNWTO Study on the Tourism Labour Market in Asia-Pacific region and UNWTO's quarterly Asia-Pacific Newsletters.

39. Before the Regional Representative ended his presentation, he proposed that following Iran's suggestion for close collaboration of the two commissions with other commissions, we could consider organising a sideline technical event between Asia and the Middle East during our next commission meetings in Iran in 2009. The subject could be on joint marketing and travel flow, and if successful, a similar meeting could be organised between Asia and Europe on another occasion.

40. He also reiterated UNWTO's commitment to the on-going recovery programme in Sichuan Province after the earthquake. China then informed the two commissions that the *First Forum on Metropolitan Destinations of Asia-Pacific region* co-sponsored by CNTA and Chengdu City will be held as planned. It will be organised within the framework of the recovery programme of the tourism industry of Sichuan Province.

41. The Secretary-General picked up on the subject of destinations and apprised the commissions of UNWTO's Centre of Excellence for Destinations. He visited Montreal (the headquarters of the Centre) recently to review the progress being made. The subject of destinations has been on UNWTO's agenda for a long time because in our world today, competition is more between destinations than countries. Our aim in setting up this Centre is to assist destinations in the enhancement of the quality of their services in the face of global competition. A group of Affiliate members, including the University of Montreal, Tourism Montreal, George Washington University and

National Geographic was instrumental in the proposal to set up this Centre of Excellence, which has the support of the Government of Canada and the Provincial Government of Quebec. First, we set up a Council on Destinations within our Affiliate membership which is an operational body supporting UNWTO's programme of work in the area of destination management.

42. We have also been working with a number of countries on the issue of destinations. One of such countries is China, with whom we collaborated in the selection of the best tourism Chinese cities. UNWTO sent its experts to China to formulate the criteria for selecting the three best tourism cities among 300 competing cities. Dalian, Hangzhou and Chengdu came out as the winners as they fully satisfied the basic requirements needed for the best tourism cities scheme.

43. With the progress made at the Centre of Excellence in Montreal, we have decided to experiment with a group of countries; and as far as Asia is concerned, China is our logical choice because of the experience accumulated from the best tourism cities scheme. But when the experimental phase is over, the programme will be open to all UNWTO members.

44. The main requirement for setting up a centre of excellence is to define an evaluation and measurement system that would encourage destinations to make progress in upgrading the quality of their products and services. We have been organising conferences on destination management and quality since 2004 and we intend to continue every year or two in order to review progress made. The most recent conference on the subject took place in Budapest, Hungary last year. The next one will be held in the City of Bordeaux, France, next September and Asia will be the venue for either the 2009 or 2010 session.

PRESENTATION ON ACTIVITIES OF UNWTO REGIONAL SUPPORT OFFICE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Agenda item 5b (Document CSA/CAP/20/5b)

45. The Chief of UNWTO Regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific based in Osaka, informed the Commission about the activities of the Office since our 17th General Assembly in Cartagena in November 2007. Last February, our Osaka Office organised the Japan World Heritage Wooden Structure Tourism Forum in Sydney in Australia. This forum focused on a comparison of world heritage wooden structures in Japan with stone constructions in Europe and the USA. Its aim was two-fold: to draw attention to world heritage wooden structures in Japan such as Himeji Castle and Horyuji Temple, and to the "wood culture" behind these structures; and to boost the number of Australian tourists to Japan through this activity.

46. In March this year, the First International Seminar on Industrial Tourism was held in Nagoya, one of the central areas of manufacturing in Japan. This seminar was jointly hosted for the first time by UNWTO and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism of Japan to discuss how to link industrial tourism with regional development and how to increase arrivals of international tourists through industrial tourism.

47. In collaboration with UNESCAP, as has been in previous years, the Office organised a seminar on enhancing the role of sustainable tourism for the socio-economic development of Asia-Pacific region in Assam, India, in June. Seminars on the same subject have already been held in Vietnam, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia and Bangladesh.

48. After the presentation made by the Chief of the Regional Support Office, Iran proposed that there be more field visits by the Office to the countries in the region as well as more decentralisation of the activities of the Organization. The Secretary-General responded by informing the Commissions that we tried the idea of having regional secretariats of UNWTO in the past. However, apart from financial constraints, it was not a productive move. We now have 4 major bodies under our umbrella: The Regional Support Office based in Osaka, (which was opened in mid 1990s to reinforce our presence and visibility in the region, after we had lost the membership of Australia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand towards the end of the 1980s); the ST-EP Foundation based in Seoul thanks to the support of the Republic of Korea (which is part of our global ST-EP initiative with the partnership of SNV, the French, Italian, and Thai Governments); the Themis Foundation in Andorra (which is maintained with the financial support of the Government of Andorra and is mainly for education, research and training); and recently, the Centre of Excellence for Destinations in Montreal (about which reference has already been made).

49. Given the size of the Secretariat and of the Organization, 4 representative bodies are considered a reasonable number. For this reason, it was decided during the 17th General Assembly in Cartagena to discontinue the opening of regional bodies of UNWTO. This, however, does not nullify the establishment of a focal point for a specific activity such as the Silk Road in Uzbekistan or Handicraft and Tourism which we intend to establish in Iran. The latter will be of a global nature and not just for Asia and the Pacific region.

UNWTO STUDY ON TOURISM LABOUR MARKET IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

Agenda item 5c (document CSA/CAP/20/5c)

50. The Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific gave the introduction to this item. He informed the two commissions that the study was done in collaboration with the Queensland University. This is the first phase of the study and it will lead to a final release during the 5th *UNWTO International Conference on Tourism statistics: Tourism, an Engine for Employment Creation*, scheduled to take place in Bali in March 2009. The study represents the Asian perspective of UNWTOs analyses on tourism and employment which is part of the global 5th International Conference. He also took advantage of this occasion to inform the commissions that the Secretariat intends to undertake other studies such as the Buddhist route in collaboration with South Asian countries; an overall review of Northeast Asia's tourism policies in association with China, Japan and Korea. Also, the findings on the conference on metropolitan tourism held here in Kobe in addition to the first two which took place in Shanghai and Busan are going to form the basis for a full-fledged study on metropolitan tourism in Asia.

51. After this introduction, the Chairman of the Education Council delivered his presentation. The aim of the study was to seek practical solutions and recommendations for the development of effective tourism labour policies across the Asia and Pacific region. It is based on the views of opinion leaders and people in the travel and tourism trade. Asia fits within a wider global tourism labour market, and tourism represents about 8 per cent of total world employment. Tourism is particularly advantageous as a development tool because of its labour-intensive nature and the labour force is highly mobile and flexible.

52. Asia has suffered a series of crisis such as natural disasters, and health scares (e.g. SARS), and this has caused the Asia-Pacific tourism labour market to undergo structural changes which has resulted in unemployment in certain areas including Bali after the bombings. There is also lower job security, low social welfare, less training and development, etc.

53. Tourism labour, though important, is not taken seriously. Skills and labour gaps are systematically producing a number of challenges. In Australia, the tourism labour market is losing labour to higher paid sectors; in China and India, there are labour shortages because of the booming demand for tourism. Globalisation is impacting the tourism industry which in turn is having an impact on competition for labour in the region. Technology is causing deskilling and the increased demand of the ageing population for more tourism is causing a decline in the labour force. There is more casual and temporary employment as well as high labour mobility and immigration.

54. With the foregoing challenges, the study recommends that there be a shift from the employee “cost” approach to an “assets” strategy for labour management deserving investment. This can be done through increase in flexibility of the workforce; increase in performance management systems for labour in tourism; recognition of good performance through monetary compensations; communicating with staff on regular basis; providing access to learning and development; and empowering staff to take decisions.

55. The study also recommends sustainable approach to tourism employment with respect to occupational structures, human resource practices, immigration policies and labour market strategies.

56. After the presentation, the Director of Programme and Coordination informed the two commissions that UNWTO is carrying out a survey on employment issues among governments, and its results will be presented at *UNWTO's 5th International Conference on Tourism Statistics* to be held in Bali in March next year.

57. **Maldives** commented that they had recently conducted a similar study on labour issues which concurred with the findings of the labour study; thus they will support and cooperate with UNWTO in the implementation of the recommendations of the study.

