

**DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE UNWTO COMMISSION FOR SOUTH ASIA
AT ITS FORTY-NINTH MEETING**

Islamabad, Pakistan, 25 April 2007

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UNWTO COMMISSION FOR SOUTH ASIA

Forty-ninth Meeting
Islamabad, Pakistan
25 April 2007

AGENDA PROPOSED BY PAKISTAN

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Communication of the Chairman¹
3. Preliminary Remarks by the Secretary-General²
4. Regional Activities – **Negative Travel Advisories, i.e. How to Combat Negative Travel Advisories**
5. Discussion on a Study on South Asia
6. The Organization's general programme of work
- Appointment of the Members of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics
7. Any other issue specific to the Commission – **Packaging of Various Travel Destinations**
8. Place and date of the fifty-first meeting of the Commission

¹ This item will be covered under item 2 of the 19th Joint Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for South Asia and UNWTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific

² Items 3 and 4 will be covered during the 19th Joint Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for South Asia and UNWTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific

PREAMBLE

1. The 49th meeting of the UNWTO Commission for South Asia (CSA) was held in Islamabad, Pakistan on 25 April 2007. The meeting was held in conjunction with the 45th meeting of the UNWTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific, the 19th joint meeting of the UNWTO Commission for South Asia and the UNWTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific and the UNWTO Asia-Pacific Conference on Low Cost Carriers.

2. The meeting was chaired by **Pakistan**.

3. The Secretariat informed the Commission that given that items 2, 3 and 8 had already been dealt with during the 19th Joint Meeting of the two commissions which was held just before the current meeting, the only items to be discussed during the 49th CSA Meeting would be items 1, and 4-7.

DECISIONS

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Agenda item 1 (document CSA/49/Prov.Ag.)

4. There were two provisional agendas prepared on this item: one by the Secretariat and the other by **Pakistan** based on the original one by the Secretariat but with additional items. After reviewing the two provisional agendas and taking into account the items proposed by Pakistan, the Chairman requested the Commission's comments and decision about which of the two provisional agendas to adopt.

5. The Commission opted for the provisional agenda proposed by Pakistan which was then **adopted**. The final agenda of the meeting is located on page 2.

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES – NEGATIVE TRAVEL ADVISORIES, I.E. HOW TO COMBAT NEGATIVE TRAVEL ADVISORIES

Agenda item 4

6. **Pakistan** was opposed to the issuance of over-generalised travel advisories which in many cases had become a permanent feature on issuing countries' websites even after situations in the offending area or country have normalised. Pakistan thus recommended that UNWTO play a proactive role and devise a mechanism whereby it will be consulted by countries issuing travel advisories.

7. The **Maldives** recalled that there was a resolution passed during the 16th General Assembly in Senegal in which countries issuing travel advisories had to consult the country or countries going to be affected by the travel advisory. Maldives also recognised the fact that nation States were sovereign and may not necessarily consider the document on this issue as binding. However, it would be appreciated if UNWTO could come up with a regime whereby the countries against which travel advisories are written would be involved in the drafting and the revision and withdrawal of negative travel advisories. Both **Sri Lanka** and Iran endorse the suggestions of Pakistan and the Maldives.

8. The Deputy Secretary-General responded to the issues raised by informing the Commission that travel advisories are not new, however they have been prevalent especially after September 11 and the last two years. Because of problems travel advisories appear to be giving especially the countries at the receiving end, UNWTO set up a Working Group on Travel Advisories composed of both developing and developed countries. Within the group there are also countries that issue the travel advisories and those that are affected by them. The Working Group drafted a set of guidelines which were approved by the Executive Council and the General Assembly in 2005. These guidelines advise that travel advisories be responsible and should follow the general thrust of the Code of Ethics that was adopted not only by UNWTO's General Assembly but also by the General Assembly of the United Nations. The Code of Ethics specifies stipulates that while UNWTO recognises the right of sovereign nations to advise their citizens and to protect them in every possible way, they must also issue travel advisories following these guidelines.

9. Some of the guidelines refer to the fact that travel advisories should be issued within a specific time frame; they should not remain on websites of governments' foreign ministries forever; they should be revised periodically and should clearly define the geographical scope of the area or country affected; travel advisories should be substantiated by very accurate information and several sources; the issuing country should even go to the extent of consulting with the country to be affected by the travel advisory. However, these guidelines are not obligatory. Countries may choose to abide by them or not.

10. The General Assembly during its meeting in Senegal requested that the Secretariat elaborate on these guidelines which it is currently doing.

