

DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE UNWTO COMMISSION FOR SOUTH ASIA
AT ITS FORTY EIGHTH MEETING

Macao, China, 14 June 2006

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UNWTO COMMISSION FOR SOUTH ASIA

**Forty-eighth meeting
Macau, China**

14 June 2006, 14:30 – 17:45

AGENDA

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Communication of the Chairman
3. Preliminary remarks of the Secretary-General
4. Tourism market trends in South Asia in 2005
5. Crisis preparedness in tourism
6. Regional activities
7. Country briefs: an overview of each member Country's tourism performance in 2005
8. Draft of the General Programme of Work for 2008-2009: Identification of priority issues
9. Place and date of the forty-ninth meeting of the Commission

PREAMBLE

1. The 48th meeting of the UNWTO Commission for South Asia was held in Macao, China on 14 June 2006, at the gracious invitation of the Government of Macao SAR. This meeting was held within the framework of UNWTO's first Ministerial Roundtable on Asia-Pacific Tourism Policies, the nomination of the region's first Tourism Ambassador and the presentation of the Organization's market studies on 7 source markets of the Asia-Pacific region. The events were graciously inaugurated by H.E. Mr. Edmund Ho Hau Wah, the Chief Executive of Macao, China.
 2. The 48th meeting was chaired by Mr. Salman Javed, Managing Director of Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation in his capacity as representative of the Minister of Tourism – the Chairperson of the WTO Commission for South Asia.
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DECISIONS

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Agenda item 1 (document CSA/48/Prov.Agenda.)

3. Before reviewing the provisional agenda the Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific informed delegates that Pakistan had officially requested to host the next 49th Meeting of the Commission for South Asia and the 45th Meeting of the Commission for East Asia and the Pacific. India seconded the move.
 4. The provisional agenda was then **adopted** and the final agenda of the meeting is located on page 2.
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COMMUNICATION OF THE CHAIRMAN

Agenda item 2 (document CSA/48/2)

5. In her communication, which was delivered by the Managing Director of Pakistan Tourism Development Cooperation, the Chairman underlined the importance of tourism as a source of socio-economic development for many countries, particularly less-developed and developing countries. She also referred to the role of UNWTO in promoting tourism in the South Asian region and raising awareness on the importance of tourism development.
6. Through its tourism organizations the Government of Pakistan makes policies and regulations in line with UNWTO's guidelines. The Government's projects emphasize the involvement of local communities in order to achieve economic development, create employment and reduce poverty. The Pakistani Government is currently in the process of preparing new tourism policies and marketing strategies for sustainable tourism which local communities can benefit from.
7. The Chairman also mentioned that although the threat of avian flu is imminent, poverty still remains a major problem in the Asian region; but through cooperation and sustainable tourism, poverty can and will be overcome. Another issue that the Chairman addressed was travel advisories.

Since travel advisories affect the image of a country negatively, and its tourism for that matter, the Chairman suggested that UNWTO be consulted by countries issuing travel advisories in order that the contents of these advisories would be unbiased.

8. Lastly, the Chairman expressed her gratitude to the world community for extending cooperation to Pakistan during the earthquake of 2005. She also thanked UNWTO for providing guidelines for the revival of tourism in earthquake-hit areas. Because tourism in Pakistan contributes significantly to economic growth, the Government has made great efforts to revive tourism in damaged areas by investing heavily in infrastructure facilities in tourist areas and attractions.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL

Agenda item 3 (document CSA/48/3)

9. The Secretary-General informed the Commission of estimates of international tourism receipts for 2005, the top earners, the top spenders and the ranking of tourism in international trade. Estimates of international tourism receipts for 2005 amounted to USD 685 billion; however, this is to be taken with some caution given that it is a preliminary approximation. In comparison with 2004, there was a 7.7% increase. Asia as a whole received 20% of this amount, i.e. 139 billion. The countries that earned the most were USA, Spain, France, Italy, UK and China. The highest spenders were Germany, US, UK, Japan, France, Italy and China. With respect to international trade tourism is in the fourth position after petroleum products, chemicals and automotive products.

