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**PARTICIPATION IN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM'S COORDINATION  
MECHANISMS**

**Note by the Secretary-General**

In this document, the Secretary-General reports to the General Assembly on the participation of the UNWTO in the principal coordination mechanisms of the United Nations system as well as on joint activities with United Nations specialized agencies, programmes and funds and on the ratification of the Convention on Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies.

## **PARTICIPATION IN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM'S COORDINATION MECHANISMS**

1. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has continued its participation in the different Inter-agency mechanisms and networks set up by the United Nations, as well as in meetings and events organized by UN entities that have relevance to the tourism sector. The objective is threefold:

- a) ensuring that the potential of tourism is fully recognized at the international level, as a multidisciplinary sector capable of contributing to economic growth, sustainable development and poverty reduction, especially in times of crises;
- b) getting support to tourism from other agencies in their respective fields of responsibility; and
- c) avoiding duplication of efforts and ensure optimal utilization of resources within the UN system.

### **A. Participation in UN System Substantive Issues and Activities:**

A.1 UNWTO participated in a meeting of the Advisory Committee meeting of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the **World Health Organization's** (WHO) regional office for the Americas, held in December 2007 in Managua, Nicaragua, in which health and tourism were the main issues discussed. UNWTO continues to liaise regularly with WHO in the area of International Health Regulations (IHR), becoming as from December 2008 an authorized focal point of the International Health Event Management System, and thus reflecting the views and concerns of the travel and tourism sector on communicable disease outbreaks. UNWTO is also a member of the United Nations System Influenza Coordination System (UNSIC), under which the global preparedness activities for influenza and the current activities related to the influenza A (H1N1) were and are carried out.

A.2 Implementation is underway and continuing for the UNWTO proposal on "Development and Conducting Regional and National Simulation Exercises to Rehearse and Assess Preparedness Plans and Uncover Shortcomings", approved by the Management Committee of the **United Nations Central Fund for Influenza Action (CFIA)**, February 2008. Funds approved for UNWTO to implement this project amount to USD 252,000.

A.3 The **United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC)** forms an essential part of the **UN Statistics Division (UNSD)**, entrusted with the coordination of international statistics programmes and activities. As an active member of the Commission, UNWTO was represented at the 39<sup>th</sup> and 40<sup>th</sup> Sessions of the UNSC, held at UN Headquarters in February 2008 and 2009, respectively. The former session reviewed and adopted the revised International Recommendations on Tourism Statistics and took note of the updated TSA: Recommended Methodological Framework 2008. One of the key outcomes of the latter session resulted in the approval of a document on System of National Accounts (*SNA93 rev. 1*), which in a specific chapter includes the Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) as proposed by UNWTO. In June 2009, UNWTO participated in a Regional Workshop for South East Asian countries – Developing National Systems of Tourism Statistics: Challenges and Good Practices held in Vientiane, Lao.

A.4 The **Inter-agency Task Force on Statistics** of International Trade in Services (TF-SITS), a sub branch of the UNSD, held its last meetings March 2008 and 2009, in Vienna, Italy and Bangkok, Thailand. The UNWTO was present at both meetings. Participants of the TF-SITS agreed upon the design of an implementation plan for the new Manual on SITS, to be presented for official adoption at UNSC in March 2010.

A.5 A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between UNWTO and ILO in December 2008, to increase cooperation in various common areas of interest, and especially on the measurement of employment and on the promotion and improvement of working conditions in tourism.

A.6 Cooperation with the **International Labour Office (ILO)** and UNWTO is ongoing for designing a statistical joint project (2007-2008) in the area of employment and decent work in tourism industries. A joint biennial programme of work (2007-2008) between the UNWTO Department of Statistics and Measurement of Tourism and the ILO Bureau of Statistics within the framework of the ILO Decent Work Agenda is concurrently under implementation with the publication on "Sources and Methods: Statistics on Employment, Wages and Hours of Work in the Tourism Industries - special edition".

A.7 UNWTO, the **UN Statistical Commission** and the **ILO** joined forces to convene the 5<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Tourism Statistics, which this year focused on Employment issues.

A.8 As a participating member of the **UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)**, UNWTO contributed to the formulation of a 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production, in the context of the Marrakech Task Force. A policy recommendation paper, in the framework of the International Marrakech Task Force on Sustainable Tourism, was approved and submitted to the UNCSA.