DISCUSSION ON A STUDY ON SOUTH ASIA

Agenda item 5 (document CSA/49/5)

11. The Secretariat recalled that on a number of occasions during previous meetings of the Commission for South Asia, members had expressed the desire that more regional studies and research be carried out by UNWTO to further promote tourism in the region as a whole. The need for a regional approach is further expressed in view of the fact that although most of the South Asian countries have been performing well in their individual destinations, identification of tourism products of regional nature would prove more appealing to source markets.

12. The Commission was informed of some of the regional studies which have been completed or yet to be completed. These included the Regional Outbound Tourism Study series (of Australia, China, Hong Kong SAR, Japan, Republic of Korea and Thailand), the regional tourism policy review, a study on labour skills in tourism for Asia and the Pacific region, a study on tourism and community development in Asia and the Pacific region, a study on Low Cost Carriers and a study on metropolitan tourism in Asia and the Pacific region.

13. For the South Asian region specifically, the Secretariat pointed out that one tourism product which abounds in the region is Buddhist routes and monuments. There is the need to package these cultural resources as sellable tourism products. The Secretariat proposed that one way of doing this was undertaking a research on tourism and Buddhist routes in the region to be followed by a seminar or workshop on the subject.

14. The Commission was encouraged to endorse or identify other regional tourism studies for future research.

THE ORGANIZATION'S GENERAL PROGRAMME OF WORK – APPOINTMENT OF THE MEMBERS OF THE WORLD COMMITTEE ON TOURISM ETHICS

Agenda item 6 (document CSA/49/6)

15. The Secretariat recalled that it had sent a communication to all member States in the region to inform them that the term of the present Members of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics (WCTE) was expiring on 31 December 2007. The process of nomination and election of new Committee Members for the period 2008-2011 was to take place during the first semester of 2007(during the commission meetings). This was to allow for the endorsement of the new composition of the Committee by the Executive Council at its eightieth session in June 2007.

16. Up to the day of this commission meeting, only **Pakistan** had proposed a candidate for the World Committee on Tourism Ethics. **Iran** made an on-the-spot decision to nominate a member to join the Committee.

17. After some discussions, the Secretariat proposed that since **Pakistan's** candidate – Mr. Iqbal Walji, the member representing the region in the previous term, i.e. 2004-2007 had performed remarkably well, the Commission should consider re-nominating him. There was a general consensus on this, and **Iran** was then advised to send its nominee to the Secretariat to be considered for the position of Alternate Member.

ANY OTHER ISSUE SPECIFIC TO THE COMMISSION

Agenda item 7

18. The Chairman of the Commission made the observation that South Asian region needs more attention from the UNWTO Headquarters. He proposed that a regional office such as that of Osaka be established in South Asia as well.

19. **Iran** also suggested that the Commission create links and have intra-regional cooperation with other regional commissions of the Organization apart from CAP. They could even attend their commission meetings as observers. The Secretariat responded by recalling that attending the commission meetings of other regions as observers is already an established practice in the Organization, and proof of it is the fact that at the current commission meetings we have been joined by representatives of Egypt, Georgia and Kazakhstan. The Secretariat also added that there is the possibility of creating links between South Asia and the Middle East and encouraged members of the South Asian Commission to attend their commission meetings. It was also pointed out that countries from North Africa which actually belong to the Commission for Africa (Tunisia, Mauritania, Algeria and Morocco) often attend the meetings of the Commission for the Middle East. The Regional Representative for Asia is currently negotiating with the Regional Representative for Europe in order to plan a Euro-Asia event.

20. The Chairman of the Commission requested that the Commission be informed of the meetings of the other regional Commissions so that members that may be interested in attending could do so.

PLACE AND DATE OF THE FIFTY-FIRST MEETING OF THE COMMISSION

Agenda item 8

21. The decision was taken at the 19th Meeting of the two commissions that Japan will be the host for the 51st Meeting of the Commission for South Asia, the 47th Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific, and the 20th Joint Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific and the UNWTO Commission for South Asia. The meetings will be held in Kobe, Hyogo Prefecture, in Japan, during the first half of 2008. (The 46th CAP and the 50th CSA shall be held within the framework of the 17th Session of UNWTO's General Assembly in Cartagena de Indias in Colombia at end of next November)

22. The Secretariat expressed on behalf of the members its most sincere appreciation to Government of Pakistan for the warm hospitality and the excellent organisation of the 19th Joint Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific and the UNWTO Commission for South Asia; the 49th Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for South Asia; the 45th Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific; and the UNWTO Asia-Pacific Conference on Low Cost Carriers.

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