UNWTO COMMISSION FOR SOUTH ASIA
UNWTO COMMISSION FOR EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC
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PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GENERAL PROGRAMME
OF WORK FOR 2010

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

Item 5b_a of the Provisional Agenda

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General submits to the Joint Meeting of the two Commissions activities that have been undertaken by the Organization since the 22nd CAP-CSA Joint meeting which took place in Hanoi, Vietnam in May 2010.
The World Tourism Organization’s strategic objectives for its general programme of work since its 18th General Assembly have focussed on improving competitiveness and sustainability. In line with this, UNWTO’s activities in the Asia-Pacific region have sought to promote these objectives. This report summarises the activities undertaken since the second half of 2010 to the first trimester of 2011. While some of these activities are based on these objectives, others have been carried out upon the requests received from some member States.

**IMPROVING SUSTAINABILITY**

**World Tourism Day Celebrations and Sustainable Tourism Forum (Guangzhou, China, September 2010)**

Under the theme of “Tourism and Biodiversity” for World Tourism Day 2010, a high-level dialogue on tourism, biodiversity and sustainable development was convened as the central event to coincide with the UN International Year of Biodiversity. As such, the Dialogue provided an important platform from which to debate how tourism can contribute positively to biodiversity conservation and the quality of life of local populations, while minimizing potentially negative environmental and social impacts.

Leading tourism and biodiversity experts agreed that biodiversity is one of tourism’s most valuable assets. This is especially the case for developing countries, where the largest proportion of global biodiversity can be found and biodiversity-based tourism can make a valuable contribution to socio-economic development.

Among the main conclusions that emerged from the panel discussion was the need for the tourism sector to assume a collective responsibility for conserving biological diversity and implementing global targets, including government, the private sector, intergovernmental organizations and civil society.

**UNWTO’s Consulting Unit for Tourism and Biodiversity in Bonn (Germany):** It is currently working together with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism on the ‘Energy Efficiency for Sustainable Tourism in Pangandaran’ project in Indonesia. This project is supported by the ‘International Climate Initiative’ of the German Ministry for the Environment and aims at achieving a low carbon tourism development in West Java. The main objective of this project is to create a lighthouse example of innovative mitigation and adaptation measures on reaction to climate change for Indonesia to be replicated in other destinations beyond Pangandaran. Significant reduction in the Green House Gas (GHG) emissions is envisioned from the pilot projects installed as part of the project.

In Thailand two projects have been implemented by the Bonn Unit in cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism and Sports. These are: the ‘Biodiversity
and Sustainable Tourism Development' project in the Province of Phang Nga, and the 'Programme for Energy Efficiency in Kho Khao (PEEK)', project.

The overall goal of the ‘Biodiversity and Sustainable Tourism Development in the Province of Phang Nga’ project was to strengthen sustainable tourism, as well as to transfer lessons learnt to other sites in Phang Nga, and along the Andaman coast.

The ‘Program for Energy Efficiency in Kho Khao and Khao Lak (PEEK)’ which is in its concluding phase, is financed by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety under the ‘International Climate Protection Initiative’. The PEEK project is being implemented by the UNWTO Consulting Unit on Tourism and Biodiversity in collaboration with Adelphi, Berlin. The overriding objective of this project is to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the hotel industry in Kho Khao and Khao Lak by means of innovative and replicable solutions for energy efficiency and renewable energy.

PEEK is part of the efforts of UNWTO and the Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Thailand to create a model destination for sustainable tourism in Kho Khao and Khao Lak. Through this project, efforts are also being made to create greater acceptance for sustainability and climate protection strategies both in the tourism sector and among the local population.

In Laos, the Bonn Unit is currently developing a project around the Xe Pian National Protected Area and the Kiet Ngong wetlands in the province of Champasak jointly with Laos National Administration of Tourism. These two areas in the South of Laos are rich in biodiversity with a great potential for the development of tourism and the creation of jobs.

**Observatories of Sustainable Tourism**

UNWTO has been promoting the use of sustainable tourism indicators since the early 1990s, as essential instruments for policy-making, planning and management process at destinations.

In order to help policy makers, planners and tourism managers to strengthen their institutional capacities for information management and monitoring in support of decision and policy making, UNWTO launched the concept of the Global Observatory of Sustainable Tourism (GOST) based on the UNWTO methodology for sustainable tourism indicators. GOST intends to facilitate the establishment of a network of observatories at all levels, through the use of a systematic application of monitoring, evaluation (sustainable tourism indicators) and information management techniques, as key tools for the formulation and implementation of sustainable tourism policies, strategies, plans and management processes.