58. The Deputy Secretary-General informed the commissions that UNWTO has agreed with the Government of Maldives to undertake a mission in the country to study the implication of the tourism industry on the labour market as well as the social impacts of tourism. The Commissions also learnt that UNWTO has signed a draft agreement with ILO which will be signed in the near future. This agreement does not only focus on jobs but also on the quality of these jobs because it is important to ensure that the perception of jobs in the tourism industry conforms to international standards. Women according to ILO occupy more than 60 per cent of the workforce in the tourism sector. However, what kind of jobs they are, what qualifications are required and what is the quality of these jobs remain essential elements to look into.

59. **Hong Kong** sought clarification of the point made in the presentation on the labour study about “Regional Strategic Approach”. And the explanation given was that a number of opinion leaders came up with the idea that some countries in the region are facing the same problem. This makes it a problem of a regional nature requiring regional coordination for a solution on regional basis. This forms the next phase of the study in terms of working out the strategies required to solve the problems identified.

60. **India** said that they understand that the study is a provisional report containing an overview of the subject based on data received from a second source. However, they request an interaction with governments and stakeholders of the trade in order to have more updated information since the scenario is changing constantly. Manpower shortage and requirements are important issues to India and they have sought UNWTO's assistance in this regard.

61. The Regional Representative reiterated that the study was only a first phase and stock-taking exercise and requested that delegates send the report to their authorities for comments to enable us to finalise this stock-taking phase, which will then take us to step number 2 – the formulation of strategies.

62. **Bangladesh's** request was for the development of capacity-building and training, while **Malaysia** said that its skilled labour, after acquiring some years of experience, tends to immigrate to neighbouring countries that offer higher wages. The report, however, does not mention this and it does not reflect the actual labour situation of the country. They will send detailed comments after reading it thoroughly.

63. The Secretary-General concluded the discussions on this item of the agenda by making the following comments: the various interventions and comments being made about the study go to prove the importance of the subject. Tourism is one of the sectors of the world economy with a maximum capacity for generating jobs in general and also for women, young people, as well as disadvantaged groups in remote and rural areas. There are three major points to take into consideration:

64. With regard to the conference to be organised in Bali, the theme of employment will be one of the main issues to be discussed. The subject was broached in Iguazu (Argentina) during the last international conference on tourism and statistics, but there is the need for progress.

65. The first point to consider is the measurement of jobs in the tourism sector. It is a complex exercise; it is even more complicated than calculating international tourist arrivals, number of rooms or income. Many of these jobs are generated from indirect but related sectors such as agriculture, handicraft, construction, restaurants etc.

66. **Seasonality:** the duration of many of the jobs varies from just a few months, to weeks or days and some of them are from the informal sector; this makes measuring the volume of the jobs a very complicated task. Therefore, it is very important not to jump to conclusions and not to announce at this stage that tourism represents so many millions of jobs in the world or in Asia. We need to build on methodology which is one of the aims of the Bali conference and which is coherent and compatible with the tourism satellite account.

67. The second point relates to the quality of these jobs under the terminology and expression - *decent work*. If a person has an unqualified job at MacDonal'd's, it may be qualified as indecent. The concept of *decent work* is subject to more in-depth debate.

68. The third point, which both Maldives and Bangladesh have already mentioned is what we can do to improve the level of qualification, the structure of the labour market, address the theme of immigration and what is the role of the national tourism administrations (NTAs) in education and

training. Many of these administrations have no competence in this subject, either because it is under another ministry or managed by local authorities. The subject of immigration is an equally complex one. It is not possible to build special immigration rules for tourism; it forms part of the general immigration policies of a country.

69. With reference to the foregoing, Maldives is a success story. At the beginning its tourism depended on foreign workforce. This has allowed them to build the country's tourism industry smoothly, with less negative impacts on the lives of the traditional community. The shock of tourism development was softened by the fact that the workforce was imported. Social problems cropped up later, but Maldives has a full Ministry in charge of tourism to tackle these problems and that of the labour market which is not the same for other countries.

70. In response to Bangladesh's request the Secretary-General said that our mission in education and training should be to help NTAs in their capacity-building process for the attainment of competence in this subject. And if UNWTO has set up the TEDQUAL mechanism for universities in recognition of quality education in these establishments, under the umbrella of the national tourism administration, it is to give NTAs a role and to enable them to be more active in the subject of education and training. All these issues are complex, but as has already been mentioned earlier, this is just phase one; many things have to be worked out in order to arrive at the conference in Bali with better instrument of measurement of the volume of employment in line with the methodology of the tourism satellite account.

71. We need to define a policy to impose a level of qualification, be it for decent or indecent work; issues related to capacity-building in the labour market structure, immigration policy, training and education policies should be approached in a realistic manner taking into account the limitation of the competence of the NTAs and the fact that these are problems much broader than the role of the NTAs.

72. **Thailand** comments that the subject of labour market, upgrading skills and standards of tourism services should be on the region's agenda because of their importance to the Asia-Pacific region. Within the ASEAN framework, there is an agreement about mobility of work in ASEAN countries which will come into force in 2010. As part of the agreement UNWTO has signed with ASEAN, the latter would like to feature its development of international standards, measures and training in phase number two of UNWTO's labour study. It will have a special emphasis on the liberalisation of tourism services. ASEAN will also share its experience in the harmonisation of competences and qualifications across the 10 member countries of the Association.

73. According to the Chairman of the Education Council, ASEAN has been working on this issue of harmonisation for the past 5 years. It has been a real challenge, given the wide differences in economic development between the countries. The objective has been achieved and the next step is the signing of a mutual recognition arrangement for tourism qualifications across ASEAN to ensure that labour can move freely in the tourism sense. It will be an even greater challenge to apply this harmonisation of qualifications to the whole region, but it is not impossible.

BRIEF INTERVENTION ON SNV-UNWTO COLLABORATION ON ST-EP IN THE REGION

Agenda item 5d (document CSA/CAP/20/5d)

74. The Director of Programme and Coordination gave the introduction to this agenda item. He recalled that the ST-EP programme was launched in 2002 in Johannesburg at the World Summit on Sustainable Development. It is an initiative that materialised in 2004 when UNWTO started to field missions to identify potential projects that could help in alleviating poverty. We began to receive support from various organizations including SNV in the Netherlands and the Government of the Republic of Korea which offered to host the ST-EP Foundation in Seoul. We have also received the financial support of the Governments of Italy, Thailand, France and Macao, China and this has enabled us to make substantial progress in the projects we are implementing.

75. A point that the Director of Programme and Coordination emphasised was that as a result of UNWTO's awareness-raising activities in relation to the ST-EP programme, many organizations the world over including NGOs, UN and non-UN Organizations and bilateral agencies, are taking initiatives and undertaking projects on sustainable tourism for the eradication of poverty using ST-EP principles, and applying the know-how we have developed since the launching of the ST-EP initiative. This was part of UNWTO's objective to mobilise other institutions to work in the same direction. We also have a pending issue of raising additional funds and mobilising additional resources in order to expand the ST-EP programme to enable us to assist more countries with this initiative.

76. The Representative of SNV delivered his presentation after the introduction to this item. It was an overview of SNV's recent partnership with UNWTO in relation to the ST-EP initiative (2004-2007) and planned activities from 2008-2010. The two Organizations were drawn to each other in 2004 because they shared (and continue to share) common policies about sustainable tourism and poverty alleviation. In our partnership, our focus has been on capacity-building, research and publications as well as dissemination of information and awareness-raising about the ST-EP programme.

77. The first MOU we signed was based on poverty reduction, formulating the right policies, awareness-raising about sustainable tourism as an engine for poverty alleviation and socio-economic growth, fostering coordination and cooperation in the tourism sector, monitoring and evaluation of the impacts of tourism development on poverty alleviation and local economic growth.

78. Between 2004 and 2007, several identification missions took place, a number of projects were implemented, and strategies were formulated. In Asia-Pacific region, some examples of projects include the Tourism Planning and Promotion for the Viengxay Caves and Capacity-building in conservation planning and management in the Viengxay District (Laos); development of handicraft village in Hatay Province (Vietnam); and the Mekong Discovery Trail in the northeast of Cambodia.

79. An evaluation of the first phase of our partnership was carried out in August 2007: 50 projects have been implemented since 2004, many of which were focused on outputs and outcomes. It came to light that the impact on the beneficiaries (the poor people) was not enough. The decision was thus taken to move beyond community-based tourism and focus on direct employment and supply chain to the regular tourism industry. This partnership has made us see how much UNWTO and SNV complement each other. The decision was then taken to strengthen ties with the ST-EP Foundation.

