



UNWTO Commission for the Americas

Fifty-fifth meeting

San Jose, Costa Rica, 14 May 2013

Decisions

CAM/55/DEC

Madrid, June 2013

Original: Spanish

Decisions taken by the UNWTO Commission for the Americas at its fifty-fifth session

Contents

	<u>Page</u>
I. Decisions taken by the Commission	2
II. Annex 1 - List of participants	12

MINUTES OF THE FIFTY-FIFTH MEETING OF THE UNWTO
COMMISSION FOR THE AMERICAS

On 14 May 2013, the Regional Commission for the Americas held its fifty-fifth meeting in the city of San Jose, Costa Rica, under the chairmanship of Costa Rica, represented by the Minister of Tourism, Mr. Allan Flores Moya along with the Vice-chairmen of the Commission, Bahamas and Peru. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following Member States of the Commission: Argentina, Bahamas, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Uruguay and Venezuela, plus Spain in an observer capacity, and four Affiliate Members: (see detailed list of participants in Annex 1). Also attending in an observer capacity was Full Member Zimbabwe, as well as representatives of the OAS and ALIDE.

1. Agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Communication of the Chairman of the Commission (**Costa Rica**)
3. Report of the Secretary-General (CAM/55/3):
 - 3.1 Update on international tourism in 2012 and outlook for 2013 (CAM/55/3)
 - 3.2 Mainstreaming tourism in the global agenda (CAM/55/3)
 - 3.3 Report on the implementation of the Programme of Work 2012-2013 (CAM/55/3.3)
 - 3.4 Recent publications (CAM/55/3.4)
 - 3.5 Update of the draft UNWTO convention on the protection of tourists and tourism service providers (CAM/55/3.5)
 - 3.6 Progress report on the application of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism and report on the World Committee on Tourism Ethics (CAM/55/3.6)
 - 3.7 Results of the survey on priority areas of the General Programme of Work 2014-2014 (CAM/55/3.7)
4. Results of regional tourism and outlook for 2013
5. Preparations for the 20th session of the General Assembly (CAM/55/5)
6. World Tourism Day
 - 6.1 Report on the celebration of World Tourism Day 2013: Tourism and Water: *Protecting our Common Future* (CAM/55/6.1)
 - 6.2 Selection of the host country for World Tourism Day 2014 (CAM/55/6.2)
7. Place and date of the 56th meeting of the UNWTO Commission for the Americas (CAM/55/7)

2. Communication of the Chairman of the Commission

In its communication as Chairman of the Commission, Costa Rica expressed gratitude for the presence of the delegations of the Full Members and Affiliate Members as well as of the special guests, and highlighted the features that tourism possesses from the perspective of the Costa Rican government, based mainly on tourism sustainability as a strategy and on the concept of differentiation.

3. Report of the Secretary-General

[\(Document CAM/55/3\)](#)

The preliminary remarks of the Secretary-General focused mainly on the following points:

1. Update on international tourism in 2012 and outlook for 2013
2. The mainstreaming of tourism in the global agenda
3. Progress report on the implementation of the Programme of Work for 2012-2013
[\(Document CAM55/3.3\)](#)
4. Administrative and financial matters

The Secretary-General noted that despite the increasing global economic instability, which is particularly affecting the eurozone, international tourist arrivals grew by 3.8% in 2012 to reach a historic mark of over one billion (1.035 billion). Meanwhile emerging economies (+4.1%) once again outpaced the advanced economies (+3.6%), with the Asia-Pacific posting the best results.

By region, Asia and the Pacific (+7%) had the highest growth, while by subregion, South-East Asia, North Africa (both +9%) and Central and Eastern Europe (+8%) topped the rankings.

Among the top ten tourist destinations, revenues in the first three quarters of 2012 increased significantly in Hong Kong (China) (+16%), United States (+10%), United Kingdom (+6%) and Germany (+ 5%). At the same time, a significant number of destinations around the world recorded an increase of 15% or more in international tourism receipts, such as Japan (+37%), India and South Africa (both +22%), Sweden and the Republic of Korea (both +19%), Thailand (+18%) and Poland (+16%).

