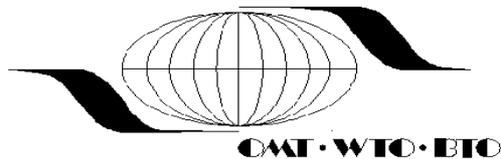


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**WTO COMMISSION FOR EAST ASIA  
AND THE PACIFIC**  
Thirty-second Meeting  
Kyoto, Japan  
18 February 1998

# **REPORT**



## **Note by the Secretary-General**

*The Secretary-General submits to the Commission,  
a report on the thirty-second meeting of the WTO  
Commission for East Asia and the Pacific.*

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## **I. Brief Overview**

At the invitation of the Government of Japan, the thirty-second meeting of the WTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific was held at the Kyoto International Conference Hall in Kyoto, Japan on 18 February 1998.

The Commission considered, amongst other matters, a tourism market report which provided statistical and analytical information on the development of international tourism in the region in 1997 and trends in tourism activities over the past ten years. The Commission expressed its opinion and comments on the contents and scope of the report and also suggested improvements that it considered necessary. The Commission was apprised of the regional and technical co-operation activities carried out by the Organization in 1997 within the region and, the planned activities for 1998-1999. In addition, the Commission heard with great interest the communication of its Chairman (Thailand) in which the regional situation was analyzed in detail. The Secretary-General made his preliminary remarks which touched upon the status of the world tourism in 1997, the current economic crisis in Asia and its impact on tourism, and summarised the action initiated by the Secretariat to implement the general programme of work of the Organization in the region. The Secretary-General also informed the Commission of the salient features of the planned activities of the general programme of work.

## **II. Communication of the Chairman**

After adopting the provisional agenda of the meeting, which was prepared and submitted by the Secretary-General, the Commission received the communication of Mr. Pradech Phayakvichien, Deputy Governor, Tourism Authority of Thailand in his capacity as Chairman of the Commission.

Welcoming all the delegates and praising the Government of Japan for its excellent organization and warm hospitality, the Chairman gave a brief overview of the world tourism situation in 1997. He stated that last year was a year of moderate growth for international tourism resulting in 613 million tourist arrivals with an increase of 2.9 per cent. This was translated into tourism receipts of US\$ 448 billion, an increase of 2.7 per cent. As for East Asia and the Pacific, 1997 had a mixed pattern. On average the region experienced a severe setback in both tourist arrivals and receipts with only 1 per cent growth while China recorded an 18.4 per cent jump in receipts.

The Chairman stated that the downturn trend in tourism was triggered by the Asian economic crisis. However, this financial crisis would be a temporary phenomenon and its setback would not drastically affect the region's tourism forecast for the long-term due to the solid foundation of its tourism industry. Over the last decade, the infrastructure and superstructure have been well developed with quality facilities and services well provided. This basic strength will help managing the recovery faster and, East Asia and the Pacific will still catch up with the original degree of growth in tourism by the Year 2020.

The Chairman continued by saying that the Members' efforts to remedy the situation are being hampered by the steep decline in the amount of

marketing budget available to both the public and private sectors and by the potential threat of airlines cutting back flights because of the decline in outbound business from Asia. Many of the countries are relocating the marketing budgets and promotional activities to the more productive markets of North America and Europe. Yet in these markets, severe competition comes from other regions such as the Caribbean, Africa and Latin America. The Chairman urged WTO to carry out detailed analyses of these markets and advise the region as to how best they can respond to the fierce competition coming from other destinations. He expected that WTO and other international travel and tourism organizations would put more emphasis on, and devote resources to, this kind of activity in order to meet the specific requirements of the members States.