80. The success of the initial cooperation between UNWTO, SNV and the ST-EP Foundation led to the signing of a Letter of Intent during the UNWTO General Assembly in November 2007, followed by an MOU expressing a collective desire to strengthen cooperation in the fight against poverty through joint sustainable tourism initiatives.

81. With this tripartite partnership covering the period 2008-2010, we are aiming at having a direct impact on 20,000-25,000 households in the next three years. It will focus on the 7 mechanisms of poverty reduction identified by UNWTO. Currently, there are 16 project packages focused on impact management, knowledge management, government policy formulation, and especially capacity strengthening of the projects. And there are SNV advisors that are acting as UNWTO/ST-EP representatives in countries SNV is working.

82. In the Asia-Pacific region, 2 project packages have been identified: the Mekong Discovery Trail, which is currently at phase 3 – the implementation of the programme (phases 1 and 2 centred on feasibility studies and identification of activities); and the Great Himalaya Trail in Nepal. This is a pilot project in the western part of the country.

83. After SNV's presentation, a representative of **Iran** requested that similar projects be undertaken in his country. The response of the Secretariat was affirmative in principle, pending discussions on areas and parts of the country planned for the ST-EP programme. The Secretariat also sought clarification on the source of funding Iran is counting on. The reason is that during the next meeting of the Board of Directors of the ST-EP Foundation, a number of candidate projects that have already been identified will be considered for funding. SNV has its own list of countries where it provides financial support for pro-poor projects; and with regard to the Italian Government, its funds are meant for projects it has selected in two regions in the world – West Africa and Central America. The projects Iran has in mind will thus have to be undertaken with additional source of funding from the country itself or elsewhere.

84. The Secretary-General made further comments on the foregoing. He said that the Board of Directors of the ST-EP Foundation has agreed that as far as funding of ST-EP projects are concerned, priority is to be given, in principle, to least developing countries. However, there is some flexibility and exceptions are made for projects in very poor areas of countries with middle-level income.

85. When the four regional coordinators of ST-EP were reduced to one, it was decided that Asia did not need a specific regional coordinator since SNV is present in some countries in Asia and would be able to represent UNWTO. It has also been decided that there is no need to review what has been done in the past but rather to draw lessons from that and to improve on the methodology around the concept of the supply chain; i.e. to look at the direct impact of tourism and of tourism-related sectors on the community.

86. At the beginning we were more focused on rural communities but our next target for ST-EP projects is small developing islands in the Pacific area. We know that the island of the Maldives is no longer on the list of least developed countries because of tourism development.

87. **Iran** made an additional request. The country has formed a National Committee of Ecotourism made up of 3 organisations under the President of Iran: the Environment Protection Organization, ICHTO (Iran Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organisation) and the Management and

Planning Organisation. They have completed the first phase of the Master Plan for Ecotourism. In addition to that, Iran has many other projects for which it needs UNWTO's technical advice.

88. The Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific then informed the commissions about another project being launched in Guizhou Province of China. The uniqueness of this project stems from the fact that it is being funded from resources that do not come from the ST-EP Foundation but from a Chinese industrial partner called Tsingtao Brewery Ltd. The fund will be used to support 7 villages through micro-financing, to produce handicrafts for sale to tourists. This has been achieved through the facilitation of CNTA (China National Tourism Administration) and UNWTO.

89. **Bangladesh** gave more information on micro-financing in relation to the development and expansion of tourism in the country. Micro-financing is known to have evolved from Bangladesh. This has helped to bring about organisations that produce and market handicrafts. About 90% of the international tourists that visit Bangladesh buy these products. Micro-financing is thus helping in the socio-economic well-being of the poor as well as the development of tourism.

90. The Deputy Secretary-General concluded the discussions on UNWTO-SNV collaboration on ST-EP with the following: to date UNWTO has dealt with ST-EP from a technical perspective in the form of capacity-building, technical know-how and some experience in product implementation. The other aspect, i.e. financial support is not within our possibilities. However, without marrying the two elements – technical know-how and financial support in the form of micro-financing for which Bangladesh is well-known, we will not be able to tackle the issue of impact on the ground in a meaningful and realistic manner.

91. That was the whole idea behind the ST-EP Foundation, which was launched in 2002 in Johannesburg but did not take full-fledged legal shape until the 16th General Assembly in Senegal in 2005. It is imperative therefore to recognise the fact that we are still at the initial stages. Tourism and UNWTO will not be able to solve the problem of poverty in the world, even though we are making our contribution along those lines.

92. Through our partnership with SNV we have accumulated a good body of knowledge and experience. We entered this partnership from different angles: SNV is more into capacity-building and enabling local communities to stand on their own feet, but UNWTO's focus is tourism. The partnership between us started even before the ST-EP Foundation took form, but UNWTO was the one that took the decision to strengthen the ST-EP Foundation and consolidate all the ST-EP-related activities we carry out at the Secretariat under the umbrella of the Foundation. This gave birth to the tripartite partnership aimed at the further reinforcement of the ST-EP Foundation. The time has now come for us to build more partnerships because neither UNWTO, nor SNV nor the ST-EP Foundation is a funding agency. We came together because we have a mandate that binds us together.

93. From the discussions about ST-EP, it has become clear that now that we have the experience and a number of projects which prove and show what we are capable of doing, the time is ripe for us to attract world funding bodies. It is very obvious that we are at the very beginning of the ST-EP initiative; we are still in the learning process even in the technical sense.

94. But from the signals being received from China, Japan and comments from the floor, the Deputy Secretary-General proposed that possibly, the way forward could be to consider the ST-EP programme from a regional perspective, for example ST-EP Asia. However, currently, given the

limited funds at our disposal as well as limited capacities in terms of manpower, we need to tailor our agenda to our possibilities.

COUNTRY REPORTS ON TOURISM PERFORMANCE IN 2007

Agenda item 5e (documents CSA/CAP/20/5e)

95. The format for presenting this agenda item, which was introduced by the Secretariat 2 years ago, was modified. Instead of having presentations made by individual countries, (which from previous experience has been a time-consuming exercise), it took the form of interactive discussions of a few major topics of mutual interest. These included the factor(s) that determined the tourism performance of countries during 2007; important tourism policies made specifically for 2007/2008; how certain countries are managing the high inbound tourism growth; specific policy measures of interest to other members; success stories related to destination marketing; how certain countries have achieved a balanced market segmentation with respect to long haul vs. short haul; actions countries are taking about climate change in line with the UNWTO recommendations reflected in the Davos Declaration; successful case studies about tourism and poverty reduction and any economic and social indicators that can be used to prove this success.

96. The following is a summary of the contributions made by the countries represented in the interactive discussions:

Australia: Australia has had only 2% growth in inbound tourism for several years. The main reason for this is the appreciation of the Australian dollar. This has masked some trends in individual markets: while there is more than 10% decline in the number of Japanese travellers, there is a high growth from the Indian and Chinese markets. Other factors include the rise in low cost carriers in the region, popularity of short haul trips and competition with outbound markets of Thailand and Vietnam not just for attracting international tourists but also the domestic market of Australia, given that sometimes it is cheaper to go abroad (especially to New Zealand and close destinations in Asia) than to travel to some parts of Australia. Domestic tourism accounts for 75% of Australia's tourism. Apart from competition from other markets, the high rise in fuel is another factor which has been militating against its growth these last few years. Australia's forecast for both inbound and domestic tourism has been higher than actual performance. However, it is expected that growth will increase between 4 and 5 per cent in the next few years.

India: India has been enjoying double-digit growth for the past 4-5 years. In 2007, it recorded a 13% growth in international tourist arrivals. Foreign exchange earnings also registered a growth of 33% to reach USD 11.6 billion. The first four months of 2008 have seen a continuation of the double-digit phenomenon. Domestic tourism is the weight behind the country's tourism success. It accounts for two-thirds of India's economic resources.

Both inbound and domestic tourism in India have been on the rise for the past 5 years since the "Incredible India" campaign began in 2002. State governments in India are strong supporters of this campaign and are using it to promote their destinations. Other factors attributable to India's tourism buoyancy are its open sky policies and modernisation of its airports. However, one of the bottlenecks of India's tourism expansion is the high rates of hotel accommodation – an issue the government is taking measures to rectify. Land is being made available at reasonable prices not just in metropolitan areas but also in other cities and towns; Budget accommodation is being developed in urban areas

and homestay facilities are also being provided in places such as Kerela. This is part of a rural tourism project co-funded by the government of India and UNDP. Further initiatives are underway to ensure that the double-digit growth rate continues for many years to come.

