

WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION

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RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT STATUS REPORT

Note by the Secretary-General

In this document, Members are informed of the current implementation of the General Assembly Resolution A/RES/498 (XVI), adopted at its sixteenth session and the action plan adopted by the Executive Council at its seventy-eighth session, held in Quito, Ecuador, on 27 and 28 June 2006.

RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT STATUS REPORT

1. Pursuant to the General Assembly Resolution A/RES/498(XVI) and Executive Council Decision CE/DEC/14(LXXVIII), a working group on Risk Assessment and Crisis Management (RAMG) was established and a comprehensive action plan developed by the Secretariat to respond to the imminent threat of Avian and Human Influenza (AHI).

2. In accordance with the action plan, UNWTO carried out during the last two years under the direction of the Assistant Secretary-General the following activities:

- Adjusting UNWTO's priorities to ensure that the Secretariat can deal effectively with the current situation and have the ability to respond appropriately in the event of any change in status;
- Developing Avian flu contacts and national coordinators within the membership;
- Full integration into the combined efforts of the United Nations led by the United Nations System Senior Coordinator for Avian and Human Influenza (UNSIC) and the UN System Consolidated Action Plan for Avian and Human Influenza;
- Developing the proposal of targeted communications for travellers, the travel industry and tourism destinations under the UN System Consolidated Action Plan for AHI for which funding of 400.000USD was received from the Central Fund for Influenza Action (CFIA);
- Convening and managing TERN (Tourism Emergency Response Network) – a group of industry associations¹, to exchange information and issue, as necessary, common messages to travellers, with the purpose of improving the capacity to respond to any pandemic and to ensure that travellers receive consistent advice. The original group of 8 has been progressively extended to 16, at the present count, creating a global network of networks encompassing thousands of tourism stakeholders;
- Developing an emergency response system portal in collaboration with Microsoft, now operational under www.sos.travel, with the purpose of serving as a “one stop” global reference point for the tourism sector and eventually for tourists seeking information;

¹ African Travel and Tourism Association (ATTA)·Airport Council International (ACI)·American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA)·American Hotel and Lodging Association (AHLA)·Asociación Latinoamericana de Transporte Aéreo (ALTA)· Association of Asia Pacific Airlines (AAPA)·Association of European Airlines (AEA)·International Association Transport Association (IATA)·International Council of Cruise Lines (ICCL)·International Federation of Tour Operators (IFTO)·International Hotel and Restaurant Association (IHRA)·National Tour Association (NTA)·Pacific Area Travel Association (PATA)·United Federation of Travel Agent's Associations (UFTAA)·European Travel Commission (ETC)

- Receiving an additional funding of 30.000 USD from Microsoft to finance sos.travel scholarships, and to be used for improving reports and monitoring events reported on www.sos.travel;
- Starting (or initiating, creating a) permanent data monitoring process and a daily reference bulletin for members, the tourism industry and travellers to be issued and posted on the www.sos.travel website;
- Circulating to members regular information with guidelines approved by the World Health Organization (WHO) on AHI;
- Planning three international avian and human influenza simulation exercises for the year 2007, the first covering Europe, Africa and the Middle-East (held in Paris in March), the second covering the Asia-Pacific region (held in Jakarta, Indonesia, in July). The third AHI exercise that will cover the Americas is scheduled to take place in Mexico City, in October.
- Holding three meetings of the RAM Group, under the Chairmanship of France (Vice-Chairs being Thailand and Canada), to oversee plans and review the activities. The fourth meeting is scheduled for October 2007, on the occasion of the third international simulation exercise;
- Participation at various travel trade events, international and regional meetings where actions and progress on activities pertaining to risk and crisis management were elaborated.

3. UNWTO's work in the field of Risk Assessment and Crisis Management has been dramatically re-aligned over the past two years, under the current threat of AHI. External funding from Microsoft and CFIA has been secured to improve the effectiveness of the efforts of the Secretariat. The circumstances of improved coordination mechanisms and procedures have been used by UNWTO to develop a broader strategic approach to risk and crisis management in tourism in general with the aim to cover other risks of importance and for the benefit of the tourism sector.

4. A detailed work programme has been developed for the period of 2008-2009, reviewed and endorsed by the working group on Risk Assessment and Crisis Management and the Regional Commissions for Africa, Europe and the Americas. It has then been submitted and approved by the Programme Committee and the Executive Council at its last session.