10. With regard to the outlook for 2006, the rising cost of fuel is certainly a concern for the tourism industry. However, tourism's proven resilience in the face of unfavourable circumstances makes us confident that its effect will be minimal. UNWTO's projected growth for the Asia-Pacific region is 5% barring any unforeseen negative major incident. In a survey the Organization conducted on the effect of price increase in oil it was found out that 60-70 per cent increase is a level the industry can sustain. Two groups of airlines are going to be affected by this situation: USA and small developing countries but globally, we do not expect the aviation industry to experience major difficulties.

11. Avian flu, climate change, environmental insecurity and poverty issues all go to show that tourism is part of global challenges. It is incumbent on us therefore to be active for the benefit of the tourism industry.

12. The Secretary-General also informed the Commission that UNWTO for the first time in its history hosted the UN Chief Executives Board meeting last April. It was chaired by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. The United Nations System Chief Executives Board, formerly known as the Administrative Committee on Coordination – is the forum that brings together the executive heads of all Organizations to coordinate and cooperate on a whole range of management issues facing the United Nations system. As the youngest Specialised Agency of the UN, this Board meeting in Madrid contributed remarkably to UNWTO's visibility and its importance within the UN system.

13. He continued his remarks by highlighting the Organization's activities. Even though we are half way in the year we are way ahead as far as our programme of work is concerned: we have held several seminars on destination management, new emerging markets, evaluation of promotional activities, sustainability indicators for tourism destinations, tourism and handicrafts and many other subjects directly related to the major components of the Organization's programme of work. We have already held the commission meetings for Europe, the Americas and Africa, and now that of Asia.

14. The Secretary-General informed the Commission that the financial situation of the Organization was good. Up to May we had received about 57% of contributions from our member countries, out of which only 29% has been spent so far. As far as membership is concerned we hit the 150 mark as of the last General Assembly (the 16th Session in Senegal). Comoros in Africa, is considering formalising its membership. The same goes for Brunei Darussalam. With regard to the US we have made remarkable strides in its attempt to have it rejoin the fold.

15. The Secretary-General concluded his remarks by informing the Commission that during the next Executive Council meeting in Ecuador (the 78th Session) he will announce to the Council the reinforcement and restructuring exercise he intends to carry out in the Organization. Some young staff members have been slated for promotion and new ones are going to be brought in through the external recruitment procedure.

TOURISM MARKET TRENDS IN SOUTH ASIA FOR 2005

Agenda item 4 (document CSA/48/4)

16. The UNWTO's Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific based his presentation on UNWTO's latest Tourism Market Trends for Asia and the Pacific and its quarterly Tourism Barometer, but he intends to expand this to include information on regional outbound situation as of next year. It is common knowledge that in the last 4 – 5 years tourism has suffered a series of crises of all kinds; however it is also a paradox that both tourists and the industry are gradually becoming inured to the proliferation of these crises. We have come to the realisation that staying at home is no safer than travelling.

17. In 2005, global annual growth rate was 5% and international tourist arrivals crossed the threshold of 800 million for the first time. 42 million more tourists were received worldwide and out of this, the share of Asia and the Pacific was 11 million – recording a growth rate of 7.4%, which was higher than the world average. We received 156 million international tourist arrivals which can be translated into 19% market share of the world. The strongest performer was Northeast Asia: it recorded 8 million new arrivals out of the 11 million received by the whole region. South East Asia and South Asia on the other hand did not perform as well, owing to the impact of the tsunami. They received less than the regional average.

18. If we make a historical comparison from 2000 – 2005 of international tourist arrivals, we see an increase of 40%, i.e. 45 million in numerical value. Asia's market share of 6 years ago was 16%, and despite persistent crises this has increased to 19%. UNWTO's forecast for growth in the region

also continues to hold. In the last 10 years, global average growth rate (6.6%) has superseded the projected growth rate of 5.2%. World average growth rate forecast for this year is 4.5%, but that of Asia and the Pacific is 8.9%.

