Message from the SDT Department

Dear Readers,

You are now more than ten thousand subscribers to the SDT e-bulletin, representing a wide range of countries, organizations, administrations, institutions, academies, NGOs, and I wish to take this opportunity to extend my appreciation for your interest in our activities.

The issues relating to tourism sustainability require a wide and active participation from several stakeholders, public and private. Only a shared, concerted and farsighted effort leads to solutions of the problems arising from the complex relations between tourism growth and its management. Our common challenge is to work toward an optimal balance between the economic, social and environmental aspects of tourism development.

Two important events, to which you are invited to participate, will take place in the next months. The conference on "Climate Change and Tourism", Davos (Switzerland), 1-3 October, will explore ways for tourism to respond to the challenges posed by climate change. The conference on "Tourism, Religions and Dialogue of Cultures", Cordoba (Spain), 29-31 October will analyse tourism's potential to stimulate and facilitate dialogue among civilizations, cultures and religions. More information on these events is available below.

We hope that the e-bulletin, by disseminating the activities undertaken by UNWTO in SDT, contributes toward the goals mentioned earlier and we hope that you will find this information useful for your work. Your comments and suggestions on how this e-bulletin can be improved and be more useful to you and
your organizations, will be appreciated.

From our side, all the staff of the Department will do our best to provide you with relevant and timely information, through this e-bulletin.

Luigi Cabrini
Director, Sustainable Development of Tourism

1. Changes in the Department of Sustainable Development of Tourism

With a view to continuously improving and meeting the needs and demands of its members and the tourism industry, UNWTO has completed some internal restructuring changes, which have affected the Department of Sustainable Development of Tourism in the following way:

Mr. Luigi Cabrini, former UNWTO Regional Representative for Europe, has been nominated as the new Director of the Department from 1 June 2007. Mr. Eugenio Yunis, who had been heading this Department since 1997, has been appointed as Director of Programme and Coordination.

Two Sections have been created within the Department: one dealing with the cultural, social and ethical aspects of tourism, headed by Ms. Marina Diotallevi, and one dealing with environmental and quality issues, headed by Mr. Gabor Vereczi.

2. Davos Conference: Climate Change and Tourism

UNWTO will hold the Second International Conference on Tourism and Climate Change in Davos, Switzerland, from 1-3 October 2007. The Conference is organized together with United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and supported by the World Economic Forum (WEF).

There is now a wide recognition of the urgent need for society, at all levels, to implement strategies to face the changing climate conditions and to take preventive actions for future effects.

Climate change is a key issue for policymakers worldwide and tourism is an important element of discussions. The Second International Conference welcomes stakeholders from the public and private sector, and representatives from the civil society.

The second International Conference on Climate Change and Tourism will followed by a Ministerial Summit, supported by the Government of the United Kingdom at the World Travel Market in London on 13 November 2007.

More information:
http://climate.unwto.org (Conference Information)
http://www.unwto.org/sustainable/climate.htm (Additional Information)
3. International Conference on Tourism, Religions and Dialogue of Cultures

With the support of the Government of Spain, the World Tourism Organization will convene a conference in Cordoba, Spain, on the subject of tourism, religions and dialogue of cultures with two central aims:

- First, to analyse the relationships between tourism and religion, with a view to optimizing their synergies and interactions by harnessing tourism's potential to stimulate and facilitate dialogue among civilizations, cultures and religions.

- Second, to offer orientations and recommendations to governments, religious authorities and tourism operators for the sustainable development and management of tourism motivated by religious purposes or associated with religious heritage sites, as well as regarding how to optimize the benefits that such tourism can generate.

Conference dates: 29-31 October 2007

4. Latest updates from the Tour Operators Initiative (TOI)

Activities of the Tour Operators Initiatives (TOI) continues forward:

- The Kuoni Travel Holding Ltd., one of Europe's leading tourist corporations, became a member of the Tour Operators Initiative. The Kuoni Group has steadily and systematically developed its position in the world travel market over the years and is currently operating in over 30 countries in Europe, Asia, Africa and North America. With the Group's commitment to environmental concerns, some of their upcoming work will address the following four key priority areas: child protection from sex industry; working conditions in tourism; water competition at destinations between needs of locals and needs of tourism and also combating negative impacts of climate change. In November 2006, Kuoni signed the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism, which led to a number of awareness activities targeted directly at travellers.