International tourism in the Americas in 2012 recorded an increase of six million arrivals (+4%), reaching a total of 162 million. At the top stood Central American destinations (+6%), while South America, with an increase of 4% recorded slight slowdown with respect to the double-digit growth it had recorded in 2010 and 2011. The Caribbean (+4%), on the other hand, improved on the results of the last two years, while North America (+3%) consolidated its growth in 2011.

With regard to the outlook for 2013, the UNWTO forecasts international tourist arrivals to grow between 3% and 4% in 2013, which would be on track with the long-term forecast given in *Tourism towards 2030*: an average of +3.8% annually between 2010 and 2020. This outlook is confirmed by the UNWTO's Confidence Index which shows that the prospects for 2013 are similar to those expressed in the 2012 evaluation (124 points in 2013, compared to 122 in 2012).

In the Americas, the UNWTO forecasts growth in international tourist arrivals of between 3% and 4% in 2013, slightly above the long-term prediction for 2030 in the region: +2.9% between 2010 and 2020.

Subsequently, he referred to the work that is being carried out by the Secretariat with the objective of positioning tourism in a more prominent place in the political and economic agendas, at both the global and national levels. The campaign, a joint initiative of the UNWTO and WTTC includes submitting an Open Letter to the Heads of State and Government from around the world; it seeks to achieve their recognition of the importance of tourism to meet current global challenges. Between 28 February 2011, the date when then President of Mexico Felipe Calderón received the first Open Letter, and the latter part of **April 2013**, the campaign was joined by **49 leaders, ten of whom were from the Americas**: Mexico, Colombia, Jamaica, Peru, Argentina, Haiti, El Salvador, Guatemala, Uruguay and Paraguay.

He stressed that the organization is working on three key policy areas in 2012 such as travel facilitation including visa-related issues, taxation on travel, and connectivity. In connection with facilitation, after the important reference made to tourism and the role of visa facilitation in stimulating growth and employment in the Declaration of the Leaders of the G20 (June 2012), the UNWTO has continued to advocate streamlining of visas as a means to promote the growth of the tourism sector. He also reported that the UNWTO is also working with WTTC to carry out an assessment of the impact of visa facilitation in the APEC economies, which will be completed in September 2013.

Subsequently, he referred to taxation and said that the Secretariat is continuing to advocate smart taxes and trying to raise awareness of the need to assess the economic impact of the increase or the introduction of new taxes on travel and tourism.

Connectivity was the third axis to which he referred as a priority, as considering that 51% of international tourists arrive to their destinations by air. The UNWTO Secretariat has also started to work on this issue, especially in terms of air transport, in order to raise awareness internationally of the importance of a closer relationship between tourism and air transport to ensure mutual benefits. In this regard, he reported on the work being carried out between the UNWTO and ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization).

He then mentioned that the UNWTO has continued to work well within the United Nations system and with other international and regional organizations such as regional development banks in order to give tourism a more prominent place on the agenda of sustainable development.

In the area of education and capacity building, he said that the UNWTO Themis Foundation, the UNWTO's executing arm for education, organized several training courses in various regions on areas such as statistics and the tourism satellite account, sustainable development, competitiveness and energy management.

With regard to administrative and financial matters, the Secretary-General informed the delegations that despite the zero nominal growth, preliminary information on the financial performance of 2012 indicates that the budget was balanced at 12,276,000 euros according to the plan of expenditure of the approved regular budget.

He also stated that the Secretariat is also determined to intensify efforts to obtain extra-budgetary funds for technical cooperation activities, as well as other programmes.

The Chairman of the CAM thanked the Secretary-General for his remarks and invited those present to make their comments. The Minister of Tourism of Ecuador, Freddy Ehlers, addressed the Secretary-General to thank him for his presentation, and talked about the latest achievements of the Meeting of Ministers of Tourism of UNASUR, where the implementation of a common e-visa for the South America region is being studied.