China: Great losses have been suffered by the tourism industry on the whole but especially that of Sichuan Province as a result of the earthquake. The Provinces of Shanxi and Gansu were also affected by the earthquake. In terms of inbound tourism, long-haul markets will be very much affected as itineraries are nation-wide based. With respect to short haul markets, especially from neighbouring countries, their itineraries are largely region-focused; they can thus visit other parts that have not been affected.

As far as the recovery programme is concerned, CNTA has despatched expert groups to Sichuan to assess the situation. Several meetings have also been held to discuss tourism recovery plan in the earthquake-affected areas and China as a whole as well as the re-building of the tourism industry of Sichuan. CNTA is also revisiting the growth rate for inbound, outbound and domestic tourism as it is currently going down. China foresees great challenges ahead and is bracing itself for them.

Sri Lanka: The overall tourist arrivals for the year 2007 decreased by 11.7% to 494,008 from 559,603 in 2006. Travel advisories issued by major tourist originating countries and the unhealthy security situation caused this decline. Total tourism earnings in 2007 recorded was US\$ 384.4 million, i.e. 0.2% less than that of the previous year. The number of Western European tourists, which is the country's traditional arrivals, declined its share from 40.8% in 2006 to 39.4 in 2007. While, India retained its position as the premiere tourist generating market to Sri Lanka, the ratio of South Asian tourists remained the same 30.0% in 2007 as against 2006. Russia and Middle East have emerged as Sri Lanka's new tourism generating markets.

Sri Lanka's long term primary objective is to reach a visitor target of 2 million tourist arrivals by 2016. With an improvement in the security situation and carrying capacity considerations, this target may be revised accordingly. In its future growth, Sri Lanka Tourism will place a premium on the yield from international tourism rather than the volume of tourist numbers to be generated. This would make tourism the third largest foreign exchange earner of the country.

Laos: Inbound tourism grew to 34% in 2007 registering 1.6 million arrivals. Thirty per cent of this number is long-haul and 70% is from the region led by Thailand. The promotion of ASEAN as a single destination is one important factor contributing to the growth in Laos' tourism. Poverty reduction programme and community-based tourism are key elements in Laos' tourism policies. The country is currently carrying out community-based ecotourism projects in 4 provinces with a loan from ADB (Asian Development Bank). UNWTO has also provided Laos technical assistance in the formulation of tourism law, a Master plan for Viengxay and a ST-EP project in the southern part of the country.

Republic of Korea: The size of Korea's tourism market has expanded substantially for the past four to five years. However, increase in arrivals in 2007 as compared to that of the previous year was very minimal. Outbound tourism exceeded visitor arrivals in the country in 2007 increasing by 15% in comparison with 2006 and +50% if the period is stretched to 2003. Consequently, tourism deficits increased from USD 3.8 billion in 2004 to more than USD 10 billion in 2007; and this is a record high negative in the balance of payment of Korea's tourism sector.

Among the factors that have contributed to this negative performance are the high currency exchange rate and a consistent slowdown in the number of arrivals from Japan – Korea's largest source market. (-3 to -4 per cent for the past four to five years). Nevertheless, Korea foresees a bright future for its tourism. Even though it does not expect much from China this year because of the earthquake, it is more hopeful about Japan because the number of Japanese travellers is increasing. Korea successfully launched its *Korea Sparkling* branding campaign in 2007 which is meant to last for three years. This campaign is intended to help the country to get a worldwide recognition for its branding and to promote Korea as a fresh and new destination.

Indonesia: Indonesia received 5.1 million international tourists in 1997 in the midst of economic crisis. Bali was attacked in 2002 and 2004 and Indonesia was also one of the tsunami victims of the end of 2004. International tourist arrivals reached 5.5m in 2007 – the highest number ever since Indonesia began to develop tourism. It is targeting 7 million tourists in 2008. From January to March it experienced a 15% increase in its inbound numbers compared to the same period in 2007.

In 2005, 17 ministries and 4 government agencies were instructed by the President of Indonesia to get involved in the tourism industry. This required a lot of cooperation and coordination exercises among so many sectors in the development of tourism. This was followed in 2006 by a decree of the President to set up a national scheme to enhance export and investment in Indonesia. The President's instruction and decree helped to speed up the development of tourism in Indonesia. The country's new Investment Law Article 25 which includes tourism, welcomes foreign direct investment. This is 100% owned by the investors and they are mainly investment ventures in 3-5 star hotels, tourism resorts, convention buildings and facilities as well information and consultancy enterprises. Also, Indonesia allows up to 15% foreign capital for joint-venture investment.

Bangladesh: After two consecutive bleak years (2005 and 2006) the tourism industry in Bangladesh reported unprecedented growth in terms of visitor arrivals in the country. International tourist arrivals in 2007 were 289,110, representing a substantial growth of 44.33% over the previous year's total of 200,311. Bangladesh obtained the Approved Destination Status (ADS) of the People's Republic of China in 2006. Consequently, Chinese tourist arrivals increased by 82% compared to 2006. Favourable law and order as well as peaceful political atmosphere can be attributed to this tremendous growth in tourist arrivals. However, tourism earnings did not follow this trend. Foreign exchange earnings from tourism in 2007 registered negative growth of 4.80% over that of 2006, contributing 76.40 million US\$ to the country's economy.

Domestic tourism continued to show a steady upward turn. The domestic market continues to take full advantage of the two-day weekend, which has led to higher occupancies at all private and public sector accommodation units. Hotels and motels operated by Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC) recorded average annual occupancy rate of 42.31% in 2007. This is in fact a slight decline from what was achieved in 2006.

In 2007, the government emphasized the promotion of the tourism industry by encouraging the private sector to invest in tourism. The Government has thus incorporated in the Industrial Policy-2005 some specific provisions permitting the leasing of many commercial outlets, hotels and restaurants of Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (the National Tourism Organization) to the private sector on management contract. BPC's vacant lands are also being leased out to private sector investors to establish tourist facilities on Build Operate and Transfer (BOT) basis. Through this process, local community participation is ensured and this plays a vital role in the poverty reduction

strategy of the country. In order to have a controlled and planned tourism industry mainly in the private sector, the government has taken the initiative in enacting the 'Bangladesh Tourism Ordinance-2008'.

Pakistan: Pakistan targeted 1 million inbound tourists in 2007, however owing to adverse circumstances it registered 839,500 tourists with a negative growth of 6.6% in comparison with 898,400 recorded in 2006. In spite of this downturn in arrivals, international tourist receipts showed an increase of 6.2%. Given that the number of domestic tourists recorded was 44.5 million, Pakistan has decided to make domestic tourism the base upon which it is going to build its international tourism. Among the measures the government is taking to promote domestic tourism is the creation of a more conducive investment environment to encourage the private sector's involvement in this. In addition to this, the government is granting visa upon arrival to 24 countries to boost international tourism.

Japan: Japan is making significant efforts to expand international exchanges, and is striving to increase its numbers for both inbound and outbound tourism. For the inbound tourism, Japan has been promoting the *Visit Japan Campaign* since 2003. This is a joint project between the public and private sectors, with the target of receiving 10 million foreign tourists by the year 2010. As a result, the number of inbound travellers has been increasing continuously since 2003. In 2007, Japan received 8,346,969 inbound travellers -- an increase of 1,012,892, or 14%, from the previous year. If we compare the figures of 2007 with those of 2003, when the Visit Japan Campaign was first launched, the number of inbound travellers has increased by 60% between the two periods.

Asia and the Pacific markets are Japan's major source. The top three markets are the Republic of Korea, Taiwan and China. Comparing the number of inbound tourists to Japan from these markets in 2003 and 2007, Koreans increased from 1,459,333 to 2,600,694, (+78%); Taiwan increased from 785,379 to 1,385,25 (+76%); and the Chinese increased from 448,782 to 942,439, (+110%). Other markets in Asia and the Pacific region also showed rapid growth rate during the same period. For example, tourists from Thailand increased by 109% and those from Singapore increased by 97%.

Building a "Japan Tourism" is at the core of the government's policy for the 21st century. In this regard, the Cabinet approved the Basic Plan to Promote "Japan Tourism" in June 2007. The plan provides concrete goals and policy measures to make Japan a "tourism nation", including an inbound tourism target of receiving 10 million international tourists by 2010, and an outbound tourism target of 20 million by 2010.