19. From January to April this year preliminary estimates on tourist arrivals available in countries on individual basis are: Maldives 97%; Sri Lanka 28%; India 14%; Nepal 13%.

CRISIS PREPAREDNESS IN TOURISM

Agenda item 5 (documents CSA/48/5 and its annexes)

20. The Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific made introductory remarks on this item, after which Sri Lanka and Maldives shared their experiences on how to tackle crisis situations and to develop recovery plans.

21. The Regional Representative informed the Commission that the raison d'être of this agenda item is the series of crises that the tourism industry has been living with these past few years. Our reaction to them has been on adhoc basis, but given that crises are constantly featuring in today's world, there is the need for a more defined and strategic approach in order to overcome them as efficiently as possible. UNWTO is thus taking all the necessary measures in order to pre-empt or mitigate the effects of potential crisis on international tourism. During the recent session of the 16th session of the General Assembly in Dakar, the issue of disasters affecting tourism was considered and a Working Group on Risk-assessment and Crisis Preparation and Management was established to develop UNWTO's strategic action on disaster risk mitigation. France is the Chairman of this group and Thailand is one of its Vice Chairmen. The task force held its first meeting last March in Paris in order to prepare proposals for the Executive Council in June.

22. In fact the issue of crisis is now an integral part of the Organization's programme of work. UNWTO is now part of the UN crisis coordination team. We have also created a Tourism Emergency Resource Network (TERN) with the aim to rally the support of all partners at international, national and regional levels. PATA, IHRA and UFTAA are currently our partners.

23. At UNWTO's headquarters, we have established a permanent unit for crises and have appointed a national coordinator in each Member State for Avian flu. We are going to organise a series of seminars on management issues relating to crisis in anticipation of any possible unfavourable incident. We have also created a sub-page on crisis management on UNWTO's home page and have also prepared some guidelines on crisis management.

24. **Sri Lanka's** representative, Director General of Sri Lanka Tourist Board - Mr. Seenivasagam Kalaiselvam informed the Commission that Sri Lanka for the past 40 years has been facing a series of crisis which are mainly of internal political nature. Military conflicts, terrorist attacks and civil wars have been the bane of Sri Lanka's tourism industry. Other crises have also been in the form of natural disasters like floods, cyclones with the latest one being the tsunami. Most recently, external factors such as recession in tourism generating markets to Sri Lanka; September 11 2001 incident in the USA; the Bali bombings in 2002, the emergence of SARS in 2003, and the avian flu in 2004, have also been sources of concern for Sri Lanka. The terrorist-induced crises especially, receive wide

publicity in the international and local media and this affects the image of the country as a tourist destination.

25. Sri Lanka's strategies in moments of crisis are to take care of the tourists and keep them informed of the actual situation prevailing in the country; the industry as a whole unites and speaks with one voice; the industry responds quickly and disseminates information that reflect the real situation; no attempts are made to tell half-truths since it will damage the image of the destination and make it lose its credibility when found out; Sri Lanka has tried to develop better media relations skills and makes sure it is the first to tell the story as it is before the media.

26. **Maldives'** representative, the Deputy Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation, Mr. Abdul Hameed Zakariyya informed the Commission that tourism has been the backbone of Maldives' economy since 1972. It contributes about 30 per cent of the GDP; but indirect contributions raise the industry's share of the GDP to a striking 65 per cent. This heavy dependence of Maldives on tourism is a source of concern because it makes it vulnerable as it is subject to the uncertainties of external factors. The industry has been experiencing for the past three and a half decades fluctuations in its earnings owing to external shocks: the first and second Gulf Wars, the Sept 11th, the SARS epidemic, the tsunami, and more recently the possible outbreak of the avian flu in certain parts of the world. But so far, the largest blow to the Maldives tourism industry has been dealt by the tsunami of December 2004, following which occupancy dropped to a mere 25 per cent.

