



ORGANISATION MONDIALE DU TOURISME
WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION
ORGANIZACION MUNDIAL DEL TURISMO
ВСЕМИРНАЯ ТУРИСТСКАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ
منظمة السياحة العالمية

CSA/CAP/21/DEC

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

Tehran, I.R. of Iran, 3 - 4 March 2009

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**UNWTO COMMISSION FOR SOUTH ASIA & UNWTO COMMISSION FOR EAST ASIA
AND THE PACIFIC**
Twenty-first Joint Meeting
Tehran, Iran
3-4 March 2009

PROVISIONAL 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 of the Secretary-General
5. Impact of the global economic downturn on tourism globally and in the region
 - 5a – Presentation on market trends for 2008 and prospects for 2009
 - 5b – Presentation of findings of the research on *Global Economic Imbalances and Tourism Growth: How can tourism face the new risks and uncertainties?*
 - 5c – Regional perspective and country briefs
 - 5d – Report on the activities of UNWTO's *Tourism Resilience Committee*
6. Progress report on the implementation of the general programme of work 2008-2009
 - 6a – Global perspective
 - 6b – Regional Activities and possible adjustments to the general programme of work in light of the global economic downturn
 - 6c – Presentation on the activities of the UNWTO Regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific
7. Status of the draft general programme of work for 2010-2011
8. Preparations for the 18th session of the General Assembly
9. Nomination of a host country in East Asia and the Pacific for World Tourism Day 2010
10. Facilitation of the work of the two commissions
11. Place and date of the twenty-second joint meeting of the two commissions

PREAMBLE

1. The twenty-first joint meeting of the UNWTO Commission for South Asia and the UNWTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific was held in Tehran, the Islamic Republic of Iran from 3-4 March 2009. It was held in conjunction with the *UNWTO Conference on Increasing Tourist Flows between Asia and the Middle East*.

2. The meeting was chaired by **Iran** and co-chaired by **Thailand**. There were fifty-seven participants representing Australia, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, 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 United Arab Emirates 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/21/Prov.Ag.)

3. Upon the joint commission's acceptance of the proposal of the Secretariat to discuss agenda items 5a, 5b and 5d as one item, the provisional agenda was adopted. The final agenda of the meeting is located on page 2.

COMMUNICATION OF THE CHAIRMAN

Agenda item 2 (document CSA/CAP/21/2)

4. **Iran**, the **Chairman** of the joint Commission made an overall assessment of the international tourism situation as well as that of the region - the growth of which plummeted in 2008 as a result of the global economic slump. Even though tourism has resisted the scourge of the crisis better than other sectors, it is projected that the situation will worsen in 2009. Thus he urged UNWTO and all the members to continue seeking effective strategies to combat the crisis. He also congratulated the Organization on the establishment of the Tourism Resilience Committee.

COMMUNICATION OF THE CO-CHAIRPERSON

Agenda item 3 (document CSA/CAP/21/3)

5. **Thailand**, the Co-Chairperson of the joint commission shared the policy measures her government has been taking to confront the economic crisis in general and the problems posed by the closing of Suvarnabhumi Airport at the end of last November in particular. Visa fees have been waived for a period of three months and landing fees for all airlines have been given a 50% discount for the same duration until September 2009. From April, a special budget will be given to allow the youth to travel all around the country, but on condition that they book their trips through tour operators, sleep in hotels and eat at restaurants. Soft loans are also being given to tourism-related

businesses such as hotels, restaurants, tour operators and transport to stimulate business. In addition to these, 50% discount is being applied to entrance fees to national parks.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Agenda item 4 (document CSA/CAP/21/4)

6. The Secretary-General *a.i* highlighted 3 main issues in his remarks. He informed the two commissions about the effects of the on-going economic crisis on the tourism industry and the steps the Organization has been taking to address the situation. This includes a study on the effect of the global economic downturn on tourism and how the industry can respond to the risk and uncertainties deriving from it; a study on airline segmentation and another one on generating markets as well as regional and sub-regional segmentation. Another initiative of the Organization in the face of the crisis is the launching of the Tourism Resilience Committee to monitor macroeconomic and tourism market trends and provide members with practical and real time responses to these challenging times. In conclusion, the commissions were informed that Mr. Francesco Frangialli – the current Secretary-General ended 19 years of service to the Organization at the end of February.

