

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WORKSHOP “TOWARD SUSTAINABLE TOURISM”

We, the Ministers of Tourism of the Central American region and their representatives, meeting in Roatán, Honduras, on 23 and 24 June 2011, at the First “Toward Sustainable Tourism” Workshop, carried out with the participation of representatives of the international community, the World Tourism Organization, distinguished members of the diplomatic corps, top local authorities and the tourism private sector,

CONCLUDE THAT:

1. Tourism in Central America continues to be a fundamental pillar of Central American integration and a motor of economic and social development, given its significant contribution in terms of jobs, income, foreign exchange revenue, contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the eradication of poverty in Central America.
2. It is necessary to highlight the importance that the United Nations, through its resolutions, accords to the attainment of policies oriented toward sustainable tourism, social ethics in tourism, and the protection of the environment and ecosystems, as an essential premise for the development of tourism that is sustainable and in harmony with nature; and also to acknowledge the good work being done by the United Nations system in the tourism sector, under the leadership of the World Tourism Organization and its General Secretariat.
3. It is necessary to strengthen this industry through sustainability policies and practices that ensure greater economic and social benefits and fewer negative impacts on the environment as well as on the natural and cultural heritage of the individual countries and of the region as a whole.
4. Addressing the matter of sustainability requires the action and the mutual commitment of public and private actors, as well as the integration of measures at the regional level so as to obtain the best results.
5. The issue that we are confronted with in the face of climate change obliges us to take immediate actions, both preventive and responsive, in order to minimize its impact and the damage to natural resources, which form part of the tourism attractions and products promoted by our countries.

Consequently, WE MAKE THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. To highlight the importance of the biodiversity of natural resources and the environment as well as their fragility and vulnerability, which requires the due conservation, preservation and continuous improvement of this heritage, which constitutes an important value for Central American tourism. To this end, the international community is urged to continue and to strengthen its resolute support for sustainable tourism, with policies oriented toward education and the protection of the most exposed tourism zones, by developing cooperation mechanisms for the recovery of natural environments at risk, for which purpose the participation of civil society is essential.

2. To reiterate as a regional priority the efforts of diverse institutions in the area of sustainable tourism, to which end it is necessary to reinforce the mechanisms for the adoption and implementation of policies and measures relative to the matter, including regional criteria for tourism sustainability, designed and approved between the private and public sectors at the regional level.
3. To recognize the pressing need to address the issue of climate change, due to its significant repercussions in tourism, with a view to ensuring the proper management and use of the natural and cultural resources in the region.
4. To urge the environment ministries of Central America, which form part of the Central American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD) of SICA, to unify, agree upon, and strengthen efforts, actions and programmes aimed at promoting sustainable tourism and to undertake measures that mitigate the effects of climate change within the pertinent regional strategy.
5. To call upon the United Nations to strengthen international cooperation for the tourism sector in its programmes of action and development, as an instrument that contributes to the eradication of poverty and the protection of the environment, linking tourism strategies to the Rio+20 Agenda.
6. To highlight that in this effort international cooperation and cooperation by developed countries should be promoted and developed, with the aim of financing and reinforcing management capabilities with regard to initiatives and projects with an impact contributing to tourism sustainability and the response to climate change in Central America. The countries and organizations attending the present seminar are urged to join this initiative for the purpose of constructing and implementing joint strategies of a regional nature that contribute to integration, tourism development and to a sustainable Central America.
7. To express the importance of fostering the exchange of experiences and good practices among the countries of Central America and of other regions, in the area of tourism sustainability and climate change, with a view to the adoption of beneficial measures; promoting national and regional meetings for the coordination of programme-oriented policies and the linking of local sectors, authorities and civil society, as an essential factor for the achievement of sustainable tourism.
8. To urge the private-sector members of the Central American Federation of Chambers of Tourism (FEDECATUR), to continue efforts together with the tourism public sector, and to undertake commitments to introduce, adopt, promote and implement, in a continuing manner, regional tourism sustainability criteria and measures that contribute to the sustainability of the industry in the region's service enterprises.
9. To highlight the important work of the natural conservation and environmental protection programme (PEW) and its active participation in the conservation of shark species, and which we thank for its participation in this event.
10. To congratulate the Republic of Honduras for the coordination and facilities provided for the holding of this important workshop, which we hope can encourage new meetings on the subject at the regional level.