27. The Government's response to the crisis in the tourism sector was to counter the initial fears about the safety of visiting the Maldives. There were reports that the Maldives had almost completely disappeared from the surface of the earth for a few minutes as the tsunami swept over our low-lying archipelago.

28. Our priority, therefore, was to counter this negative publicity and at the same time repair and reconstruct the damaged resorts. To this end, the Government increased the budget of the Maldives Tourism Promotion Board by an additional 2 million dollars. The Board stepped up road shows and fairs in major source markets for the Maldives. The Board organized familiarization visits for tour operators, travel agents and travel trade journalists.

29. Promotional campaigns were mounted through the electronic media placing advertisements on the BBC, CNN and the National Geographic. Parallel to the promotional campaign, the repair and reconstruction of resorts were facilitated by waiving the customs duty for materials imported for such works. Financial concessions were offered to the damaged resorts by deferring their lease rent payments for varying periods depending on the extent of the damage.

30. Crisis preparedness played a key role in restoring traveller and investor confidence in the Maldives as we embarked on reconstruction and recovery. In order to address the crisis, we swiftly moved at the resort level and at the national level to draw up crisis preparedness plans. At the resort level, the aim was to enhance the safety of tourists in case of disasters. All the resorts were required to draw up and submit their crisis preparedness plans to the Ministry of Tourism. The plans formed part of a national disaster management plan for the Maldives. These were formulated with expertise from the UNWTO and other international organizations.

31. As a result of the foregoing measures, the slump in occupancy was reversed in about 10 months. Statistics for the first quarter of 2006 reveal an occupancy of 96% which is better than the occupancy reported for the same quarter in 2004 which was the best year in the pre-tsunami period.

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

Agenda items 6 (documents CSA/48/6 a,b,c)

32. With reference to Agenda item 6, the Commission was apprised of the activities carried out and planned in the region since its forty-seventh meeting held in Dakar, Senegal in November 2005. These activities are based on the outcome of a series of meetings the Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific had with the delegations from each Member State in the region represented at the General Assembly. The aim of these meetings was exchanging views and ascertaining the national agendas of each country as far as their tourism industry was concerned. Some of the activities already undertaken include the formulation of crisis management and national contingency plan, sustainable tourism indicators workshops and a seminar on new emerging markets.

33. For the very first time, the subjects of **handicrafts and tourism** were married in an international conference in the handicraft-rich country of Iran; and for being a relatively new phenomenon, it shockingly drew and held the attention and participation of more than 500 delegates from over 30 countries. Internationally renowned experts from UNWTO member States and non-members, international organizations and private sector representatives in handicrafts provided technical support for the Conference. The aim of the Conference was to raise awareness about the importance and role of local handicrafts for tourism development and reciprocally the importance of tourism as an agent for the protection and preservation of traditional crafts, methods of production and culture. The successful outcome of this 1st Conference made delegates agree that the 2nd be held in Thailand, another handicraft-rich country. They also concurred that a plan of action be formulated to guide the major conclusions of this Conference. It was further agreed that in view of the wide-range of specialists that the Conference attracted, there will be the formation of a panel of tourist handicraft experts.

34. Another novel activity is the market study of 7 major outbound markets of Asia and the Pacific region (Australia, China, Hong Kong, Japan, India, Republic of Korea and Thailand). These market studies are equally unique in that they have been done on Asia, for Asia and by Asian experts. The aim in undertaking these intra-regional studies is to assist Members in policy adjustment and readjustments.

35. Phuket Action Plan has been drawn to a close with the production of a DVD documentary reflecting the one-year-on situation of the countries affected with special emphasis on depicting the recuperation undergone since the disaster. The aim is to broadcast this film on pan-European television channels as well as TV channels of these countries' source markets in order to boost the growth of their tourism.