IMPACT OF THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC DOWNTURN ON TOURISM GLOBALLY

- **Presentation on market trends for 2008 and prospects for 2009**
- **Presentation of findings of the research on *Global Economic Imbalances and Tourism Growth: How can tourism face the new risks and uncertainties?***
- **Report on the activities of UNWTO's *Tourism Resilience Committee***

Agenda item 5 (documents CSA/CAP/21/ 5a_b_d)

7. The Deputy Chief of Market Trends, Competitiveness and Trade in Tourism Services presented this agenda item which highlighted the main tourism trends for 2008 both on a global and a regional basis. As a result of the global economic crisis, 2008 was not a very good year for tourism. Growth was only 2% in comparison with 7% of 2007 and the 4 preceding consecutive years of strong growth when average growth in international tourism was 7%. Because of the air of uncertainty hanging over the world economy, IMF has been revising its figures every 2 to 3 months. The confidence of UNWTO's tourism experts is at its lowest – even lower than during the SARS outbreak. While the beginning of 2008 brought concerns about fuel prices, 2009 has brought unemployment and the weakening of confidence of both businesses and consumers in its wake. All of these have already started impacting on travel negatively. Europe and the Americas will be the most affected while growth in Asia will remain stagnant. Because of the magnitude of the uncertainty, it is difficult to foretell the end of the crisis even though historical trends testify to tourism's resilience in the face of big challenges.

8. In response to the crisis, UNWTO at the very beginning of 2008, commissioned a study to prepare for a possible worst-case scenario of the on-going financial and economic turmoil and its unavoidable impact on the tourism industry. The Tourism Resilience Committee has been set up to provide support to Member States facing the challenges posed by the economic slowdown through close market monitoring, sharing experiences on response and the reinforcement of public/private partnerships. UNWTO has installed a webpage on the Committee on its homepage which is already providing information on response of countries such as Canada, Thailand, Egypt, Bulgaria, Malaysia and Indonesia. Members of the commission are encouraged to communicate their strategies in

response to the crisis to the Secretariat for inclusion in the information on the website. The Co-Chair (Thailand) proposed to host a working group meeting of the Committee in June in order to assess their achievements before their meeting in Kazakhstan during the next General Assembly.

REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE AND COUNTRY BRIEFS

Agenda item 5c (Document CSA/CAP/21/5c)

9. The Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific delivered the introduction to this agenda item. He informed the two commissions that the region's performance in 2008 was uncharacteristically poor (1.6%) and comparable to only two previous occasions (SARS in 2003 and during the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997-98). For the first time in years, Asia's growth rate was less than world average. The effect of the economic downturn on Asia's tourism was felt much earlier than in other regions. Some of the factors attributable to these results are the fluctuations in the price of fuel resulting in capacity cuts in airlines, the Beijing Olympics, and socio-political unrest in Sri Lanka and Thailand.

10. In spite of the general gloomy picture, a few countries experienced double digit growth. Indonesia grew by 12.7% because of the recovery of Bali; Macao SAR grew by 13.5% owing to continued visits from mainland China, and Bhutan's growth was over 30% owing to a series of internal political changes and socio-economic development.

11. After this introduction, the countries represented made brief presentations on the impact of the global economic downturn on their tourism industries and how they have been coping with the crisis. These include Australia, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Malaysia, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. Presentations were also made by the Associate Members from Hong Kong SAR and Macau SAR. A special report on these presentations will be delivered to the members of the Executive Council at its 85th session to be held in Bamako, Mali, in May.

12. After listening to all the presentations, the Secretary-General *a.i.* concluded this item with a few comments. He said there is the need for uniformity in the content and the delivery of country reports. There is the need to streamline this information and share it in a more systematic way. Data analysis and policy issues should not be mixed; they need to be treated differently. And if the reports are received well in advance by the Secretariat, they could be analysed and incorporated into UNWTO's market intelligence report.