Three observatories have been established to date: Yangshuo Observatory (2004), Huangshan Observatory (2008) and Zhang Jiajie Observatory (2011) – all three of which are located in China. During the World Tourism Day
celebrations in Guangzhou UNWTO and Sun Yat-sen University of China signed an agreement to collaborate jointly in the establishment, management, and monitoring of the existing and future sustainable tourism observatories in China and possibly in the Asia-Pacific region. For this purpose, UNWTO and Sun Yat-Sen University have agreed to establish the “Monitoring Centre for UNWTO Sustainable Tourism Observatories” at the University under the auspices of UNWTO.

T-20 Tourism Ministers' Meeting

The T20 is a members-driven initiative with the full support of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

The initiative emerged in response to the Roadmap for Recovery developed by the UNWTO. The Roadmap for Recovery, which was approved in October 2009 at the UNWTO’s 18th General Assembly, is a manifesto on how tourism and travel, one of the world’s biggest sources of jobs and export earnings, can be a primary vehicle for job creation, enhanced development, trade promotion, economic recovery and the transformation towards a greener economy.

The first T20 Tourism Ministers’ Meeting was held in South Africa in February 2010 to discuss tourism’s valuable contribution to the economic stimuli required for the global economy’s recovery and the longer-term ‘green’ transformation.

The second T20 Tourism Ministers’ Meeting which took place in Buyeo – Republic of Korea in October 2010 emphasized and enhanced tourism’s contribution to the global economy and job creation as well as the development agenda.

Fourth UNWTO-PATA Conference on Tourism Trends & Outlook (2nd week of Nov. Guilin, China)

The Fourth UNWTO Forum on Tourism Trends and Outlook was held on 2-4 September 2010 in Guilin, China, in collaboration with the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA), Hong Kong Polytechnic University, and Guilin Municipal Government.

As has been the case with the previous sessions, the Forum served as an important platform for national tourism organisations, non-governmental organizations, destination marketing organizations, industry practitioners and academics to share research, strategies and practices after the global economic crisis.

The theme for this 4th session was domestic and regional tourism to reflect the importance of these two tourism segments especially during world crisis situations. Domestic tourism for example is gaining more recognition because of its ability to cushion the negative impacts of crisis on a country’s international tourist arrivals. Regional or sub-regional tourism alliances also play a pivotal
role in destination marketing and are more effective in the development of joint initiatives.

The Forum aimed at analyzing the current situation of domestic and regional tourism with a focus on its role as economic crisis shock-absorbers and socio-cultural development amongst destinations and source markets in Asia and the Pacific region. Participants exchanged views on policy issues and strategies related to the development of domestic and regional tourism and how they foster economic development, socio-cultural integrity and environmental sustainability.

**ENHANCING COMPETITIVENESS**

**World Tourism Conference (Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia, 4 – 7 October)**

The Government of Malaysia and the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) jointly organised this second session of the *World Tourism Conference 2010* in collaboration with the Provincial Government of Sabah.

The conference aimed at highlighting strategies of leading destinations and organisations in the tourism industry which could be adopted and adapted to generate income and accelerate growth in the tourism industry. This was the main focus of the conference owing to the fact that it was organised at a time when the tourism industry was gradually recovering from the exceptionally challenging time it experienced under the influence of the global economic crisis. The conference also drew attention to innovative product development and marketing strategies in tourism to enable the public and private sectors to harness and maximise the potential of tourism.

**First Statistics Capacity-building Workshop for Asia-Pacific, Bangkok, Thailand (Bangkok, Thailand, 22-26 November 2010)**

UNWTO initiated a two-year Statistics Capacity-building Programme for its Asia-Pacific members. This was done with the organization of the first workshop jointly with the Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism of Australia, the Ministry of Economic Development of New Zealand with the close collaboration of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Thailand and UNESCAP.

This capacity-building programme serves a double-pronged objective: institutional partnership and knowledge-sharing. As Australia and New Zealand are the most developed countries in the compilation of tourism statistics and the development of tourism satellite account (TSA) within the region, the main objective for this partnership is for these two countries to act as a technical support in this capacity-building programme in order to share their experiences in tourism statistics with and also transfer knowledge of their expertise in this subject to the other UNWTO member States in the Asia-Pacific region.
And given their strategic geographical location, Thailand and the Philippines serve as the hosts for this two-year long programme. The second Workshop will be held in Manila at the beginning of July, while the third and regional seminar will take place in Bangkok at the end of the year.