36. With respect to planned activities, the Secretariat intends to conduct more seminars and workshops on crisis management, sustainable tourism indicators and poverty alleviation. A follow-up will be made on the nomination of Jackie Chan as Asia-Pacific first Ambassador by considering the possibility of using other celebrities along the same poverty alleviation lines.

37. Representatives of UNESCAP and SNV gave short briefs on their activities in Asia. While the latter continues to focus on sustainability and human resource development through APETIT, SNV centres its activities mainly on fighting against poverty. They have 700 advisors around the world with about 100 in Asia.

38. The Chief of UNWTO's Regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific region based in Osaka apprised the Commission of his Office's activities in the region since its inception 11 years ago. They have maintained close collaboration with UNWTO head office in the organisation of some events in Asia. The most recent ones are the UNWTO Japanese Symposium on Encouraging Regional Tourism in China, (last May); and the 42nd Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific & Technical Seminar on Sustainable Management of the Landscape and Environment for Tourism, Shiga, Japan, (June 2005).

39. A number of **issues** emerged from the foregoing agenda items. With regard to the financial situation of the Organization which the Secretary-General made mention of in his remarks. **India** put in the suggestion that if the Organization's finances were that good, then part of it should be used to undertake a study that could produce recommendations on how to push up South Asia's performance. The Secretary-General took note of India's suggestion.

40. The Chairman of the Commission (**Pakistan**) requested that the Regional Support Office be more active in South Asia. **India** seconded this and enquired if the Regional Support office could consider a project on Buddha circuits – something along the lines of the Silk Road Project. **Bhutan** supported the suggestion linking the idea with tourism development. The Secretariat responded by proposing the possibility of organising a conference on the subject in the region. The Members of the Commission who are interested in hosting the conference are invited to put it in writing to the Secretariat.

COUNTRY BRIEFS: AN OVERVIEW OF EACH MEMBER COUNTRY'S TOURISM PERFORMANCE IN 2005

(Agenda item 7, document CSA/48/7)

41. During the session on **country briefs**, the 8 countries represented, i.e. Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, took turns to present the Commission with an overview of their respective country's tourism performance in 2005. Owing to time constraints countries did not go into much detail. However, the following is the summary of the scripts that were distributed on each country's report.

42. **Bhutan's** international tourist arrivals for 2005 grew by 47.3% (13,026) and gross earnings grew by 48.3%. The five major source markets for the last three years continue to be the USA, Japan, United Kingdom, Germany and France. Some of the major advancements that took place in tourism in Bhutan for 2005 are the following: Development of tourism inventory and database, sustainable development plan, tourism Act to provide framework for tourism development, software to streamline visa processing, launching of Bhutan's brand and corporate identity design and an

interactive web portal that has been designed for the Department of Tourism. The target for tourism arrivals in 2006 is set at 15,000. If the present trend continues, the target number will be surpassed.

43. The tourism industry in **Bangladesh** faced some difficulties in 2005 in terms of visitor arrivals. The first few months were promising, but for the year as a whole, the country registered 207,662 arrivals, which signifies a decrease of 23.45%. However, tourism earnings did not follow this trend. Foreign exchange earnings from tourism in 2005 registered a double digit growth of 13.27%. Domestic tourism has continued to show a steady upward growth. It is expected that tourist arrivals in Bangladesh will increase in the next years. Some projects are being implemented through the Government's funding in the tourist attraction areas of Bangladesh for enhancement of tourist facilities. Through the implementation of these projects, more and more local people and communities' involvement in the tourism development process will increase. Bangladesh has entered into an MOU agreement for Approved Destination Status (ADS) with People's Republic of China; therefore the arrival of more Chinese tourists in Bangladesh is expected. Bangladesh has also emphasized the creation of Human Resource Pool in the Tourism sector, as tourism is a service-oriented industry. This undertaking is aimed at creating an efficient workforce to face the challenges of globalization and achieve Millennium Development Goals.