The Minister also conveyed his concern for countries to introduce the concepts of conscious tourism within their state tourism policies, highlighting its ethical and responsible aspects.

The Secretariat took note of the statement by the Minister, and the Chairman gave the floor to the delegations. With no more statements forthcoming, the meeting moved to the next agenda item.

3. Report of the Secretary-General

3.4 Recent publications

[\(Document CAM/55/3.4\)](#)

The Executive Director for Competitiveness, External Relations and Partnerships gave a presentation on the latest UNWTO publications dividing them among the main areas of work: competitiveness and sustainability.

He then mentioned the importance for countries to use the virtual library (e-library) and said that the use and content of the virtual library were to be reorganized in order to have a better use of this tool available to all Member States with the inclusion of other media such as presentations in Power Point and summary mission reports.

Previously, a form had been distributed to the delegations listing the users of the e-library by country and inviting the countries to update this database.

To access the presentation click [here](#).

3. Report of the Secretary-General

3.5 Update of the draft UNWTO convention on the protection of tourists and tourism service providers

[\(Document CAM/55/3.5\)](#)

The Executive Director for Competitiveness, External Relations and Partnerships gave a presentation on the updated draft of the *UNWTO convention on the protection of tourists and tourism service providers* as part of the Report of the Secretary-General.

The report provided to the delegations was based primarily on the content of the draft whose general part presents the convention's general principles, scope elements, main definitions and related provisions related to international law.

In a succinct summary of the annexes, the Executive Director described what each contains: Annex I contains the assistance obligations of States parties in situations of force majeure, indicating a clear distinction between the obligations of the private sector as shown in Annex II which focuses on issues relating to package travel. Finally, Annex III focuses on information reporting obligations under existing regulatory frameworks at the global and regional levels.

After the presentation, the Chairman invited delegations to take the floor. The delegation of Mexico expressed to the UNWTO Secretariat its interest in becoming more closely involved in the deliberations of the technical committee and expressed its availability for future meetings.

After the statement by the delegation of Mexico, the Chairman offered the floor to the delegations and having received no further requests, closed the item and moved on to the next.

3. Report of the Secretary-General

3.6 Progress report on the application of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism and report on the World Committee on Tourism Ethics

[\(Document CAM/55/3.6\)](#)

The report of the Regional Director was based mainly on the campaign that has been conducted in various countries around the world related to accession by the private sector to the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism which involves observing the provisions of the Code, disseminating the document to its customers and suppliers and reporting on the actions taken in this regard to the World Committee on Tourism Ethics.

This Commitment has been signed by 47 major companies and associations from Germany, Armenia, Ecuador, Spain, France, Mexico, the Netherlands and Uruguay, as well as a regional organization in Latin America and the Regional Director mentioned that the day before the holding of the CAM meeting more than 50 companies and associations of Costa Rica had signed this commitment in the presence of the Secretary-General.

He then mentioned the reforms that were made in the World Committee on Tourism Ethics and the invitation of the Secretary-General to all Full Members and Associate Members of the UNWTO to submit candidatures for the new committee, along with the procedure for the proposal, selection and appointment of members of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics and the candidature form by country. This committee will be elected from among the candidatures put forward, in the course of the General Assembly.

The Chairman then opened the floor to the delegations. With no statements forthcoming, the meeting moved to the next agenda item.

3. Report of the Secretary-General
3.7 Survey on the priorities of the Member States for 2014-2015
[\(Document CAM/55/3.7\)](#)

The Regional Director explained the scope of the survey that was sent to all the official recipients of the UNWTO in September 2012 in order to prepare the general programme of work and budget of the Organization for the period 2014-2015.