**Capacity-building Workshop on Tourism Branding (Hanoi, Vietnam, December 2010)**

International experts from France, Australia, Malaysia and China shared their experiences on the subject of branding in their countries to enable Vietnam to design the best strategies for the promotion and marketing of its tourism products.

China is one of Vietnam’s source markets in Asia while France occupies this position in the European context. The Workshop thus sought to find out Vietnam’s unique products and marketing strategies that can be used to consolidate the French market and to increase the number of tourists that visit it from other European countries and from China.

In the case of the other two countries, the Workshop discussed which aspects of Australia’s tourism branding strategies could be applicable to the Vietnamese situation; and the secret behind the success story of “Malaysia Truly Asia” campaign and how Malaysia used it to successfully penetrate the Middle East Market.

**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

**Technical Assistance for the evaluation of the tourism development of Yen Bai Province and Ha Giang Province of Vietnam (December 2010)**

This mission was carried out to evaluate the tourism development potential of Yen Bai Province and Ha Giang Province of Vietnam. Three main potential tourism growth areas in the two provinces were identified, namely ecotourism, home-stay community-based tourism and cultural tourism.

The mission also revealed that the provinces could benefit more from tourism by improving the services available to tourists, and directing their marketing efforts towards higher-end tourists.

Community members in the two provinces should also improve their understanding of ecotourism and responsible travel, as this will help the local community to develop a vested interest in tourism, and appreciate its potential for poverty alleviation.

**Review of draft contract for the Formulation of a Strategic Direction and Action Plan for the Tourism Industry of Brunei**

The contract was for a tourism development project aimed at guiding and providing an institutional framework for the development of Brunei’s tourism industry over the next decade.
UNWTO’s review entailed an analysis of the original draft of the contract within the framework of, and in comparison with the structure of international and standard contracts for plans of this nature and importance. An in-depth study of the draft contract was carried out and recommendations were made from a technical viewpoint to improve upon the draft.

**Technical Assistance for the Revision of Iran’s Tourism Master Plan (January 2011)**

UNWTO formulated Iran’s original tourism master plan jointly with the Government of Iran and UNDP from 2000-2001. Though the recommendations detailed in the Plan are still applicable new developments that have taken place over the past ten years made it necessary to revisit the Master Plan and adapt it to the current developments in Iran.

The objective of the mission was to set out the terms of reference for the general revision of the Tourism Development Master Plan. A project proposal highlighting the importance of the active involvement of Iran in the general revision has been sent to the Government for further action.

**SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION**

**High level Seminar on Mainstreaming Tourism (Thimphu, Bhutan, Jan 2011)**

The Seminar was aimed at contributing to the strengthening of one of the guiding principles of the Tourism Council of Bhutan for high-value-low-volume tourism development and to achieve UNWTO’s goal of moving tourism higher in the global agenda. Tourism’s importance as an engine for poverty alleviation, job creation and a powerful driver for socio-economic development was the main topic of discussion.

One session of the Seminar was devoted to the sharing of Malaysia’s marketing strategies and success story about its *Malaysia Truly Asia* campaign which served as a typical demonstration of south-south cooperation among member States.

**Nepal Tourism Year Inauguration Ceremony 2011 / Asian Tourism Ministers' Conclave “Tourism: Collective Standing for Better Tomorrow” (Kathmandu, Nepal, January 2011)**

The Asian Tourism Ministers’ Conclave was an integral part of the inauguration of Nepal Tourism Year 2011 campaign.

It drew the participation of a high number of high-ranking officials who shared knowledge and debated the way forward for tourism in South Asia. It was an innovative platform for the leaders and policy-makers of the region’s tourism industry to inter-change ideas and strategies on major issues which influence
not only the future of Asia’s tourism as a whole but directly impact on sub-regional tourism.

Within the framework of Nepal Tourism Year Inauguration Ceremony, UNWTO organised a High level Seminar on Mainstreaming Tourism but with the focus on the use of Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) as a means to enhance the role of tourism in the national agenda. Philippines shared its experience on the subject of TSA with the Nepalese participants thus featuring another display of south-south cooperation.