In order to reinforce these efforts, it was decided that a new Tourism Agency responsible for developing tourism be established in the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism in October 2008. Japan intends to become a "tourism nation" by promoting comprehensive and systematic policy measures under the leadership of this new Tourism Agency.

Macao, China: Macao's tourism industry achieved record-breaking results in 2007. It welcomed 26,992,995 visitors, registering a growth of 22.7% over 2006. The rising economic importance of the tourism industry can be seen from the growth over the years. The expansion of the tourism industry has been fuelled by the growing number of new hotels, resorts and entertainment complexes. Since the Handover in 1999, total visitor arrivals have increased rapidly from approximately 7.5 million in 1999 to 26.99 million in 2007, thanks to the strong support of the Central Government of China and the hard work of the travel and tourism sector.

Among Macao's top 10 major generating markets, Mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia and Japan continue to be the top five. In 2007, Mainland China continued to be Macao's leading source market (14.87 million) with a growth of 55% in comparison with 2006. There has also been strong growth in the tourist numbers from Malaysia (+98.3%), Thailand (+57.4%), Singapore (+50.2%) and the Philippines (+45.4%) due to direct access. A look at the sub-regions shows that in 2007, visitor arrivals from East Asia grew by 20.5% over 2006. Arrivals from South and Southeast Asia surged to 69.2% more than in the previous year confirming the region's position as Macao's, second largest source market. Among the long-haul markets, the Americas took the lead with an increase of 39.5% compared with 2006, followed by Europe (+34.7%), Oceania, Middle East and Africa.

In 2007, the number of tourist arrivals that Macao received (i.e. 27 million approximately) amounted to over 50 times the size of the population. And in order to face this challenge of large numbers of tourists, significant investment is being made by both the government and the private sector in tourism infrastructure; however, there is the need to strengthen the partnership with local stakeholders and at the same time update the regulation framework for tourism on regular basis. Another measure being taken by the government is the commissioning of a carrying capacity study with the aim to strike a balance between the population's quality of life and visitors' expectations.

Hong Kong, China: With the concerted efforts of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTb), the travel trade and the community at large as well as favourable source market conditions, Hong Kong's tourism industry continued to grow steadily in 2007. It received over 28 million tourist arrivals. The growth in arrivals in 2007 was attributed to favourable exchange rates, increase in flight capacity and Hong Kong's improved hotel room supply, which increased by around 9% to 51,506 rooms by the year's end.

Among the source markets, Mainland China continued to be the leading source market, with arrivals increasing by a double-digit 13.9%. The growth momentum was especially apparent in the second half of 2007, following extensive media exposure and publicity for the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. The continuous expansion of the consumption visit segment, especially from the Guangdong province of China, was also a key driver of growth. As for the international markets, the growth spread across both short and long-haul market regions, with double-digit increases of 14.2% and 13.4% recorded in the region of Europe, Africa and the Middle East and in Australia, New Zealand and South Pacific respectively. The high-potential markets of the Republic of Korea and the Philippines, as well as the emerging markets of Russia and the Middle East, also performed strongly, with arrivals increasing by 21.9%, 21.8%, 12.8% and 23.7% respectively.

Hong Kong's main strategy in the management of high growth rate in tourist arrivals lies in investment in both hardware and software infrastructure. Over the past few years, Hong Kong has invested over HK\$30 billion in developing new and upgrading existing tourism attractions. Notably, the opening of Hong Kong Disneyland in September 2005 is helping to position Hong Kong as a premier destination for family tourism. A number of major tourist attractions were opened in 2006, including the Hong Kong Wetland Park and the Ngong Ping 360 Cable Car. Other important attractions include the nightly Symphony of Lights, which has been awarded the world's "Largest Permanent Light and Sound Show" by Guinness World Records. In the next five years, the total investments from both the Government and the private sector in key tourism facilities will amount to HK\$10 billion. These

include redevelopment of the popular Ocean Park into a world-class theme park, featuring some 70 attractions (at present it has 35 attractions) and the development of a new cruise terminal to enable Hong Kong to tap into the booming cruise industry.

With respect to software, Hong Kong will step up the training of its tourism officials; enhance its cooperation with the Mainland China, both in attracting more visitors to Hong Kong and leveraging the rich tourism resources in the Mainland to promote multi-destination itineraries. Hong Kong will continue to focus on the high yield market segments by reinforcing its image as an international convention and exhibition hub. In the 2008-09 Budget, an additional HK\$150 million has been earmarked for HKTB to set up "Meetings and Exhibitions Hong Kong" (MEHK) in order to raise Hong Kong's MICE profile in the next five years through global publicity. HKTB will also continue to promote Hong Kong worldwide by adopting a targeted and focused approach and tailoring strategies to the conditions prevailing in each market. The Olympics Games in Beijing in August 2008, along with the Equestrian Events to be held in Hong Kong, will give Hong Kong a very good opportunity to showcase its international cosmopolitan image and diverse tourism appeal.

Maldives: Maldives began to develop its tourism industry 35 years ago as a long-haul destination bringing in tourists on charter flights from Europe. The country took advantage of its many islands to develop each island as a self-contained resort. Maldives' approach to tourism development has been in an integrated and holistic manner and this underlies the secret to managing the receipt of about 700,000 international tourists annually which is more than twice the size of its population. At the very early stages, the government realized the importance of planning the tourism industry; for this reason two master plans have already been formulated and a third one is currently underway. The plans focused on the expansion of the tourism industry, what kind of hotels to build and of which categories; and in order to ensure that development is done in an environmentally sustainable manner, the government enacted the tourism act and the environmental act.

Maldives' sustainable tourism development policy is an overarching policy with a focus on the protection of the environment delimiting building areas, the beach front, the banning of sand and pearl mining etc. With such measures, the government has been able to maintain the standards and services offered at the resorts as well as their physical development in order to ensure that it fits into the overall tourism development plan of the country. The private sector and foreign capital are behind the development of the resorts. There are no corporate taxes or taxes on profits, and repatriation of profits has been the government's incentive for major foreign investors. For marketing purposes, the government and the private sector joined hands to form Maldives Tourism Promotion Board. Together, they have created a single branding with the message "Maldives, the sunny side of life".

As far as impacts of tourism are concerned, there are several factors to consider: Maldives' dependence on tourism is extremely high, therefore, the overall national planning process has been geared towards tourism be it in terms of infrastructure, security, or import duty policies. The government has always tried to raise public awareness about the importance of tourism, and the protection of the environment. Other economic activities or industries have been stifled as a result of the remarkable success of tourism in the Maldives and 10 domestic airports are currently under construction to ensure that the benefits of tourism spreads to the entire population. To further bring tourism closer to the people in a way that will be for their direct benefit, a tourism corporation – a joint venture between the government and the private sector – was launched two years ago with the government holding 45% shares. This is the first instance in the tourism history of the Maldives where the government has become a shareholder in a tourism enterprise. The idea behind this

venture is to bring as many Maldivians as possible into the corporation as direct shareholders in tourism. There are 22,000 of them to date.

However, there are adverse factors that cannot be overlooked. The gap between the rich and the poor is wider. Maldivians working at the resorts feel like expatriates on their own land, given that they spend a greater part of their time away from their families and communities; consequently many children grow up without the presence of their fathers and this brings about concomitant social ills.

Maldives now finds itself at a stage where the demand for further economic development and public expectation for an economically developed country is pushing the government to further expand tourism to all the atolls and release more resorts. There are 92 world class resorts with 64 new ones under construction (in addition to 10 domestic airports).

Malaysia: *Malaysia Truly Asia* campaign was initiated just after the Asian Financial Crises. Tourist arrivals were at their lowest point (5.5 million) at that time. The campaign's recognizable sing-song coupled with the fact that Malaysia is a multi-cultural and multi-racial destination which represents the diversity of Asia as a whole, has proved to be a very good selling point for the past 9 years.

However, Malaysia's destination marketing strategy is best represented by its Visit Malaysia Year campaign of 2007 which succeeded in raising international tourist arrivals from 17.5 million of 2006 to 21 million in 2007. Tourist receipts also experienced an increase of USD 3 billion in comparison with the previous year. Many factors contributed to the success of this campaign. Visit Malaysia Year coincided with the country's celebration of the 50th anniversary of its nationhood and the theme of the campaign – *One Golden Celebration* was very apt. A song was commissioned about this theme because songs have a way of stirring people's emotions. It is easy to sing, it carries hope and is sung with a lot of smiles. The campaign was based on a series of events which were meant to give potential tourists reasons to visit Malaysia. This was linked with marketing and publishing of these events many months ahead of the celebrations. Inter-agency coordination was also strengthened between the Ministry of Tourism and ministries such as the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Home Affairs, and restrictions to travel were substantially reduced.

