

Ministers' Summit on Tourism and Climate Change

13 November 2007, London, United Kingdom

Background Note

Addressing the consequences and the causes of climate change is a main strategic priority since the tourism sector is impacted by this global phenomenon and at the same time contributes to it through greenhouse gas emissions. We must take leadership in a responsible way and the London summit is an important step in this process.

The Secretary General of the UN has been charged with developing a global response to the challenge of Climate Change, coherent with the Millennium Development Goals and the endorsement of this approach by Heads of States during the recent General Assembly Session. In essence it will be a roadmap for greenhouse gas reduction through to the middle of the century, as well as for coherent adaptation responses, with immediate application, clear targets and monitoring systems. This roadmap will be presented at a Climate Summit in Bali, Indonesia in December of this year.

UNWTO has been requested by the Secretary General to ensure that tourism is appropriately reflected in this overall submission, working with relevant UN Agencies and the tourism sector. With the support of the UNWTO Executive Council, we have initiated a plan to take full advantage of this opportunity.

A key element of our plan was achieved at the Second International Conference on climate change and tourism held in Davos on 1-3 October, where UNWTO, together with UNEP and WMO and with the support of the World Economic Forum and the Government of Switzerland concluded a multistakeholder event with more than 400 participants from some 80 countries, representing the public and private sectors, the academic community and civil society. The resulting Davos Declaration updates our longstanding work in this area and provides a comprehensive input for the UN Secretary General's Roadmap. The declaration is balanced and realistic, with achievable goals and a proper link to the interrelated poverty agenda.

At the London Summit, Ministers are invited to discuss and endorse the Declaration. In this way it will have appropriate status when reflected in the overall UN process and will be an effective outcome when UNWTO will report to its General Assembly in Colombia at the end of November. The meeting will last for half a day, according to the enclosed programme. A document containing a joint message from UNWTO, UNEP and WMO, the text of Davos declaration and the summary of a scientific report addressing the interrelations between climate change and tourism will be distributed at the venue of the meeting.



Committed to Tourism, Travel and the Millennium Development Goals