The Chairman also informed the Commission of the various activities carried out by the Organization as applied to the region. He said that several sectoral support and technical assistance missions were fielded to answer the needs of member countries. A variety of subjects were covered such as training, legislation and marketing. The Secretariat continued its technical assistance to member countries in formulating national and regional tourism plans. In 1997, several regional conferences were successfully organized such as the Asia-Pacific Ministers' Conference on Tourism and Environment in the Maldives, the World Tourism Leaders' Meeting on the Social Impacts of Tourism in the Philippines and, the Pan-Asia/Pacific Technical Seminar on Tourism and Aviation in Macau. A number of good quality publications and reports have been published for the region. These reports will be of great use to policy makers, implementers and researchers.

The Chairman was pleased to see the achievements made by the Organization in other areas of the programme of work, such as the healthy development of the Silk Road project, the revised study on *Vision 2020*, the series of monographs on tourism market trend in the world and in the regions, and the on-going preparation for the proposed International Conference on Statistics and Measurement of the Economic Importance of Tourism.

The Chairman concluded by calling upon all members of the Commission to work together under the banner of the Organization and share their resources, knowledge and experience in order to address many of the common issues facing the region.

### **III. The State of World Tourism in 1997**

By congratulating the chairmanship of Thailand and by thanking the Japanese Government for its warm welcome and for the outstanding facilities it made available to the meeting, Mr. Francesco Frangialli, WTO Secretary-General, made his preliminary remarks to the Commission. Together with WTO's Chief of Statistics and Market Research, Mr. Enzo Paci, the Secretary-General presented the Commission with a detailed analysis on the state of world tourism in 1997 with the following salient features:

Provisional estimates of world tourism for 1997 show that international tourist arrivals increased by 2.9 per cent reaching a record high of 613 million. The receipts rose to 448 billion US dollars, an increase of 2.7 per cent. In 1997, the regions that recorded the highest increases in arrivals were Africa (7.4 %), South Asia (5.1 %), the Middle East (4.1) and Europe (3.2). In East Asia and

the Pacific, on the other hand, international tourist arrivals grew by only 1.1 per cent.

Last year, France was again the world's most visited country with 66.8 million arrivals, followed by the United States (48.9 million) and Spain (43.4 million). So far as receipts were concerned, the United States came in first, ahead of the three European countries that attained virtually the same level, namely Italy, France and Spain. Among the most remarkable performances of the leading countries in 1997, it should be mentioned that arrivals for Turkey were up by 13.5 per cent and receipts for China by 18.4 per cent.

However, the Asia-Pacific area has hampered the development of the world tourism industry as a whole in 1997. The abrupt decline in fiscal and currency flows in the last months of the year and the resulting stagnation, calculated over the whole year, have had repercussions on the industry's overall performance. It was the "stagnation" of Asia-Pacific that reduced by one-third the increase in worldwide arrivals.

#### **IV. Asian Financial Crisis and its Impact on Tourism**

Continuing his preliminary remarks, the Secretary-General briefly analysed the on-going economic crisis in Asia and its repercussions on the tourism industry. The major characteristics of the crisis were:

- principal stock markets have suffered large-scale loss of value, and the fragility of the overextended financial and banking systems stood clearly manifested;
- several currencies, hitherto often pegged to the US dollar by virtually stable rates of exchange, were strongly devalued;
- numerous financial and real estate assets, often artificially overvalued, were severely and suddenly depreciated;
- the growth rates of economies sharply declined;
- unemployment and inflation levels escalated considerably, the former as a result of the lower growth rate and the latter as a consequence of the stringent rationalization of the economies;
- the burden of the public and private debt was felt in all its force and made more acute for debts denominated in foreign currencies by the necessity of having to repay them with devalued currencies and by more expensive imports;
- the services of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) were called upon, in August for Thailand, in December for the Republic of Korea, and in September and again in January 1998 for Indonesia, while other countries like Malaysia applied stringent financial policies to prevent such a necessity; and
- regional balances have shifted with Japan, the region's leading economy being weakened; with Philippines and Malaysia holding

up better than Thailand, the Republic of Korea and Indonesia; and with China enjoying a position of relative strength.