44. The **Indian** outbound tourist market is one of the fastest growing and market watchers say that with the economy doing so well, the numbers are only going to boost further. Inbound tourism is also set to grow impressively. India achieved a record growth of 26.8% foreign arrivals in 2004 and 13.2% increase in 2005 with 3.92 million international tourist arrivals. Foreign exchange earnings from tourism have also shown a robust growth, 35% in 2004, and 20% in 2005 over the previous year. World Travel and Tourism Council has estimated that demand for India tourism will grow annually at 8.8% over the next decade. Extensive attention is also being given to new tourism products such as cruise tourism and medical tourism. The Government of India has given a high priority to the development of the tourism sector, allocating an increased budget for tourism infrastructure and hospitality related services, and marketing of tourism products. Major emphasis has been given to positioning India as a global brand. The Ministry of Tourism has launched its campaign titled 'Colors of India' as part of its ongoing Incredible India Campaign. Apart from the government budget, opportunities in the tourism sector have opened up to foreign investments. Hotel and tourism related industry investments are now eligible for an approval of up to 100% direct investment and are encouraged to set up hotels, golf courses, amusement parks and other forms of tourism businesses.

45. The promotion of **Iran's** tourism industry will not only raise tourism's importance in the country's gross national product, but it will also increase Iran's share in international markets. To achieve several objectives in tourism, Iran has drawn up certain plans which will be and are being implemented with the aim of boosting economic growth and eliminating poverty in underdeveloped regions of the country. The short-term plans for tourism include: taking advantage of existing capacities such as modern technology for preserving historical, cultural and natural relics, attracting foreign investment within the framework of foreign investment laws of the country, establishing bilateral relations for exchange of information, facilitating visa issuance to foreign tourists through issuing visas at five international airports of Iran upon their arrival in the country. (The government of the Islamic Republic of Iran approved new regulations recently which allow the issuance of a 15-day visas, which can be extended up to a month and even more, for all applicants at all points where foreign tourists arrive in the country). For the development of tourism in the medium-term scheme,

Iran has the following plans: launching of electronic visa issuance system, promotion of Iran in international markets, inviting credible international travel writers on familiarization tours, maintaining close working relationship with the private sector and launching of Iran's tourism offices at home and abroad. Lastly, the long-term plans of tourism in Iran include increasing its share of international tourists by about 1.5 percent over a 20-year period. This would mean receiving at least 20 million tourists and earning 2 percent of global tourist receipts or about at least 25 billion USD. Iran has also made a projection of a 30-percent annual growth rate for tourism by the Fourth Economic, Social and Cultural Development Plan.

46. The year 2005 was the worst year in the history of tourism in **Maldives**. Being hit by the devastating tsunami in December 2004, occupancy rate of resorts dropped drastically from nearly 100% to 25%. Twenty one resorts were damaged, making nearly 5,000 beds inoperable, while 6 of them had to be completely rebuilt. Fears were raised about the safety of the Maldives as a destination despite the fact that there were only 3 reported deaths. Although the economy of the Maldives had suffered badly due to its dependence on tourism, the government provided additional resources to regain the positive publicity of the Maldives as a tourism destination. With the help of the private sector, arrivals increased markedly. Occupancy rates improved gradually from 50% in June, to 75% at the end of the third quarter and finally reached 95% at the end of 2005. Thirteen out of the 21 resorts destroyed are back in operation bringing the total bed capacity to 17,600. However, in spite of the strong recovery, arrival figures dropped from 616,000 in 2004 to 350,000 in 2005. Europe remains the main generating market.