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GENERAL PROGRAMME OF WORK **2008-2009**

6a – Global perspective

6b – Regional Activities and possible adjustments to the general programme of work in light of the global economic downturn

6c – Presentation on the activities of the UNWTO Regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific

(Agenda item 6 (Document CSA/CAP/21/6a, 6b, 6c))

13. The Chairman of the Programme Committee presented a summary on the activities undertaken during the 2nd half of 2008, all of which had already been approved by the General Assembly in Cartagena de Indias (Colombia). With regard to technical events and missions, response from member States was positive on the whole; however, there is the need for improvement as far as documentation, discussions, briefing meetings and compliance with time schedule are concerned. The Chairman also informed the two commissions that the Programme Committee strongly requests that members complete and return evaluation forms on technical missions and events because it is only by so doing that the Secretariat will be able to tailor and refine the delivery of its services to their satisfaction.

14. The Secretary-General *a.i.* added that the activities that have been presented were based on 4 strategic objectives – all of which have been detailed in the document CSA/CAP/21/6a. The Secretariat is operating on an extremely moderate budget. There is the need to adjust the programme of work in the face of the current crisis. Consequently, 10% of the budget for 2009 has been frozen for emergency purposes.

15. This was followed by a brief presentation on UNWTO's 2030 future vision. The Deputy Chief of Market Trends, Competitiveness and Trade in Tourism Services referred to UNWTO's global vision on tourism trends from 1995-2020 which forecast that average annual growth in international tourist arrivals would be 4%, and this has been so until 2007 irrespective of all the unanticipated challenges world tourism has been faced with during this period. The report also forecast that China would be a very important outbound market and number one destination by 2020 – prognosis which is likely to become a reality before time. However, the report underestimated the growth of tourism in the Middle East and overestimated that of the Americas.

16. *Tourism Towards 2030* project is intended as a world reference, a forecast on international tourism growth through the year 2030 and a revision of UNWTO's existing long-term forecast *Tourism Vision 2020*. Its findings shall be turned into 6 separate reports including One 'World Overview' report and five 'regional reports' (Europe, Asia and the Pacific, Americas, Africa and the Middle East).

17. The Regional Representative and the Deputy Regional Representative delivered the presentation on regional activities and the possible adjustments to the general programme of work for the region as a result of the global economic crisis. The changes in the implementation of the region's activities will be in line with the Tourism Resilience Committee's objectives. One of these will take the form of a special report on the compilation of strategies being used by countries in Asia and the Pacific to confront the crisis (to be presented at the 85th session of the Executive Council in Mali next May). Another will be a technical assistance mission to two economically developed provinces in China – Jiangsu and Guangdong, where the economic slowdown is affecting their tourism industry. The policy recommendations emerging from the findings will serve as a reference for the whole of the region. Plans are also underway to produce a report on responses to the global economic downturn but from the perspective of segments of the tourism industry in the region such as accommodation establishments and aviation.

18. The Chief of UNWTO Regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific based in Osaka, informed the Commission about the activities carried out by the Office since June 2008 when the last meeting of the two Commissions took place in Kobe, Japan, until March 2009.

STATUS OF THE DRAFT GENERAL PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2010-2011

Agenda item 7 (document CSA/CAP/21/7)

19. After the delivery of the presentation on this item, the Secretary-General *a.i.* concluded with the following: Discussions on the general programme of work for 2010-2011 began last year because it usually goes through a lot of processes before its approval. The design and structure of this programme, which used to be very rudimentary, has undergone a drastic change. Responses to the questionnaire the Secretariat sent to members reflected their immediate concerns as opposed to long-term issues. Climate change and ethics for example, came way down the list of countries' priorities. The Secretariat shall respect these priorities and the budget allocation for their implementation from a regional or sub-regional perspective, but at the same time pay attention to long-term issues. In order to improve our operations, we intend to move our current budget structure into the International Budget Programme and Accounting System. For 2009, we have blocked 10% of our budget for possible unforeseen contingencies, and because of inflation, we are struggling with high costs in the face of fixed budgets.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE 18TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Agenda item 8 (document CSA/CAP/21/8)