He described the strategic objectives that were taken into account: a group composed of sustainability/ethics and another consisting of competitiveness/quality, divided into areas of activity, the preferred means of information and finally the suggestions. He remarked that the suggestions made by the respondents in the chapter on sustainability and ethics were, among others, the following:

- UNWTO's collaboration for the development of national tourism plans
- The interest in aiming the programme of work of the UNWTO at developing local communities
- Social and environmental dimensions should be linked by the economic aspect

On the side of competitiveness and quality, he highlighted the following:

- Employment in tourism in terms of seasonality, wages and working conditions in general
- "Physical" accessibility of destinations: connectivity, transport and mobility
- Branding of destinations

He stressed the importance that countries have given to regional and subregional cooperation. All the regions gave an average rating of five points (**out of five**) and among the issues highlighted were, for example, investment in technology to improve the entry formalities, the development of joint projects such as that of the Southern Cone statistics, etc. He also mentioned that on the occasion of the CAM held in Quito last year, delegations stressed the need for the programme of work to focus on seven areas: Statistics and the Tourism Satellite Account, domestic tourism, intraregional travel (in which air connectivity can be included), hotel energy solutions, multi-destination, "branding" and accessibility, all of which backs up the results of this survey.

In this regard, a debate was proposed to work on the results of the survey, adapting them to the programme of work of the committee and outlining a plan of action for the next biennium.

The Chairman of the Commission opened the debate and invited the delegations to take the floor. The delegation of Uruguay, regarding the field of competitiveness, invited those present to participate in the forthcoming event to take place in the city of Montevideo, from 26 to 28 June, on the subject of national branding with representatives of the countries of the region. He also informed the meeting about a workshop on accessibility organized jointly with ONCE Foundation, AECID and the UNWTO to be held from 9 to 12 October also in the city of Montevideo.

The delegation of Cuba informed the delegations present about the meeting held on 5 May in the city of Varadero, Cuba, between the Regional Director and the delegations of Cuba, Mexico, Jamaica, Nicaragua and Venezuela, at which the proposal of multi-destination for Caribbean countries was analysed. He highlighted the presence of the UNWTO in the person of Carlos Vogeler and mentioned the desirability and the interest of the countries in constituting a

technical working committee on this area with the objective of having inbound products ready for the London fair.

The Secretary-General congratulated the participating countries and expressed the readiness of the UNWTO to assist in this initiative, adding that the main role of the UNWTO is to act as facilitator in the planning and development of national tourism policies.

The Secretary-General made three announcements before closing the agenda item: the UNWTO Awards ceremony on the occasion of the next International Fair Spain (FITUR) 22 to 26 January 2014; the holding of the joint meeting of tourism ministers of Latin American countries and Asian countries along with SEGIB in the context of twentieth UNWTO General Assembly to be held in the Victoria Falls region; and the meeting between ministers of tourism of UNASUR and of the Arab League, on 12 and 13 June 2013 in the city of Petra, Jordan.

There being no further statements, the Chairman approved agenda item and moved on to the next.

4. Results of regional tourism and outlook for 2013

(click [here](#) to see the presentation)

In relation to the situation of global and regional tourism, the Regional Director for the Americas made a presentation on the results of 2012, the trends for 2013 and the state of affairs of the activities undertaken or to be undertaken by the Regional Programme.

After the presentation by the Regional Director, the Minister of Tourism of the Dominican Republic took the floor, mentioning the challenges facing the Caribbean region and inviting the UNWTO to organize an event in his country with the Ministers of Tourism of the region to study and set out the initial guidelines for the preparation of an action plan in order to address the negative impacts experienced by the region.

Also discussed was IBERIA's withdrawal from various Caribbean and Latin American destinations, with the delegations of Cuba, Uruguay and the Dominican Republic making statements on the matter. The Secretary-General called for the creation of mechanisms for rapprochement and dialogue between the parties and offered the services of the UNWTO in facilitating meetings.

In connection with the Affiliate Members, the Secretary-General reported on the membership campaign for new members and said it was essential to have Affiliate Members with a strong presence and that the regional programme has been conducting an intense membership campaign with good results.