47. 2005 was a year of mixed performance for **Nepalese** tourism. A decrease in tourist arrivals was observed in the first two quarters followed by a recovery starting from June onwards. This posed a total decline of 2.54% and the number of arrivals for the year was 375,501. The decline in the first half of the year was because of the post Tsunami global impact in travel and the hangover of the street protest of September 2004. Knowing Nepal was suffering from image crisis and socio-political insecurity, the government adopted the confidence-building strategy to retain existing visitors and to focus on revival measures during the year. Promotion campaigns were carried out targeting the regional markets like Bangladesh, India and Malaysia. Nepal took part in other regular programmes such as travel trade fairs, press meetings, organizing familiarization trips, etc. The enhanced air connection with India and Bangladesh also benefited the industry as shown by the improved Bangladeshi arrivals and spill over effect of tourists to Nepal from India. With the continuous effort in recovery programmes, tourism performance improved in the second half of the year. However, the tourism revenue declined by 9% reaching a figure of US\$ 164 million in 2005 compared to 2004. With the improved socio-political environment, a brighter performance is expected in 2006. The tourism stakeholders have developed the main 2006 strategy to inform potential tourists that life in Nepal has returned to normal. The tourism performance in 2006-07 is forecasted to experience a 10% to 30% increase in arrivals bringing almost half a million visitors to Nepal.

48. Tourism in **Pakistan** maintained a high growth rate in 2005. After three years of tourism trough due to the aftermath of 9/11, the international tourist arrivals have been showing an upward trend since 2003. Pakistan hosted 798,000 international tourists in 2005, with a remarkable 23.2% increase from last year figures. The figure surpassed the target of 720,000 tourist arrivals set by the UNWTO in Tourism Development Master Plan. Pakistan received 67 mountaineering expeditions and 251 trekking parties in 2005, bringing in revenue of US\$0.309 million and US\$75,700 respectively. Historical places, archaeological sites and museums received 2,906 million visitors in 2005. Besides

the 798,000 international tourists that travelled to Pakistan, there were about 42 million domestic visitors. Tourism plays a significant role in the socio-economic development of Pakistan. Tourism earnings have increased at an annual rate of 20% over the last five years (2000-01 to 2004-05). Tourism is the 9th contributor to the foreign exchange earnings of the country while contributing US\$ 0.18 billion to the G.N.P. in 2004-05. Hospitality industry employed more than 600,000 people. There are 1,633 hotels with 38,173 rooms and approximately 1,939 travel agents and tour operators in Pakistan. The overall tourism strategy in 2006 would emphasise multi-dimensional approach to tourism and market development. Foreign tourist arrival is expected to grow at 12% per annum, reaching 0.894 million in 2006 and 1.0 million in 2007, while domestic tourism would grow at 2.2 % annually, reaching 43 million in 2006 and 44 million in 2007. Foreign exchange earnings are forecast to increase by 5% per year, (i.e. US\$ 195 million in 2006 and US\$ 204 million in 2007). The number of hotels would be 1,796 and 1,976 in 2006 and 2007 respectively, reflecting a growth of 10%.

49. Similar to those in the South Asian countries, tourism of **Sri Lanka** in 2005 was affected by the devastating tsunami of December 2004. The tourism plant located in the affected coastal belt was either partially or fully destroyed by the tsunami, causing heavy losses to tourism. Although the total monthly arrival figures were boosted by a large influx of tsunami aid workers and increase in arrivals from India as a result of offering incentives, the recovery process was slow. The overall arrival for 2005 dropped by 3%, i.e. from 566,202 in 2004 to 549,308 in 2005. The top five source markets of Sri Lanka remained the same as in 2004 – namely India, UK, Germany, France and Australia. India topped the list whereas in 2004 it was the UK. Despite the 2.3% increase in the average per day spending, the total earning from tourism dropped by 17.3%, to Rs. 36,377 million as compared to Rs. 42,666 million recorded for the previous year. The number of hotels in operation was 223 with 13,162 rooms. This had decreased from 240 hotels in the previous year due to the cancellation of 6 hotels which had not met the stipulated requirements; another reason was the suspension from operation of 11 hotels which had been damaged in the tsunami. On the other hand, the supply of supplementary accommodation units increased substantially. Sri Lanka collaborated closely with UNWTO in 2005. A workshop on Microfinance and Assistance to Small and Medium Enterprises in the Tourism Sector was held by UNWTO with the help of the Sri Lanka Tourism Board on 13th July 2005. Sri Lanka was chosen as the host country for the World Tourism Day 2007 with the theme “Tourism provides employment for women” at the 16th Session of the UNWTO General Assembly. Sri Lanka sought technical advice from UNWTO to commence a project to combat Child Sex Tourism (CST) with the technical and financial support from UNICEF, in June 2005 and to prepare a crisis management plan in 2005.