- The TOI and World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF) begin kick-off meeting on Cooperation Agreement in April 2007. Update on the Status of the implementation of the Agreement, signed in October 2006 in Cologne, Germany, was presented by Ms. Verena Wende, Cooperation Manager. Common objectives focused on identifying common areas of interest, as well as developing a database of project destinations and key partners to be shared by WWF and TOI. At the meeting, participants agreed on the first destinations to be targeted by the Agreement: Mexico (in particular the Mesoamerican Reef Ecoregion) and Thailand (in particular the Andaman Sea Ecoregion).

Environment Programme (UNEP), Conservation International (CI) and the TOI. The Guide, is intended to help mountain-based tour operators and other mountain recreation professionals improve their environmental and social performance. The rapid growth in travel to mountain ecosystems poses potential threat to the health of their natural and cultural resources. A self-assessment checklist is included for tour operators to both identify areas of business practice improvements and tool for selecting business partners and suppliers based on sustainability criteria.

- A project for the restoration of Sarica Church in Cappadocia (Turkey), located in Kepez Valley in Nevsehir Province, was awarded the Conservation of Architectural Heritage prize (part of the European Union prize for Cultural Heritage/Europa Nostra Awards 2006) by the European Commission and Europa Nostra. The project was sponsored by Vasco Turizm, a member of TOI, and carried out by KA.BA Conservation of Historic Buildings and Architecture Ltd. over a period of seven years. Having suffered from severe surface erosion due to rainwater infiltration, cracks and flaking, the project stands out as a rare example of a successfully restored and revitalised rock-carved church that, in addition, become more accessible to visitors.

More information on TOI activities can be found in the TOI’s quarterly newsletter (News from TOI)
http://www.toinitiative.org

5. News from the Task Force to Protect Children and the World Committee on Tourism Ethics

1. The Task Force to Protect Children from Sexual Exploitation in Tourism held its twentieth meeting in Berlin on 9 March 2007, as part of parallel events held during ITB. The meeting, which was attended by over 100 delegates, featured a Special Session on Child Exploitation through Trafficking and its relationship with the Travel and Tourism Industry. One of the key decisions taken at this session was to broaden the mandate of the Task Force to cover all forms of child abuse. The report of this meeting as well as those from the previous Task Force meetings may be viewed and printed from our website: http://www.unwto.org/protect_children/index.htm. The twenty-first meeting of the Task Force is scheduled to take place at WTM London, on 12 November 2007.

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2. Following the invitation of the Regional Government of Madeira, the Fifth meeting of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics (WCTE) was held in Funchal, Madeira, on 15 and 16 June 2007. Among the main issues discussed at this last session of the Committee sitting under the current composition, were:

(a) the evaluation of the actual degree of implementation of the Code of Ethics by both governments and the private sector, and the preparation of a new survey questionnaire for future assessments;

(b) the recent promotional initiatives based on the Code, such as the partnership with the International Business Leaders Forum on Tourism and Human Rights for the tourism industry, the cooperation with the non-governmental organisation World Peace Passport focusing future generations of junior travellers, and the newly established web-based social network youtourist.travel; and

(c) the possible ways of enhancing the use of the conciliation mechanism offered by the Committee to the various stakeholders as a very helpful, discreet and credible tool for the settlement of disputes in the field of tourism.

3. The Committee further accepted the executive board of the extended Task Force to Protect Children from Exploitation in Tourism (now covering sexual exploitation, child labour and trafficking in children) as its new advisory body in terms of child protection in tourism.

4. Finally, the Members of the Committee adopted The Madeira Message on the future role of the Global
Code of Ethics for Tourism and of the Committee itself, which will be presented to the General Assembly for its endorsement at the forthcoming session to be held in November at Cartagena de Indias and, subsequently, for its dissemination to the international community.

5. The new composition of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics for the period 2008-2011 is currently being completed before its submission to Cartagena de Indias General Assembly later this year for endorsement.