A.9 Ongoing collaboration, since 2004, with the **United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF)** in the preparation and implementation of the Regional Project on Sustainable Coastal Tourism Development, addressed to reduce the environmental impacts of tourism in 9 African destinations. An interagency agreement between UNIDO and UNWTO is under preparation in order to specify the responsibilities of the two agencies in the preparation and implementation of each foreseen activity within the Regional African Project. The first regional Committee Meeting (SCM) and the Inception Workshop for the project will be held in Mozambique from 13 to 16 July 2009.

A.10 The long standing collaboration with the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** has continued in the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between UNEP and UNWTO on sustainable tourism. UNWTO is an active collaborator in the International Marrakech Task Force on Sustainable Tourism Development, including UNWTO's participation in the Task Force organized by the French Ministry of Ecology and Sustainable Development, with the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the French Ministry of Tourism, as well as UNEP, for preparation of background material which is being widely disseminated.

A.11 UNWTO is preparing a guidebook on Heritage Interpretation for Sustainable Tourism, with the participation of the **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)/World Heritage Centre (WHC)** and the World Bank and is member of an inter-agency expert group for the inclusion of tourism management issues and indicators (UNESCO-WHC Periodic Reporting process). UNWTO and UNESCO/WHC jointly organized the International Conference on Sustainable Tourism Management at World Heritage Sites in Huangshan, China, in March 2008. The main aim of the conference was to foster inter-agency collaboration to tackle unplanned, uncontrolled and unsustainable practices at world heritage sites and their surroundings. Cooperation with the **(UNESCO)** has continued, specifically in relation with Sustainable Tourism at World Heritage Sites. A joint Technical workshop was held in February 2009 in France and another in April 2009 in India. UNWTO also participated as observer at the World Heritage Committee meeting held in Seville (June 2009) where the World Heritage Sustainable Tourism Initiative was endorsed.

A.12 Cooperation with **UN Foundation** in the preparation, promotion, dissemination and observance of the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria launched at the IUCN Conservation Congress (Barcelona, October 2008) and in the establishment of the Stewardship Council on Sustainable Tourism.

A.13 Ongoing cooperation with the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Secretariat has continued** on issues related to biodiversity and tourism, in particular the User's Manual for the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development and the preparation of the International Year of Biodiversity (2010).

A.14 Cooperation between UNWTO and the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands started this year with joint activities and co-funding of ST-EP (Sustainable Tourism Eliminating Poverty) projects where poverty alleviation and sustainable tourism in wetland areas are combined.

A.15 UNWTO continues to play an active part in Climate change and tourism issues:

- (a) Participation in the UN Conference on Climate Change, Bali, Indonesia, on 12 December 2007 and the organization of a side event at the 13<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
- (b) Preparation of a joint report entitled, "Climate Change and Tourism: Responding to Global Challenges" (2008) with UNEP and WMO. In addition, the same UN agencies are developing guidebooks on Disaster Risk Management for Coastal Tourism Destinations - Adapting to Climate Change and on Climate Information Services for Tourism.
- (c) Organized in collaboration with University of Oxford, UNEP and WMO a seminar on climate change adaptation and mitigation in small island developing states (SIDS), in April 2008, which subsequently resulted in a joint publication on the same topic.
- (d) Implementation of Climate Change Adaptation Projects in Small Island Developing States, in collaboration with **UNDP and UNEP**, has continued with the support of **GEF**.
- (e) Continued participation of UNWTO in the Nairobi Work Programme on Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation, as a follow up to the activities undertaken at the **UNFCCC** COP in Poznan, 2008.

A.16 In October 2008, UNWTO and the **United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)** signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that seeks to further develop and strengthen the cooperation between the two organizations, more specifically in areas relating to MDG 3 and Women in Tourism. A significant breakthrough in this cooperation is the commissioning of a "Joint Global Triennial Report on the Role of Women in Tourism", already underway. The primary objective of the study is to raise awareness of the socio-economic opportunities that tourism can offer to women, highlighting the need to promote women's empowerment and protect women's rights in the context of tourism development. In parallel, the First Meeting of the Women in Tourism Task Force, established by UNWTO and involving UNIFEM, is planned for September 2009 in conjunction with a private sector Roundtable on the role of women in the hospitality industry.

A.17 As part of the **UN Inter-Agency Support Group for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**, UNWTO prepared a Joint Statement of Commitment to the Convention, including a Joint Strategy and Action Plan, released in March 2008. The UNWTO Special Representative to the UN attended the first Inter-Agency Support Group meeting, held at the United Nations in December 2007.

A.18 UNWTO and the **UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)** have organized national seminars for the education and training of employees in tourism-related enterprises and organizations in developing countries in Asia and the Pacific region. The 7<sup>th</sup> session of such seminars was held in Guwahati, Assam, (India) in June 2008.