**RENDERING SUPPORT AND STRENGTHENING RELATIONS WITH MEMBERS**

**Special Meeting on International Solidarity with Thai Tourism (Bangkok, Thailand, July 2010)**

UNWTO organised this Special Meeting in collaboration with PATA and the Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Thailand after the political disturbances in Bangkok had been brought under control. The incident disrupted the smooth running of businesses and other day-to-day activities while impacting unfavourably on the flow of tourists to Thailand temporarily.

UNWTO’s main objective for organising this Special Meeting was to demonstrate its support for and solidarity with Thailand and its tourism industry in order to accelerate the recovery process of the country’s tourism. The meeting was attended by representatives of travel agencies and associations, tour operators, hoteliers and the media. The presence of both local and international media served an additional purpose of disseminating the message of Thai tourism’s quick recovery from the crisis, and this contributed significantly and favourably to the recuperation of the industry which was reflected in the growth rate of tourist arrivals in 2010.

**Visits of the Secretary-General to the region**

Among his trips to the region, the Secretary-General visited Australia in July 2010 for the first time since his election and met with a number of key figures including the Minister of Tourism. He congratulated him on Australia’s formulation of its National Long-Term Tourism Strategy which is aimed at redirecting the industry in a way that will be conducive to its sustained growth. He also informed him about UNWTO’s readiness to join hands with Australia in the mainstreaming of the tourism agenda beyond tourism circles for the achievement of long-term global goals related to climate change and sustainable development.

He attended a number of events including the Tourism Futures Conference where he met with key representatives of Australia’s tourism. The conference served as a platform for exchange of knowledge and experience relating to forecasting, integrating industry stakeholders, sustainable development and stock-taking of the contemporary tourism situation.
Visits of Member countries to the Secretariat

Timor-Leste, June 2010

H.E. Mr. Gil da Costa A.N. Alves, Minister of Tourism, Commerce and Industry, Timor-Leste and his delegation visited UNWTO Headquarters marking the first visit by Timor-Leste since it joined the Organization in 2005. The Minister underlined the importance of tourism to Timor-Leste’s economy. The Secretary-General expressed his satisfaction with the news and informed the delegation about UNWTO’s recently initiated campaign directed at Heads of States and Presidents which is aimed at seeking their support to position tourism higher on the global agenda. He then invited Timor Leste’s Head of State through the Minister to add his voice to UNWTO’s effort to position tourism as one industry speaking with one voice.

Bangladesh, June 2010

A Foreign Minister and Member of Parliament of Bangladesh visited the UNWTO headquarters as part of a tour of some European countries. According to the Minister, Bangladesh as a developing country is endowed with tremendous potential for tourism development and boasts the longest beach of the world. It is currently undergoing many changes in terms of identifying potential products for tourism development, especially in the past one year thanks to the efforts of the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism. The Minister also expressed Bangladesh’s commitment to the agenda of tourism as it is becoming one of the most vital sectors for socio-economic development while generating jobs for the young and local communities; hence her offer to be a tourism advocator.

Thailand, July and October 2010 & February 2011

The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Interior of Thailand led a 34-member delegation made up of local authorities to learn about how Spain and UNWTO promote tourism around the world.

This was followed (in October) by the visit of a high level delegation, led by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand. The main purpose of the visit was to discuss the central role of tourism in the socio-economic development of Thailand. The Minister expressed the high political regard of Thailand for tourism, as part of its national image building and development, next to exports or foreign direct investment.

He proposed the signing of a “trilateral cooperation” with UNWTO as a platform to help other developing countries in their tourism development, using Thailand as an example of destination excellence. This coincides with actions and policies in the framework of the South-South economic and development cooperation which is part of the Thai external agenda, in its role as an emerging donor country.
On February 14 2011, a four-member delegation led by the Advisor to the Minister of Tourism and Sports visited UNWTO’s Headquarters. This was a follow-up to the visit of the Secretary-General to Bangkok last July with the main purpose of rendering UNWTO’s support and solidarity with the Government of Thailand in the aftermath of the socio-political disturbances that impacted negatively on tourist flow during the second quarter of 2010.

**MOUs**

The following MOUs were signed in 2010 between UNWTO and two municipal governments of China:

- **MOU between UNWTO and Hangzhou Tourism Commission** of China. This was aimed at the cooperation of both Parties in a research project entitled ‘MICE industry: Global Trends and Development Strategy for Hangzhou’.

- **UNWTO’s Regional Programme for Asia-Pacific and Tianjin Municipal Tourism Administration** signed an MOU to expand the current cooperation on tourism in general and to co-organize training programmes for tourism officials in Asia and the Pacific region. (October 2010)