Philippines: In the recent past, the Philippines concentrated on long-haul markets in Europe and North America, however, it has now switched to short haul source markets like the Republic of Korea, Japan and China. Promotional materials are translated into the language of the source market while popular actors and actresses of these markets are used to promote the Philippines in their own countries.

The Department of Tourism (DOT) is now using a new and broader technique called Performance Matrix Dashboard to measure the country's tourism performance. This is based on visitor arrivals. It uses the value chain concept as the yardstick for understanding supply and demand within the tourism sector. It also measures tourism demographics, infrastructure, as well as consumer awareness and satisfaction and is able to identify potential challenges.. By assessing the impact of these components and their inter-dependence, the DOT has a better understanding of how to position the country, improve on its performance and build a more comprehensive picture of the tourism industry. The Performance Matrix Dashboard also provides the DOT with a more encouraging result, the assessment of the sector's development, understanding of the diverse barriers to the current performance and identification of future investment needs. With this new

technique, the ultimate goal of the DOT is not just to attract more tourists but also higher spenders with a longer period of stay in the Philippines.

Cambodia: The tourism industry continues to be the mainstay of Cambodia's economy. It constitutes more than 10% of its GDP. Cambodia attracted 2 million international visitors in 2007, which is a 19% growth in comparison with 2006. The first four months of this year has already seen the arrival of over 800,000 tourists. It expects to receive 2.4 million tourists in 2008, 3.2 million in 2010 and 5 million in 2015. Cambodia's source markets are topped by the Republic of Korea, Japan and the USA. It also receives substantial number of tourists from its neighbouring countries such as Vietnam, Thailand and Malaysia. Korea is the most important source market because of bilateral cooperation based on promotional activities. There are also direct flights from Korea to Siem Reap and Phnom Penh. The number of visitors from the region is increasing because of visa facilitation and the good road network between Cambodia, Thailand, Laos and Vietnam.

Cambodia boasts tourism resources that any destination can aspire in order to become an attractive tourism product that appeals to a wide cross-section of both regional and international tourist markets. The development of its tourism industry is based on sustainability principles and poverty alleviation. Cambodia actively promotes its cultural and natural assets and develops rural tourism as well as pro-poor community-based tourism.

Nepal: Nepal has suffered a decade of internal conflicts and instability. However, the new institutional change in the country resulted in a 20% growth in tourist arrivals in 2007 as compared to the previous year. In order to continue with this trend, the government plans to construct another international airport and two others for regional use. It is also going to launch a TSA and amend an act in order to include domestic tourists who in the past were not recognized as tourists.

Nepal intends to increase its tourist arrivals and prolong visitors' length of stay. It has thus launched 2 campaigns: *Nepal for all Seasons* and *Send Home a Friend*. The latter is targeting Nepalese nationals abroad and encouraging them to visit home accompanied by at least one foreign tourist. The government shows tourism's importance in its national priorities by restructuring the tourism board and increasing the involvement of the private sector substantially. It has also decided to collaborate with neighbouring countries especially in the SAARC region in order to develop the Buddhist Circuit and the Great Himalayan Trail.

Thailand: Thailand tries to avoid the low season and to receive at least 11.5 million international tourists every year. This is achieved with a lot of work and effort from immigration officers; for this reason plans are underway to request the government's cabinet to increase the number of officials working in the immigration department. The Ministry of Tourism and Sports is also working with the Ministry of Interior to cancel the regulation of Thais filling in immigration forms when entering Thailand. This is to help speed up immigration processes for foreigners.

Thailand gives importance to the working together of all stakeholders in tourism as well as the involvement of policymakers in tourism affairs. International cooperation is also high on its list hence its closer collaboration with UNWTO, ASEAN+3 (China, Japan and the Republic of Korea), APEC and GMS countries.

Vietnam: In 2007, Viet Nam received a record number of over 4 million international tourists and registered an increase of 17.2% over 2006. Ha Noi, Ho Chi Minh City, Ha Long, Hue, Hoi An, Sa Pa

are traditionally the main destinations that attract tourists to Vietnam. Nha Trang and Da Lat are potential new destinations. Tourism activities generated 56,000 VND trillion (3.5 USD billion) in revenue with an increase of 9.8% in comparison with 2006.

Regarding source markets, North East Asia (Japan, Korea and Taiwan) was the biggest tourist generating market with a share of 29.06% (1,216,465). ASEAN came second, accounting for 15.85% share (663,599). They were followed by Russia and East European countries with 14.9% (623,945), China and Hong Kong with 13.28% (556,197), North America including Canada with 12.22% (511,797) and others accounting for 8.34% (349,257).

ASEAN is one of the most important tourist source markets of Viet Nam. It generated over 664,000 tourist arrivals in 2007, accounting for nearly 16% of the total tourist arrivals. Among ASEAN countries, Thailand was the biggest market with 158,799 arrivals, followed by Cambodia, Malaysia and Singapore with 154,564, 146,233 and 118,938 respectively.

As far as policies are concerned, 2 decrees were promulgated by the Government in 2007 to provide guidance for the implementation of Tourism Law.

Viet Nam Tourism participated in annual international tourism events in North East Asia, Europe, ASEAN and North America. Additionally, a number of FAM trips and press trips were organized for tourism promotional purposes for the media, tour operators, investors, etc. These were from Hong Kong, Macao, Thailand, Laos, China, Finland, Switzerland, USA, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. A promotional campaign about Vietnam's new logo and slogan – *Vietnam, the hidden charm* was also launched on CNN and Paris Match.

With all these promotional activities, Viet Nam expects to receive between 4.8 and 5 million international tourists in 2008. In the same year, it will launch the "Visit Can Tho Year 2008" campaign. Can Tho City is home to Mekong Delta River of Viet Nam which is famed for floating markets, orchards, river and islets village tourism. Another important event to be organized in 2008 is the 4th Hue Festival. 2008 will also be a busy year because of preparations for ASEAN Tourism Forum 2009 which Viet Nam will host for the first time.

97. The summary of the Deputy Secretary-General of the discussions on the tourism performance of the countries represented brought to light the fact that their concerns mirrored the challenges the Secretary-General mentioned in his preliminary remarks: economic, financial, security, health, energy and environmental challenges. And how to respond to these concerns are encapsulated in 9 policies measures: the importance of regulations and legislation, tourism satellite account and quality issues; sustainability, accessibility, facilitation of travel, continuous product development and diversification, restructuring, regional cooperation and the power of branding.

**BRIEF INTERVENTION OF THE PHILIPPINES ON THE INTERNATIONAL FORUM FOR
PARLIAMENTARIANS AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN CEBU**

Agenda item 5f

98. The Philippines extended an invitation to all the members to attend the 6th International Forum for Parliamentarians and Local Authorities which will be held in Cebu in the Philippines from 21-25 October 2008. The Forum is made up of 3 segments: a technical workshop on Tourism

Satellite Account (TSA) in collaboration with Asia Pacific and Economic Cooperation (APEC) Working Group headed by Australia; Parliamentarians and Local Authorities Forum; and a Technical Visit of Bohol.

The objectives of the Forum are as follows:

- To discuss the implications of contemporary global issues such as climate change, poverty alleviation and the role of women in tourism.
- To discuss the measurement of the economic and social impacts of tourism through the TSA; draw an action plan for the tourism sector to address the future degradation of the environment.
- To demonstrate sustainable practices for coastal marine and terrestrial ecosystems for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and discuss the various issues and concerns raised during the recent revision of the international recommendations on tourism statistics and the recommended methodological framework of the TSA.
- To develop the capacity of the agencies concerned and to improve existing statistical systems

The Forum is open to all national parliamentarians, NTAs, National Statistics Offices, Central Banks local authorities at regional, municipal and local levels, technical officials in charge of tourism statistics as well as public and private sectors.

PREPARATION OF THE ORGANIZATION'S GENERAL PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2010-2011

6A – THE PREPARATION PROCESS OF THE GENERAL PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2010– 2011

Agenda item 6 (documents CSA/CAP/20/6)

99. This Chairman of the Programme Committee informed the two commissions that the Programme Committee held its latest meeting in Madrid in January this year during which the Secretary-General mentioned the two main tasks of the committee: to follow through the adjustment of the implementation and evaluation of the current programme of work which was agreed on in Cartagena de Indias, (Colombia) for the period 2008-2009; and to prepare the next programme of work for 2010-2011.