6. UNWTO collaborates with Herity in its efforts to recover and understand cultural heritage

The Herity Conference held in Rome, Italy, on 6 June 2007, concluded that from the point of view of culture, every territory (country) has a significant and priceless Heritage Wealth. This Heritage constitutes the collective memory of Humanity and as a non-renewable resource, Cultural Heritage should be managed according to Quality principles, ensuring its preservation in the context of sustainable development.

Conclusions that resulted, addressed the following: a) need for clear classification of monuments, sites and museums; b) recognized the significance of their value to people and the importance of continuously updating the information; c) recognized that tourism is a key contributor to heritage sites and should be managed with quality and sustainability principles in mind; and d) identified that in addition to safeguarding and valorizing cultural heritage sites, the activities should be considered a collective responsibility worldwide.

7. The European Commission’s Action Plan for a more sustainable tourism has been completed

In late 2004, the Tourism Sustainability Group (TSG) was formed with the aim of defining policy guidelines and actions for the sustainability of European tourism. The 22 member group - represented by stakeholders from the public sector, tourism industry associations, destinations and civil society, including UNWTO and UNEP - had 3 main objectives:

- to draft, discuss and table a detailed framework for action which allocates specific activities to the individual stakeholder groups, including an agreed timetable for implementation;
- to evaluate regularly the implementation of the measures provided for in the framework for action;
- to provide value also for the players on the ground

The TSG began its work in 2005 and formulated its proposals and recommendations in a report that was completed in February 2007. An open web-based consultation was conducted on the TSG report, and in July 2007 the results were reviewed and discussed. General comments from the assessment review were positive and additional discussions on implementation procedures are currently ongoing.

UNWTO will continue supporting the TSG on sustainable tourism policy issues and for the effective implementation of this action plan to make tourism more sustainable in its European Members.
8. Regional event for the Americas on Standards, Quality and Sustainability in Tourism Destinations

From 14 to 17 May 2007, the UNWTO and the Venezuelan Ministry of Tourism (MINTUR), held a seminar in Caracas devoted to Standards, Quality, and Sustainability in Tourism Destinations, with the main objective of showing the links and interdependence between quality and sustainability in tourism.

The event consisted of three activities, namely, the 2nd Regional Consultation for the Americas on Standards and Quality Systems in Tourism, an international seminar, and a workshop on the joint application of two working instruments of the UNWTO: parameters for the evaluation of tourism quality in destinations, and sustainability indicators.

The event brought to light the strong interest that most of the countries of the Americas have taken in working on public quality standards and systems relative to tourism activities, as we as instruments and reference frameworks for the sustainability of tourism destinations. This effort will help the conservation and appreciation of tourism resources and assets, as factors of comparative advantage, and foster responsible production and consumption patterns in tourism.


9. Advances with the application of sustainability indicators for tourism destinations in Indonesia and Montenegro

The UNWTO workshop series on indicators has been continued in order to support the implementation of national and destination level tourism policies.

- A national workshop was held on the island of Lombok, Indonesia, on 21-24 March 2007, jointly with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Indonesia. The event was designed to support the national policy for decentralization in tourism management and in order to strengthen the capacity of regional and local authorities for the sustainable development of the sector. ([Final Report](http://example.com/final_report))

- A regional workshop was held in Kolasin, Montenegro for Central and Eastern European countries between 25-27 April 2007, hosted by the Ministry of Tourism and Environment of Montenegro. The Workshop used the Bjelasica-Komovi Region as pilot destination in order to demonstrate the practical application of sustainability indicators. This is an emerging tourism destination, and represents well the objectives of the National Tourism Development Strategy to diversify the country's tourism product and develop in a sustainable way the northern mountain region of the country that boosts pristine mountains, forests and rivers, as well as various national parks. ([Final Report](http://example.com/final_report))

10. UNWTO calls for promoting Sustainable Tourism practices and policies in Central and Eastern Europe

International Tourism growth in Europe has exceeded expectations over the last three years, with the Baltic States outstanding as strong performers. UNWTO’s long-term global forecast of 4% yearly growth...
until 2020 is likely to be matched or even exceeded in this region, assuming that GDP growth is maintained. Particularly Lithuania has experienced a considerable increase of both its share of arrivals and receipts within Central and Eastern Europe.