The Secretary-General stated that the impact of the economic and monetary crisis, however, should be seen in relative terms. According to IMF's estimates, the growth achieved in 1997 will have been 1.1 per cent for Japan, 1.7 per cent for Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines, and 3.6 per cent for the newly industrialized countries of the region. It is a dramatic slowdown but not a recession.

The Secretary-General summarized the following immediate repercussions for the regional tourism industry:

- limited business travel due to reduced level of general activity;
- decline in expenditure on leisure and holidays, especially for middle and upper class categories;
- reduced growth of inter-regional air traffic and slowdown in investment by local companies or airlines serving the region;
- bankruptcies especially in the hotel and catering trades;
- growth of internal competition with a proliferation of discounts and promotional measures;
- staff cuts or checks on recruitment in the various branches of the tourism industry and in the transport sector; and
- a lull in arrivals in the region, reflecting two contradictory phenomena: the slump in intraregional flows and, by contrast, but with a limited effect, the growth in arrivals from Europe in such destinations as Thailand or Bali, which have suddenly become more competitive.

In the particular case of the severely affected inbound industry of Hong Kong SAR, specific problems added to the general difficulties, such as the image of the destination, disputed trade practices and a health scare. Indonesia, for its part, suffered the effects of the smog caused by the outbreaks of forest fires in the country.

In addition, the excessively rapid growth of previous years in the region resulted in certain development imbalances such as the inadequacy of public infrastructure, the excessive indebtedness of enterprises, inadequate planning, over-capacity of hotels, the failure to adapt training systems and the damage caused to the environment. All these imbalances, if not worsened the crisis, at least hampered the capacity of the operators to respond to it.

The Secretary-General went on to spell out the foreseeable repercussions in the medium and longer term of this monetary and stock market turmoil for the Asia-Pacific tourism industry.

The effects of the crisis, barring other significant developments, will be felt over a three-year period. Strong in 1998, the effects would be less acute but still appreciable in 1999 and 2000. Intraregional flows over the period 1995-2000 would grow by 4.6 per cent a year, instead of the 8 per cent as predicted in the WTO study "*Vision 2020*". Long-haul travel from the region would increase over the same period by only 2.2 per cent each year, compared to the 6.4 per cent of the original forecasts. On the other hand, arrivals from other regions would grow more strongly than predicted, insufficiently nonetheless to offset the loss of intraregional flows.

On the whole, compared to the estimates made before the crisis, the Asia-Pacific region would lose, up to the year 2000, some 11 to 12 million potential arrivals, representing a loss of earnings of some 10 per cent. This is the negative aspect that should be taken into account. The positive aspect is that beyond the year 2000, the region should recover with a strong upward trend which seems to typify the pattern of its tourism development over the last decade.

The 1997 crisis will thus bring about a standstill in tourism development. Rather than heralding a collapse, the years 1997-2000 should be a period of structural adjustment and moderate expansion towards a more sustainable and healthier development. In the longer term and, barring any new major incident, Asia-Pacific and its tourism still have a brilliant future before them.

The Secretary-General stated that the Asia-Pacific countries may count on WTO's support in their efforts to help the tourism enterprises get back on the track of strong growth. He was confident that WTO will be able to lend them decisive support in this regard.

During the discussion under this agenda item, some members informed the Commission that although the region experienced a moderate growth in tourism receipts in 1997, the actual gains in local currency terms were much higher than calculated in US dollars. This was particularly true for Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia. The same was the situation in Europe. For instance, Spain's growth rate in receipts were 10 per cent up in Peseta terms, but only up by 1 per cent if compared in US dollars.

## **V. The State of the Organization**

WTO has gained further strength itself from its last General Assembly held in Istanbul in October 1997. This was the most important event in the history of the Organization owing to both the number and quality of the participants.