100. This Programme Committee is thus carrying out 4 years' of work, but the Secretary-General also underlined the importance of being flexible in fulfilling these tasks. This means the committee has to be sensitive to changes in the global economy and potential price increases that could affect tourism flows.

101. The Director of Programme and Coordination (DPC) has drawn up activities for the period 2009-2009, and in order to identify priority areas for 2010-2011 the committee has decided that some consultations be made with member States through a survey which has already been sent and responses have been received from the majority of countries about the identification of 5 priority areas as well as the methods for disseminating ways to carry out these activities. The final draft will be presented to the General Assembly in Kazakhstan next October.

102. During the committee meeting in Madrid, the Director of Programme and Coordination also mentioned the UN result-based management techniques to be used by UNWTO for its technical events. A proposed template for evaluating these events has already been approved by the committee. And with reference to short technical missions undertaken by UNWTO officials or experts, the committee approved the proposal of the Director of Programme and Coordination that an evaluation form be filled in by members States immediately after the mission has been undertaken. An honest evaluation will let the Secretariat know how useful the mission has been to the recipient countries. It will also help the committee in the selection of future experts or topics. Approximately a year later, these countries are expected to inform UNWTO about progress made with respect to implementation of the recommendations given, and if possible, give some indication of the impacts that have been made.

103. Another item that was discussed at the meeting was the general evaluation of the programme of work for the biennium 2008-2009 and UNWTO Agenda 2010 objectives. A survey will be sent by the end of 2009 with questions on the direct and indirect impacts of UNWTO's activities.

**6B – IDENTIFICATION OF ASIA AND THE PACIFIC REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL
PRIORITIES FOR 2010-2011**

Agenda item 6b (document CSA/CAP/20/6)

104. The Director of Programme and Coordination (DPC) continued with the presentation on the programme of work with more details. He began by informing the commissions that the committee agreed during the Madrid meeting in January on how to go about drawing the next programme of work in order that it reflects the main priorities of member countries. He then went on with a brief reminder of the new structure of the current programme of work and the resolution of the General Assembly about future programmes; the procedure adopted by the Programme Committee for 2010-2011 and the results of the survey on priority areas for Asian members.

105. There is innovation in the current programme of work because it shows a greater integration in the UN system; it boasts higher flexibility as it responds to regional needs and particularly to unforeseen occurrences that have been multiplying over the last few years. It also includes a good part of information and communication technology which is a must today in tourism as well as in many other economic activities. It has a more coordinated response to members' needs because of the integration of the work of the various departments within the Organization. Unlike previous programmes, the current one includes indicators to evaluate the outputs.

106. The structure of the programme has 4 strategic objectives, 16 specific objectives, 57 field activities and approximately 250 specific actions; and the implementation of the programme is well underway because many activities have already been undertaken within the first few months of this year. Unfortunately, the budget for each activity and the global budget have exceeded estimates owing to inflation in Spain. The programme includes expected results and indicators to measure these results.

107. The 17th General Assembly welcomed the new format. It considered it much clearer and much more solid and comprehensive. However, the Assembly also drew the attention of the committee to the fact that for the programme of work 2010-2011 and for future programmes, it would

like the Secretary-General to ensure further concentration on a limited number of activities reflecting priorities of member States. Consequently, the committee established a number of procedures during its meeting in Madrid last January: the establishment of a period of consultation (which was done during the first part of this year); and debates at regional commission meetings. The results of these consultations and debates will be submitted to the Executive Council for it to give the Secretariat the final orientation for the preparation of the programme of work. The draft of the programme will be prepared by the Secretariat during the latter part of this year for submission to the Programme Committee which will be meeting in February or March 2009. After it has been reviewed and modified by the committee, it will be submitted to the Executive Council at its meeting in May or June 2009 which in turn will hand it over to the General Assembly for the final approval in October 2009.

108. Regarding consultations with member States, a brief and concise survey was conducted. The survey on the previous programme of work was too lengthy – over 30 pages. Consequently, only a handful of countries sent in their replies, hence the modified and concise version for this year to facilitate responses. Twenty-two priority areas were listed from the current programme and from issues we know concern members. The Secretariat also enquired about what countries' preference were as far conferences, seminars or workshops were concerned at international, regional or national levels. Other enquiries were with regard to preference for technical missions versus project and publications in hard copy or electronic format. This was meant for internal use of the Secretariat.

109. The survey sent to members in February this year was made up of 22 areas. The objectives were to identify the priorities for the majority of members in order to concentrate the programme of work on areas UNWTO could make a difference with regard to detailed analysis of areas where it has comparative advantage vis-à-vis governments or other tourism organizations; and to optimise the use of its limited resources to achieve better results.

110. As of the time of the joint commission meeting, 102 replies had been received from a total of 160 members including 7 Associate members; this represents 63% of all the members. From Asia and the Pacific region, 18 replies had been received accounting for 64% of members in the region. (Europe – 67%, Africa – 65%, and the Americas only 42% with the possibility of an improvement by the time it holds its commission meeting in September). Countries that replied to the survey from South Asia include Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka. Replies from East Asia and the Pacific were received from Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Thailand, Timor Leste and Vietnam.

111. The 5 priorities of each country were put in order of importance, with the first priority being awarded the highest number of points and the last receiving the least. In the case of South Asia, education and human resource development came first, followed by poverty reduction through tourism, promotion of public-private partnerships, travel facilitation and travel advisories, promotion of the image and importance of tourism and new tourism product development.

112. In the case of East Asia and the Pacific, the top priorities were 9, namely competitiveness and excellence at destinations, education and human resource development (this was given high priority in almost all the regions), macro-economic analysis of tourism and Tourism Satellite Account (TSA), poverty reduction through tourism (which was also highly rated in all regions), new tourism product development, promotion of image and importance of tourism, international tourism statistics and TSA, environmental issues and tourism as well as climate change and tourism.

113. In addition to the foregoing, another issue that needs to be taken into account is the fact that there is shortage of financial resources to respond to all the legitimate needs of member States, particularly when the General Assembly has stressed the need for the Secretariat to concentrate its activities on a few priority areas. There is thus an obvious need to raise extra budgetary funds to meet the specific needs of this region as well as those of other regions within the Organization.

114. The Director of Programme and Coordination concluded his presentation with a proposal to members to examine the suggestions made by some member States to merge the priorities of the two commissions and to integrate these priorities into the general needs of the whole Organization.

115. In response to this, **India** made the proposal of a technical cooperation project for the integration of a trans-national Buddhist Circuit which will include some of the countries present at the meeting. If this gets the support of these countries, it could become one of the activities for new tourism product development given the free movement policy within the countries to be involved in this project. This will be a new product with a tremendous focus on inter-country tourism flow.

116. The Chairperson requested clarification on the extra budgetary funding of the Organization. The Director of Programme and Coordination explained that UNWTO has a policy of zero growth budget. And although the list of priorities of the various regions, including Asia may be long, it will not be possible for the Organization to respond to all of them because the limited budget cannot be expanded indefinitely owing to this zero growth policy. However, there are possibilities of raising extra budgetary funds either through voluntary contributions by some members or for a specific activity. An example is the ST-EP programme which is funded almost entirely from extra budgetary contributions from the Republic of Korea, SNV, Italy, etc. A number of our technical cooperation projects are also funded with the extra budgetary resources from UNDP, the countries benefiting from the project or even their local or regional governments. For example, Master plans for some States of India and some Provinces of China were funded through such means with UNWTO providing its technical expertise and taking responsibility for the execution of these projects. Another example is the tsunami recovery programmes for Indonesia and Thailand which received funding from the German government. With these examples, it is obvious that extra budgetary sources could be considered for executing and implementing part of the programme of work.

117. During the commission meeting for Europe, it was suggested that for the priority areas with a limited number of member States interested, these countries could co-fund the activities for the said areas while the budget of the Organization could be used as a seed amount for undertaking the activities.

118. The Secretary-General supplemented the explanation of the Director of Programme and Coordination with the following: during the 17th General Assembly in Cartagena de Indias (Colombia), the Assembly proposed that there be a less than 1% nominal increase of the budget. The Organization (as is known by all) is based in Spain, therefore most of the cost incurred depends on the evolution of inflation there. Inflation from May 2007 to May 2008 was 4.6% - 1 point higher than the rest of the Euro zone. The 4.6% inflation against the 0.9% increase in budget means that in real terms, the budget of the Organization has been shrinking.