50. Tourism in **Pakistan** maintained a high growth rate in 2005. After three years of tourism trough due to the aftermath of 9/11, the international tourist arrivals have been showing an upward trend since 2003. Pakistan hosted 798,000 international tourists in 2005, with a remarkable 23.2% increase from last year figures. The figure surpassed the target of 720,000 tourist arrivals set by the UNWTO in Tourism Development Master Plan. Pakistan received 67 mountaineering expeditions and 251 trekking parties in 2005, bringing in revenue of US\$0.309 million and US\$75,700 respectively. Historical places, archaeological sites and museums received 2,906 million visitors in 2005. Besides the 798,000 international tourists that travelled to Pakistan, there were about 42 million domestic visitors. Tourism plays a significant role in the socio-economic development of Pakistan. Tourism earnings have increased at an annual rate of 20% over the last five years (2000-01 to 2004-05). Tourism is the 9th contributor to the foreign exchange earnings of the country while contributing US\$

0.18 billion to the G.N.P. in 2004-05. Hospitality industry employed more than 600,000 people. There are 1,633 hotels with 38,173 rooms and approximately 1,939 travel agents and tour operators in Pakistan. The overall tourism strategy in 2006 would emphasise multi-dimensional approach to tourism and market development. Foreign tourist arrival is expected to grow at 12% per annum, reaching 0.894 million in 2006 and 1.0 million in 2007, while domestic tourism would grow at 2.2 % annually, reaching 43 million in 2006 and 44 million in 2007. Foreign exchange earnings are forecast to increase by 5% per year, (i.e. US\$ 195 million in 2006 and US\$ 204 million in 2007). The number of hotels would be 1,796 and 1,976 in 2006 and 2007 respectively, reflecting a growth of 10%.

DRAFT OF THE GENERAL PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2008-2009: IDENTIFICATION OF PRIORITY ISSUES

(Agenda item 8, document CSA/48/8)

51. The Commission was reminded of the Secretary-General's "Survey on the Organization's General Programme of Work" which was circulated among Full, Associate and Affiliate Members on 15 March 2006. These questionnaire-surveys which are conducted by the Organization biennially have a three-pronged objective, of which the latter two relate specifically to the present agenda item. Firstly, the questionnaire assesses, from the standpoint of evaluation, Members' perception of the results achieved in implementation of the now completed general programme of work for 2004-2005. Secondly, the survey ascertains Members' expectations regarding the general programme of work for 2006-2007, which is now getting underway. Thirdly, and finally, the survey consults Members concerning the strategic priority issues that they wish to see included in the draft programme of work for the future biennium 2008-2009. Members of the Commission that have yet to return their surveys were urged to do so to enable the Organization to complete its findings.

PLACE AND DATE OF THE 49TH MEETING OF THE COMMISSION

(Agenda item 9, document CSA/48/9)

52. The Commission accepted the proposal of Pakistan, the current Chairman of the Commission, to host the 49th Meeting of the Commission for South Asia as well as the 45th Meeting of the Commission for East Asia and the Pacific in 2007. Iran proposed to be the next host in 2008. However, the Secretariat reminded Members that it will be the turn of East Asia and the Pacific to host the two meetings in accordance with the rotational rule. The Commission took note of Iran's proposal to be the host in 2009.

53. The representative of the Chairman closed the 48th meeting of the Commission expressing, on behalf of all the Members, his sincere thanks and appreciation to the staff of the Macao Government Tourist Office, as well as to the UNWTO Secretariat for the successful organization of the meeting.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

The 48th Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for South Asia was attended by:

MEMBER STATES**COMMISSION FOR SOUTH ASIA****1) BANGLADESH**

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