In another vein, the delegation of Colombia requested the UNWTO to investigate the sources of funding and cooperation which are most used in the Americas, since a list of them would help facilitate obtaining funds for projects of different scales.

The delegation of Mexico welcomed the signing of UNWTO-ICAO agreement and urged them to continue working on the issue of air connectivity and facilitation in accordance with the principles of the UNWTO.

An exchange arose among the delegations regarding the competitiveness indexes established by institutions such as the WEF (*World Economic Forum*) that are very questionable and the delegations present agreed that the indexes can be very biased, not very legitimate and that in many cases they can present a distorted image of the country.

The Director of the UNWTO-Themis Foundation gave a brief report on the proceedings of the Foundation in the areas of volunteering, training (capacity building), strategy (diagnosis and development) and certification TEDQUAL among other topics and invited countries to register in the next version of PRACTICUM to be held in Madrid and Andorra in the week of 17 to 23 June 2013.

There being no further interventions, the Chairman approved the agenda item and moved on to the next.

5. Preparations for the 20th session of the General Assembly

[\(Document CAM/55/5\)](#)

After the presentation of a promotional video about the Victoria Falls area, the delegate of Zimbabwe invited all delegations to participate in the twentieth General Assembly of the UNWTO to be held in that country and in Zambia from 24 to 29 August 2013. The countries welcomed the invitation with pleasure.

Subsequently, the Regional Director for the Americas gave some details related to the General Assembly, the meeting of the CAM and other meetings or committees with the participation of countries of the region. For example, Argentina and Guatemala are expected to participate in the Programme and Budget Committee meeting that will take place on 24 August in the morning while the Regional Commission meeting will be held the same day in the afternoon, starting at 16:30.

Among other topics to be discussed on the occasion of the General Assembly, the countries of the region requested the inclusion in these decisions the joint wish of all the delegations to support the candidature of Colombia to host the twenty-first General Assembly of the UNWTO, which will be decided at the next General Assembly.

Colombia thanked those present for the support received from the Commission.

Also announced was the holding of a high-level meeting between the ministers of tourism of Latin America and of Asia as part of the twentieth General Assembly on August 27, from 12:15 p.m. to 2:15 p.m., in a joint initiative with the Iberoamerican General Secretariat (SEGIB).

Lastly, the delegations were reminded that this year two seats on the Executive Council (and possibly a third, subject to the approval of the General Assembly) are to be renewed and that so far five candidatures have been received: three requesting the renewal of their mandate (Argentina, Colombia, Jamaica) plus the candidatures of Ecuador, and that of Peru. Elections for these two (or three) posts will be held in the Commission meeting to be held on Saturday, 24 August. Colombia decided to withdraw its candidature upon receiving the unanimous support of the Commission for its candidature to host the twenty-first General Assembly in 2015.

There being no further statements, the Chairman approved the agenda item and moved on to the next.

6. World Tourism Day

6.1 Report on the celebration of World Tourism Day 2013: *Tourism and Water: Protecting our Common Future* ([Document CAM/55/6.1](#))

The Secretary-General said that World Tourism Day is celebrated every year around a theme chosen by the UNWTO General Assembly, on the recommendation of its Executive Council and in recent years, the official slogans have achieved a higher profile thanks to their alignment with the themes proclaimed for the year by the United Nations.

At its nineteenth session, General Assembly held in Gyeongju (Republic of Korea, October 2011) adopted the theme "*Tourism and Water: Protecting our Common Future*" for World Tourism Day 2013 and elected the Republic of Maldives to host the celebrations to be presided over by the Secretary-General.

After the report of the document, the delegations had no comments and the Chairman closed the item as approved and moved on to the next item.

6.2 Selection of the host country for World Tourism Day 2014 ([Document CAM/55/6.2](#))

The Regional Director gave a brief introduction on the subject and gave a chronological account of the regions and countries that had hosted the World Tourism Day. In the region of the Americas, Peru hosted the celebration of WTD in 2008.