20. The Secretary-General *a.i.* informed the two commissions that the decision to hold the 18th session of the General Assembly was taken in Cartagena de Indias (Colombia) during the 17th session. Since the feedback received on the division of the structure of the General Assembly into technical and ministerial segments which was done for the first time in Colombia was not very positive, it will be modified again in Kazakhstan. The Organization also intends to change and reform the drafting and approval procedure of the resolutions of the General Assembly, given that owing to time constraints on the drafting and debate of its contents, this has consequences on its implementation about which some countries have expressed concern. To effect these changes, a draft resolution, i.e. the Secretariat's interpretation of what it anticipates as the end result of the agenda items to be discussed will be sent to Members well in advance and before the commencement of the General Assembly for their review and comments. This draft version will then be finalised and adopted during the Assembly.

NOMINATION OF A HOST COUNTRY IN EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC FOR WORLD TOURISM DAY 2010

Agenda item 9 (document CSA/CAP/21/9)

21. The hosting of World Tourism Day is on rotational basis within the 6 regions of the Organization. In Asia, the most recent celebrations took place in Sri Lanka in 2007 and Malaysia in 2004. For 2010, China proposed to host it and this was unanimously agreed by members of the two commissions.

FACILITATION OF THE WORK OF THE TWO COMMISSIONS

Agenda item 10 (document CSA/CAP/21/10)

22. In 2005, a unanimous decision was taken by the Commission for South Asia (CSA/46) and the Commission for East Asia and the Pacific (CAP/42) to hold the meetings of the two commissions on rotational basis and at the same venue in view of the common agendas of the two regions. This became the established rule until a proposal was made during the 20th joint meeting of the two commissions in Kobe, Japan on 10 June 2008 to explore the possibility of making an institutional change through the joining of the two commissions into one single commission and making it the UNWTO Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

23. The Secretariat explained that any structural change in the regional groupings within UNWTO would involve several processes: in-depth study and investigation into the feasibility of such a move and its legal implications; the approval of the General Assembly; change in the allocation of seats in the Executive Council; and further modification of seats allocated to the regions in the various technical and statutory committees of the Organization.

24. Owing to all the procedures a structural change in the commissions has to go through, the Secretariat proposed the following course of action: in order to avoid overlapping and unnecessary repetition of agenda items, separate commission meetings should not be held when joint meetings take place, unless special circumstances require such a necessity; during sessions of the General Assembly (every two years), it is advisable that separate commission meetings be held to allow statutory elections to take place in their respective commissions; the holding of the joint meetings of the two commissions rotationally are to continue as has been the case since 2005.

25. There was a general consensus among the members of the two commissions about the Secretariat's proposal of the foregoing course of action.

PLACE AND DATE OF THE TWENTY-THIRD MEETING OF THE JOINT COMMISSIONS

Agenda item 11

26. The Secretariat recalled that given that the on-going 21st joint meeting was being held in Iran (South Asia), in compliance with the rotational rule, the venue for the 22nd joint meeting will have to be in East Asia and the Pacific. Members were then reminded that **Vietnam** already expressed interest in Cartagena de Indias. Vietnam confirmed its interest and readiness to hold the 22nd Joint Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific and the UNWTO Commission for South Asia in 2010.

27. It was also recalled that during the 18th General Assembly in October in Kazakhstan a decision may be taken about which country from South Asia hosts the 23rd Joint Meeting of the two commissions in 2011. Maldives offered to consider the possibility of hosting this meeting. Nepal also expressed interest in being the host and underlined the fact that 2011 will be ideal for this because it has been designated *Visit Nepal Year*.

28. The Secretariat and the Co-Chairperson expressed their appreciation to the Government of Iran for the excellent arrangements provided for both the Commission meeting and the Conference.

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