Last year, WTO welcomed six new member States, an additional Associate Member and some sixty new Affiliates. It adopted its programme of work and budget for 1998-1999 and improved its financial resources with significant reduction in the Members' contributions. The Assembly renewed its organs and elected its new Secretary-General, and, designated a new Deputy Secretary-General.

Above all, the supreme body made a major choice at Istanbul: to build an effective, active and living partnership between the public and private sectors, yet without renouncing its status as an intergovernmental organization attached to the United Nations system.

This major policy will gradually be put into effect in the coming months. The Affiliate Members from the private sector have already set up a WTO Business Council. A strategy group comprising senior representatives of the two sectors will be set up to perform an advisory function for the Secretary-General. The procedures for preparing the next programme will be reviewed in order to reflect more realistically the needs of the tourism industry.

The Secretary-General informed that the next session of the WTO Executive Council will be held in Lisbon, Portugal in June 1998, immediately after a ministerial conference to be held within the framework of the International Exposition (Expo'98). The Council will review the progress made and take the necessary decisions for implementing the policies established by the Assembly. It will ensure that the Organization is increasingly representative of the reality of the world tourism industry in all its diversity.

The robustness of the Organization is also mirrored in its accounts, said the Secretary-General. The provisional financial results for the year 1997 show a slight surplus of income over expenditure, which will serve to achieve a global surplus of some 1.3 million US dollars over the biennium 1996-1997. Receipts, which came to 6.76 million US dollars last year, were the highest ever recorded in the history of the Organization.

Although total contributions of the States and UNDP have dropped slightly, the income drawn from interest on investments, publications and miscellaneous receipts have increased considerably. This reveals the beginning of a diversification of the Organization's resources. This movement must be encouraged if in the long term, the Organization wish to be a little less dependent on the contributions of member States alone.

With a level of some 7.9 million US dollars, expenditure has increased considerably, proof of a clear improvement in the execution of the programme. Yet, the operating costs have been contained. Payments of arrear contributions, though less than in previous years, have been substantial, amounting to over a million US dollars.

In short, the Secretary-General stated that the Organization is sound and healthy, both in financial terms and in the execution of programme activities.

## **VI. Activities of the Organization in East Asia and the Pacific**

Since the Commission held its meeting in Macau in May 1997, the Secretariat carried out a number of activities in the region, said Dr. H. Varma, WTO's Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific in his presentation to the Commission under agenda item 5. The presentation provided a detailed review of the Organization's activities implemented in the region for 1997 and

those proposed to be conducted under the core areas of the general programme of work.

## **1. Cooperation for Development:**

In 1997, the Organization conducted 6 sectoral support and technical assistance missions in the region. These missions were aimed at assisting members in formulating project proposals in the field of planning, marketing, legislation and human resource development.

In 1998, the Secretariat will implement a technical assistance project on the formulation of a tourism development master plan for Sichuan Province (China) which is fully funded by the Sichuan Provincial Government.

While the Secretariat was making every possible effort to obtain funds from UNDP field offices for tourism project proposals, the Members were urged to establish contacts with their government agencies, which are responsible for coordinating external technical assistance, to obtain more UNDP funding for tourism projects.

## **2. Meetings in Asia**

Under the 1997 general programme of work, the Secretariat held a seminar on Tourism and Aviation in conjunction with the thirtieth meeting of the WTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific in Macau on 15-16 May 1997. The Seminar made a number of recommendations amongst these being that national tourism administrations should initiate a series of national seminars similar to that of WTO to stimulate awareness of the impacts of civil aviation upon each nation's tourism industry and that NTAs should develop mechanisms of consultation to make informed inputs into aviation policy and infrastructure decision-making.