This strong economic performance in Central and Eastern Europe goes hand in hand with the increasing recognition of ensuring sustainable growth in its environmental, social and economic dimensions, based on solid institutional and management structures.

These issues were addressed during the International Seminar on “Sustainable Development of Tourism in Central and Eastern Europe” organized by UNWTO and hosted by Lithuania, from 28 February-1 March, 2007 in the capital in Vilnius. The event brought together more than 200 participants from 20 European countries, ranging from tourism policy makers, managers at national, regional and destination levels, private sector and academia representatives... (read more...)

More information:
For more information, please click here
Information Note
Programme and Presentations


Following the 45th meeting of the UNWTO Commission for Europe, a seminar on "Policies, Strategies and Tools for Sustainable Development of Tourism was organised by the World Tourism Organization, in conjunction with the Government of Kazakhstan, in April 2006.

The Seminar was held in Almaty, Kazakhstan and was attended by some 90 people. Conclusions and seminar proceedings are now available and can be obtained at the following links:

For more information, please click here
Publication available in the UNWTO Infoshop, please click here

12. SDT contributed and participated in the following events:

12-13 July 2007 - Helsinki (Finland): TOI/WWF Core Group meeting and TOI Board Members' meeting


6 July 2007 - Sophia-Antipolis (France): Technical Committee Meeting on Sustainable Tourism Indicators for the Mediterranean, by Plan Bleu

4 July 2007 - Brussels (Belgium): Tourism Sustainability Group (TSG) - Eighth Plenary Meeting

18-19 June 2007 - Brussels (Belgium): EC 11th Annual Euro-Mediterranean Economic Transition
17-20 June 2007 - Sevilla (Spain): Foro Internacional sobre la Sequía (International Forum on Drought)

15-16 June 2007 - Funchal, Madeira (Portugal): 5th Meeting of World Committee on Tourism Ethics (WCTE)

13-14 June 2007 - Riga (Letonia): Seminar on "Sustainable development - Challenges for competitive growth of tourism sector"

25-26 May 2007 - Rome (Italy): Forum AITR - Asociación Italiana Turismo Responsable "El turismo responsable y la lucha contra la pobreza"

22-23 May 2007 - Paris (France): DestiNet Partnership Meeting - Reunión técnica de coordinación con la Directora del PNUMA-París


2-3 May 2007 - Geneva (Switzerland): Workshop on Results-Based Management

27 April 2007 - Hamburg (Germany): International Blue Flag Jury

24 April 2007 - Madrid (Spain): Reunión con funcionarios de la Secretaría de Turismo de España sobre la "Conferencia Turismo y Religión"

19 April 2007 - Marid (UNWTO Secretariat): TOI Board Members Meeting

13 April 2007 - St. Andrews (Scotland): Sustainable Tourism - The Agenda for Destinations

22-23 March 2007 - Barcelona (Spain): "L'OCUC" Congreso sobre turismo sostenible


15 March 2007 - Paris (France) - UNESCO: E-CLAT Technical Seminar "Policy Dialogue on Tourism, Transport and Climate Change: Stakeholders meet researchers"

12-14 March 2007 - Paris (France): UNEP 2nd Meeting of the Task Force on Sustainable Tourism

12 March 2007 - Brussels (Belgium): Advisory Committee Meeting OWHC Kazan

9 March 2007 - Berlin (Germany) - ITB Berlin: 20th Meeting of Task Force to Protect Children from Sexual Exploitation in Tourism; V ST-EP Forum

7 March 2007 - Berlin (Germany) - ITB Berlin: Travelife - Sustainability in Tourism


23-24 February 2007 - Milan (Italy): SKAL International Forum on Sustainable Development

2 February 2007 - Madrid (UNWTO Secretariat): 3rd Meeting of the Board of Directors, UNWTO-STEP Foundation
For SDT Events:
http://www.unwto.org/sustainable/top/events.html

For other tourism events see WTO Events Calendar:
http://www.unwto.org/calendar/menu.html

The World Tourism Organization is a UN Specialized Agency that serves as a global forum for tourism policy and issues. Its Members include 157 countries and territories as well as over 350 Affiliate Members from the public and private sectors. WTO's mission is to promote and develop tourism as a significant means of fostering international peace and understanding, economic development and international trade.

http://www.unwto.org/