119. When the Organization was founded, there was a general agreement that its regular resources coming from the contribution of member States cannot be used for funding major projects even

though a preparatory mission could be funded from these resources. The development of the project, however, has to be funded from external sources. This has always applied to technical cooperation activities. The Organization has succeeded in diversifying funding for technical cooperation activities which from its inception depended mainly on funding from UNDP and UNWTO's capacity as the executing agency of the latter. UNDP continues to fund technical cooperation projects but in a more limited way as their resources have reduced. This is the reason behind projects being funded by either the countries themselves or through mixed funding as was in the case of a project in Iran which was co-funded by UNDP and the government of Iran. With regard to local authorities, UNWTO has cooperated with 11 Provinces of China and some States in India which have requested Master plans will follow similar arrangements.

120. Through its work as the executing agency of UNDP, UNWTO has sometimes completed some projects with surplus budgets; and putting these surpluses together, the Secretary-General found it logical to keep it for projects in developing countries, especially those facing the issue of poverty alleviation. Consequently, he intended to propose to the Executive Council to use half a million dollars of these surpluses to reinforce the ST-EP initiative being financially supported by the Republic of Korea, SNV, Italy, Thailand, etc.

121. The Regional Representative also added that many projects in Asia are undertaken through extra budgetary funds. A case in point is the Regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific based in Osaka which has been funded since its establishment by the Japanese government and the private sector. The government of the Republic of Korea has also been providing some funds exclusively for activities in the region. In addition to these, the government of Macao, China has provided funds for the recovery programme of Yogyakarta after the earthquake; and when the Organization carries out research programmes, it receives support and contributions in kind from universities and research institutions.

122. The Chairperson followed these observations with the suggestion that for the two areas of most interest to the region, i.e. poverty reduction and human resource development, countries in the region that have the means (Australia for example through AusAid) should fund capacity-building, the upgrading of skills for the labour market and poverty reduction. In addition to the initial donors already mentioned, Thailand has also made some contribution to the ST-EP initiative and will continue to provide regular funds for ST-EP activities in the region.

123. **Australia** then expressed concern about two aspects of the programme of work. During the presentation of the Director of Programme and Coordination, members were asked to consider the possibility of merging the priorities of the two commissions – something Australia cannot comment on without knowing what the implications were and what impact the merging would have without knowing the results of the survey from all the other regions of the Organization. Australia thus wanted to be informed about the points to consider before making this kind of judgement. Moreover, while the issue of climate change is now of global concern, its importance was not reflected in the priorities of the Organization. It does acknowledge the fact that these priorities represent the general consensus of all the members of the Organization, but it still finds it curious that climate change has not been made a top priority. One of the things Australia appreciates is UNWTO's leadership role in the subject of climate change and tourism as it is one of the major challenges to tourism and its future growth.

124. The Director of Programme and Coordination responded by saying it was equally a surprise to the Secretariat to see that climate change was not a top priority in the results of the survey, even

though it was specifically listed among the 22 areas proposed. According to the results from the 102 responses received, climate change occupied the 12th position. It was mentioned by only 22 countries, out of which only a few put it as a top priority. The Executive Council will be informed about the relatively low ranking of climate change among the priorities of the member States and Australia's concern about this. The Secretary-General added that given the importance of climate change, he will ensure that the Executive Council makes it one of the top priorities of the Organization. Also, both the Deputy Secretary-General and the Chairman of the Programme Committee concurred that as part of the UN system, there are many other issues that could impose on UNWTO's agenda because of their global implications. They are global priorities which in some cases could even take precedence over regional or national priorities.

**BRIEF PRESENTATION OF IRAN ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A CENTRE FOR HANDICRAFT
AND TOURISM IN IRAN**

Agenda item 7

125. Iran informed the two commissions that it welcomes the establishment of a Centre for Handicraft and Tourism for which it has submitted a proposed plan to the UNWTO. The contents of this plan are as follows: general and strategic goals of the establishment of a permanent secretariat, organizational structure of the Centre's national committee, the organizational structure of its international working group and the designated goals for the government, the private sector, the local community and non-governmental organizations. Iran considers that there is the need to examine the contents of this proposed plan and for a meeting with UNWTO in order to decide on a comprehensive programme for the Centre. It then sought the approval of the two commissions for the establishment of this Centre.

126. Iran's delivery was followed by some clarifications from the Regional Representative. The Secretariat's objective for adding this item to the agenda was for informative and reference purposes and to seek the collaboration of the commissions in due course. Iran's request to host this Centre was preceded by the successful organisation of the First International Conference on Tourism and Handicraft in Iran in 2006. And this success is borne out by the fact that conferences about the subject have been organised in other regions after that of Iran.

127. The establishment of the Centre will be done through a phased approach. Year number one – phase number one will be devoted to a number of training programmes on the subject of tourism and its relationship with handicrafts with Iran as the focal point. In year number two – the second phase, on the basis of the success of the training programmes among member States, research will be undertaken on the subject. The success of this phase will then herald the final phase, i.e. the establishment of the Centre for Handicraft and Tourism in Iran. More in-depth discussions will be held before finalising the proposal.

**PLACE AND DATE OF THE
TWENTY-SECOND MEETING OF THE JOINT COMMISSIONS**

Agenda item 8

128. The Secretariat recalled that **Iran** was confirmed as the venue of the next commission meetings [i.e. the 21st Meeting of the joint commissions, the 48th Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific (CAP) and the 52nd Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for South Asia (CSA)] during the 46th CAP and 50th CSA commission meetings held within the framework of the 17th Session of UNWTO's General Assembly in Cartagena de Indias in Colombia in November 2007. The

decision on the venue of the 50th Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific (CAP), the 54th Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for South Asia and the 22nd Meeting of the Joint Commissions would be taken in Iran in 2009.

129. In compliance with the rotational rule, this venue will have to be in East Asia and the Pacific. Members were then reminded that **Vietnam** already expressed interest in Cartagena de Indias. Vietnam took the opportunity to reiterate its interest in holding the 2010 commission meetings of the region. These meetings will coincide with the commemoration of Hanoi's 1000th anniversary as the capital city of Vietnam.

130. It was also recalled that the 49th CAP meeting and the 53rd CSA meeting will take place in Kazakhstan during the 18th General Assembly in October in 2009. And given that commission meetings within the framework of the Assembly are mainly devoted to elections of statutory positions of members, joint commissions are not held.

131. Iran concluded this item by informing the commissions about their desire to organise a technical conference on the Silk Road when they host the next commission meetings during the first half of 2009.

132. The Chairperson sought the permission of the Secretary-General to cancel the 47th CAP meeting and the 51st CSA meeting scheduled for the following day, given that all the items on the agenda for these meetings had already been discussed during the joint meeting. This was agreed to; therefore **there are no separate decisions for the 47th CAP meeting and the 51st CSA meeting.**

133. The Co-Chairman of the joint commissions – Iran, took the opportunity to express its gratitude to the host country, Japan, for its warm hospitality and excellent preparations for the meeting, to the Chairperson for her excellent leadership role at the head of the meeting, to distinguished delegates for their active participation and to the UNWTO team for being the brain behind the meeting. He also extended a warm invitation to the members of the two commissions to attend the next commission meetings in Tehran.

134. The Chairperson then expressed her appreciation to UNWTO (which was represented by the Secretary-General, the Deputy Secretary-General, the Director of Programme and Coordination, the Chairman of the Programme Committee, the Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific and the Chief of the Regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific) for its support for and commitment to the region. She was also appreciative of the excellent arrangements provided for the meeting by the Japanese authorities in collaboration with the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism. Finally she thanked her Co-Chair – Iran for offering to host the next commission meetings and invited all the members to make it a point to be in Tehran next year.

135. Finally, the Secretary-General thanked Japan for providing an atmosphere conducive to a successful meeting. He also thanked Iran for being the next host, Vietnam for offering to host the 2010 commission meetings and the two commissions for their attention and active participation in the meeting. He then expressed his gratitude to the Chairman of the Programme Committee for his valuable contribution to the discussions on especially the future programme of work and invited Iran – the Co-Chair to join him in congratulating the Chairperson on the very good work done in conducting the meeting. He added that this is a fantastic illustration of the growing role of women in tourism.

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