The members of the Commission participated in the World Tourism Leaders' Meeting (WTLM) on the Social Impacts of Tourism which was jointly organized by WTO and the Government of Philippines in Manila in May 1997. The meeting attracted representatives from 77 countries and territories including 25 ministers who debated one of the most important effects of tourism development - its impacts on the social traditions and norms of societies. The meeting recognized that although negative impacts have received much media attention, these problems could be managed through effective and appropriate policies. It was agreed to support any measure to prevent the exploitation of children, youth and women arising from tourism activity and to secure this objective through the cooperation of all the stake holders in tourism.

The Meeting resulted in the Manila Declaration on the Social Impacts of Tourism which urged governments and the private sector to make all possible efforts to maximize the positive impact of tourism development and eradicate the negative ones. Participants also agreed to work toward the formulation and eventual adoption of a Global Code of Ethics for Tourism.

In 1998, three meetings are planned by the Secretariat for the Silk Road countries: the Travel Forum in Kyoto in February, the Tour Operators Workshop in Kazakstan in August or September, and the Third International Meeting on the Silk Road in Tbilisi, Georgia in October. Activities will also be initiated to implement the proposed Handicrafts Centre project as well as the TV series project within the framework of the WTO Silk Road Tourism Project .

### **3. Cooperation with ESCAP**

The Secretariat has been working in close cooperation with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) to assist the Members in further development of the tourism sector. The Secretariat is collaborating with ESCAP and the Asian Development Bank in the Mekong sub-region tourism development project. A joint ESCAP/WTO meeting on the establishment of the network of Asia-Pacific Education and Training Institutes in Tourism (APETIT) was organized in Tehran, Iran in September 1997. Plans are also being finalized to conduct a regional seminar on facilitation of travel in July 1998 in Thailand. WTO will participate in seminars and workshops which are being organized by ESCAP in 1998 on subjects of interest to the countries in the region.

### **4. WTO Regional Support Office**

Thanks to the generous support of the Government of Japan and the Osaka Prefecture Government, the Regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific was officially opened in Osaka in 1995, which enabled the Organization to considerably strengthen its operational activities in favour of all the countries of the Asia-Pacific region.

After having successfully conducted several important meetings in Japan since its inception, the Office is now taking a number of new initiatives including hosting of this WTO Tourism Week in Kyoto and a training seminar on tourism marketing in collaboration with ESCAP in Vietnam.

It may be further mentioned that the activities of the Regional Support Office are being actively supported by the Asia-Pacific Tourism Exchange Center (APTEC) which was established in 1995 with the explicit objective of contributing to the promotion of economic development and mutual international understanding in Asia and the Pacific through international tourism exchange in the region. The Centre is promoted by local authorities and business circles of the Kansai Region.

### **5. WTO Publications for Asia**

As a result of the conferences and seminars held in this region during the period under review, five publications were released. As a follow-up to the just released publication of WTO, - *Asia-Pacific Tourism in Figures*, the Secretariat plans to launch a survey of all Asian countries in order to produce a publication - *Asia-Pacific Tourism Development Review*, towards the end of 1998.

## 6. Human Resource Development

It is recalled that WTO's programme of work in education and training has been restructured so as to perform the mission of achieving quality in human resource development and, reflecting the needs of future professionals, tourism industry employers and member States.

A publication, "*An Introduction to TEDQUAL*" (*Quality in Tourism Education*) has been produced. This publication is aimed at facilitating quality audits in tourism education and training and will be used in courses imparted on quality tourism education. The TEDQUAL quality audit is also intended to be used as a tool in itself to be applied to projects in the context of a tourism development plan for a country, region or a particular destination to identify quality gaps in education and training systems and to prioritize action.

The *Graduate Tourism Aptitude Test (GTAT)* is soon to be launched for pilot testing in selected education centres and will be administered in a computerized format, enabling students to receive not only a score but also an evaluation of their strengths and weaknesses. The results of this test will be recognized by all Centres in the WTO Education and Training network as well as collaborating institutions.