As next year corresponds to the region, four countries had submitted their respective candidatures: Argentina, Colombia, Guatemala and Mexico. After some discussion, the countries withdrew their candidatures in favour of Mexico, which will host World Tourism Day in 2014.

7. Place and dates of the fifty-sixth meeting of the Commission for the Americas ([Document CAM/55/7](#))

The Regional Director informed the delegations that the next meeting of the Regional Commission will be held on 24 October 2013 at 16:30 in Zambia in the context of the twentieth General Assembly of the UNWTO.

Subsequently, it was announced that the candidature of Colombia had been received to host the next meeting of the Regional Commission in 2014, on a date to be determined with the Secretariat, in the city of Cartagena de Indias.

Colombia confirmed before those present its decision to host the 57th meeting of the Regional Commission and the delegations present welcomed the invitation extended by the Member State. The decision will be made formally at the 56th meeting of the Commission to be held in the context of the General Assembly.

In his parting remarks to the delegates, the Secretary-General reiterated, on behalf of all the delegates, his thanks to the authorities of Costa Rica for their hospitality and for the impeccable organization of all the events.

ANNEX 1: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

I. CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMISSION

COSTA RICA

Head of delegation

Mr. Allan FLORES
Ministro de Turismo
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II. FULL MEMBERS

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Head of delegation

Mr. Daniel Pablo AGUILERA
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Ministerio de Turismo

Delegates

Ms. Valeria PELLIZA
Subsecretaria
Ministerio de Turismo

Ms. Brenda VARELA
Directora de Administración
Ministerio de Turismo

Mr. Oscar SUAREZ
Director de Promoción Turística
Ministerio de Turismo Argentina

Ms. Ana Inés GARCÍA ALLIEVI
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Ministerio de Turismo

BAHAMAS

Head of delegation

Mr. Earlston McPhee
Director - Sustainable Tourism
Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation

BOLIVIA

Head of delegation

Mr. José Enrique COLODRO BALDIVIEZO
Chargé d'affaires
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BRAZIL

Head of delegation

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Ministerio de Turismo

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COSTA RICA*Head of delegation*

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Delegates

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Jefe de Inversiones
Instituto Costarricense de Turismo

CUBA*Head of delegation*

Ms. Xiomara MARTÍNEZ IGLESIAS
Viceministra de Turismo
Viceministerio de Turismo en Cuba

ECUADOR*Head of delegation*

Mr. Freddy EHLERS
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Ministerio de Turismo

Delegates

Mr. José NARANJO
Asesor
Ministerio de Turismo

Mr. Javier LLORCA
Asesor
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EL SALVADOR*Head of delegation*

Mr. José Napoleón DUARTE
Ministro de Turismo

	Ministerio de Turismo
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III. AFFILIATE MEMBERS

ARGENTINA Cámara Argentina de Turismo (CAT)	Mr. Jordi BUSQUETS Delegate
SPAIN IFEMA	Mr. Luis Eduardo CORTES Presidente Comité Ejecutivo
	Ms. Ana LARRAÑAGA Directora
	Mr. Raúl Diez VÁSQUEZ Director de Marketing y Comunicación
NH HOTELS	Ms. Ana ESCURIN Administradora de Comunicación Social
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IV. OBSERVERS

SPAIN (Full Member of UNWTO) <i>Head of delegation</i>	Mr. Antonio LÓPEZ DE ÁVILA Presidente Sociedad Estatal para la Gestión de la Innovación y las Tecnologías Turísticas de España (SEGITTUR)
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Delegates

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ZIMBABWE

Delegate

Ms. Enivah MUTSAU
 Tourism Promotion and Development Officer
 Office in Brazil

V. INTERNATIONAL BODIES

SEGIB

Ms. Doris OSTERLOF
 Directora
 Oficina de Representación para Centroamérica y Haití

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