The *WTO Ulysses Awards for Excellence in Tourism Education and Training* to cover programmes and research will be launched during 1998-1999. The WTO Education and Training Website is now in operation. The WTO Internship Programme for officials of National Tourism Administrations is now in its fifth year and has been renamed as the "WTO Practicum". This year the programme will be carried out in two periods, one in May and the other in September, with two-week courses to be held at WTO Headquarters in Madrid.

With regard to the Educating the Educators seminar, the Tourism Authority of Thailand has expressed its desire to host an Educating the Educators seminar in Thailand during the first half of 1998.

In 1998, a new series of courses on Human Resource Development will be offered to cover the training necessities of the diverse regions, including such topics as TEDQUAL: Achieving Quality in Tourism Education and Training; Rural Tourism: Achieving Competitiveness for Tourism in Rural Areas; and, Education and Training Issues in Sustainable Tourism and Tourism Policy: The Role of Governments in Tourism.

The sixth meeting of the WTO Education and Training Centres Network was held at Istanbul on 21 October 1997 with twelve out of the fourteen Centres attending. Unanimous support was given to the projects underway. It was agreed to continue and strengthen the initiative established by the Centres to provide new courses and scholarships for officials of national tourism administrations of WTO member States, complementing those scholarships already offered by the French Government at the University of Paris I, Panthéon-Sorbonne and the Italian Government at the International School of Tourism Sciences of Rome.

## 7. Environment and Planning

The WTO Environment Committee held its Tenth Meeting at Jakarta, Indonesia, on 13 November 1997 which was hosted by the Government of Indonesia. The Committee meeting was preceded by a Joint WTO/WTTC Agenda 21 Think Tank Follow-up Seminar which took place on 12 and 13 November 1997. More than 100 delegates, coming mainly from Indonesia and the Asia and Pacific region, participated in the seminar.

In the East Asia and Pacific region, the Government of the Philippines has expressed its interest in being involved in the pilot-testing of the clean beach programme under the name of Blue Flag; arrangements are currently being made with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) with a view to undertaking this project as soon as possible.

The Environment and Planning Section of WTO is currently involved in the organization of the World Conference on Tourism in Small Island States, with the support of UNEP. The Conference will be held in Mauritius, from 7 to 10 September 1998 and will cover the following four main subjects:

- The economic impact of tourism on small island states and its evaluation.
- Air transport and its importance for the development of tourism in the islands.
- Tourism and environmental quality in the islands, particularly in coastal areas.
- The development of nautical tourism in the islands and its environmental impact.

## **8. Statistics and Market Research**

Since the previous meeting of the Commission, WTO has carried out a number of activities aimed at informing Members of tourism trends and prospects on a global scale. At the same time, a series of actions were underway to promote the implementation and application of WTO-UN Recommendations on Tourism Statistics and to help the States to appreciate and assess more accurately tourism's economic importance, both nationally and internationally.

With regard to statistical publications, mention should be made of the following:

- ◆ publication of the third edition of the Travel and Tourism Barometer containing the first detailed data for 1997 on tourism receipts and expenditure and flows to and from the main tourist markets worldwide;
- ◆ the Secretariat is preparing the eighteenth edition of the Compendium of Tourism Statistics containing thirty-four basic statistical indicators illustrating tourism trends in over 190 countries and territories during the period 1992-1996; and

- ◆ the Secretariat is also in the process of concluding the fiftieth edition of the Yearbook of Tourism Statistics.

The Secretariat continued the updating of the Study on Global Tourism Forecasts to the Year 2000 and Beyond. An executive summary of this update was presented at the General Assembly in Turkey in October 1997 under the general title of “**Tourism: Vision 2020**”. This new study, structured around three pivotal points of research, focuses on:

- ◆ tourism environment and prospects to the year 2020;
- ◆ intraregional and long-haul tourist flows; and
- ◆ main emerging market segments, including methods for attracting and promoting them.

Efforts to implement the WTO-UN Recommendations on Tourism Statistics have focused on the initial preparation for the International Conference on Statistics and Measurement of the Economic Importance of Tourism, which WTO intends to hold in the beginning of 1999. A preparatory meeting of this Conference will be held in Mexico, in May 1998.

WTO has prepared the last edition of the “**Tourism Satellite Account (TSA)**” which will be discussed during the next meeting of the Steering Committee to be held in Madrid mid-March 1998.

## 9. Quality of Tourism Development

WTO is in the process of drawing up a recommended standard agreement on the status of official tourism representations abroad (administrative measures of sending and receiving countries) and of recommended amendments to the New York Convention concerning custom facilities for tourism.

The Organization continues to run a special Internet service as a **Child Prostitution and Tourism Watch**. This effort is part of the Plan of Action adopted by the World Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (Stockholm, Sweden, 1996) and is carried out with the help of major tourism operators in the world, the ECPAT organization, NGOs and national governments.

## 10. Communication and Documentation

Activities of WTO's Press and Communications section in 1998-1999 put new emphasis on promotion of the economic importance of the tourism industry, especially among governments through work related to the International Conference on Tourism Economic Statistics. The following year, the focus expands to include the general public through campaigns to prevent undesirable social, culture and environmental effects of tourism, through promotion of WTO's upcoming Global Code of Ethics and a traveller awareness campaign.

The programme also continues current efforts to enhance the image of the World Tourism Organization as an active leader of the entire tourism industry and central point for professional tourism information. This is accomplished through the production of professional publications, expansion and improvement of the information available on the WTO website on Internet, participation in tourism fairs, regular communication with industry, and media relations.

The provision of comprehensive and up-dated information to support the general programme of work will continue to be a primary function of the WTO's Documentation Centre. The Centre will develop and expand customer-oriented information services so as to meet the growing needs of Members and other external users. At the same time, priority will be given both to make information more readily accessible through the development of CD-ROM products and interactive on-line services, and to offer guidance and standards to National Tourism Administrations (NTAs) for establishing information resource centres and facilitating information access and exchange within the present global information networking development.

In 1998, a WTO publication - **Tourism Legislation**, including inventories of national laws and regulations governing the travel and tourism sector for each WTO Region will be produced. In the case of Asia and the Pacific, the regional inventory of the legislative texts compiled by country will be distributed during the first quarter of 1998. In addition, these bibliographic data will also be available on-line through the Organization's Internet site. As an initial stage, this service will be offered to Members only. On the basis of the legal information thus collected and processed by the Documentation Centre, the Commission may consider convening in 1998 or 1999 a **regional seminar on tourism legislation**. This technical meeting could either cover one or several aspects of the tourism activity such as tourism organization; accommodation; tourism investment incentives; tourism professions; tourism fiscal policy; protection and conservation of tourism resources/management of tourist sites and attractions.

## 11. **WTO Business Council**

Formerly known as the Affiliate Members Committee, the activities of the Council for 1998 will revolve around two major topics:

- a) "Taxation on Tourism": was the subject of a previous study by Deloitte & Touche which was discussed during 1997 at various seminars worldwide. The study's final report is now ready incorporating all the additional findings from these seminars. The study will be officially presented at Berlin (ITB – March '98) and available from then onwards for further presentations. A Asia/Pacific Seminar on Tourism Taxation is scheduled to be held at Kochi, India on 23-25 April 1998.
- b) "Evolution of Leisure Time and its Impact on Tourism": the first findings of this study, which was commissioned to Horwath UK, have just been received which will be further analysed during 1998 in seven seminars worldwide, out of which, two are tentatively

scheduled to take place in the East Asia/Pacific region, possibly one in China and the other in Australia.

## **VII. Next Commission Meeting**

The Republic of Korea and Macau expressed their interest in hosting the thirty-third meeting of the WTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific in the first half of 1999. The Commission requested the Secretary-General to take a decision on this at a later stage in consultation with the Chairman of the Commission.