A.19 The Organization was represented at the XII **UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)** held in Accra, Ghana, on 21-24 April 2008. The Director of Programme and Coordination attended the meeting, during which he outlined the importance of facilitating trade in tourism services and the growing importance of tourism in the development of developing countries. He also made the case for stronger support from UN agencies and other donors in favour of the ST-EP programme of UNWTO.

## **B. Participation in UN Meetings**

B.1 The High-level segment of **United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)** took place in New York in June - July 2008. UNWTO was represented on this occasion by the Special Representative of UNWTO to the United Nations, by his Deputy and by the Director of Administration. Among the items of particular interest included in the programme were keynote addresses on the theme “achieving sustainable development”, and which included a proposal entitled “Towards a Global Deal on Climate Change” as well as a “Development Cooperation Forum” framed to present a new vision for development cooperation in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

B.2 The **United Nations International Task Team on HIV-related Travel Restrictions** has the role of assessing the overall situation of discrimination affecting persons with HIV on their travel. UNWTO has participated in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> meetings held in Geneva, in February 2008 and March/April 2008. At the 3<sup>rd</sup> session of the Task Force, UNWTO had the honour of hosting the group at the Secretariat in June 2008. The first two meetings addressed common and expanded positions; assessing progress toward agreed deliverables and deciding necessary next steps with a view toward finalization by the third meeting (June 2008); agreeing upon broad content/directions of recommendations related to short-term and long-term restrictions for the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board and the Global Fund Board; and further elaborating advocacy and engagement strategies up to the end of 2008. Discussions included a mapping document of countries applying travel restrictions or other discriminatory visa policies along with a series of specific recommendations. A final report was submitted to the 23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board, which met in December 2008. A number of the recommendations from the report include the support for all countries to eliminate HIV-specific restrictions on entry, stay and residence and ensure that people living with HIV are no longer excluded, detained or deported on the basis of HIV status. Members also agreed not to hold meetings of the Programme Coordinating Board in a country with an HIV-specific restriction.

B.3 UNWTO is a member of the **UN Inter-Agency Knowledge Sharing and Information Management (UNKSIM)** since 2004. This working group was created with a view to ensure the exchange of experiences through utilizing up-to-date information technologies, promoting best practices for the flow of information and continuously seeking new and better ways of diffusing information worldwide. UNWTO participated at the Group's last meeting in October 2008, hosted by UN Vienna and IAEA. In the context of the MDGs and in the spirit of "One UN", the Vienna meeting focused on ensuring that relevant institutions in countries lacking suitable information technology infrastructure can obtain free access to information and knowledge from the United Nations organizations. UNWTO will collaborate in the area of knowledge sharing with other institutions and seek to improve its capacity-building on information management.

B.4 The New York-based UNWTO Representative to the United Nations participated in a briefing session of 19 new **UN Resident Coordinators** who recently took up their positions in the following countries: Barbados, Belarus, Bolivia, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Congo, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Mauritania, Mongolia, Montenegro, Paraguay, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Swaziland and Syrian Arab Republic. During the briefing, the UNWTO representative informed about the role played by UNWTO in support of tourism development and encouraged the newly appointed UN Resident Coordinators to consider and give support to tourism in the development assistance activities of the UN in the countries under their responsibility.

B.5 The New York-based UNWTO Representative has also participated in a wide range of other coordination meetings held at the UN headquarters in New York, including among others:

- (a) The **United Nations Development Group (UNDG)**, the preparatory meetings for the IV UN Conference on Least Developed Countries, etc.
- (b) The **United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)**, held preparatory meetings for the 17<sup>th</sup> Session of the CSD.

## **C. Participation in UN Administrative Issues**

C.1 The 5<sup>th</sup> **UN Inter-Agency Travel Network (IATN)** meeting, held at the UNWTO Secretariat in October 2008, included officials working directly in travel policies, procedures and practices within UN system agencies. The meeting addressed some issues such as: presentation of carbon calculator, creation of a joint interlinked Database on hotels and the creation of a common Travel Manual.

C.2 In June 2009, the UNWTO attended a seminar on security organized by the **United Nations Department on Safety and Security (UNDSS)**.

C.3 The **UN-CEB Finance and Budget Network** is a subsidiary body of the United Nations System High Level Committee on Management (HLCM). As a member of the network, UNWTO was represented by the Director of Administration in its meeting of July 2008 where items such as cost recovery policies and harmonization of financial regulations and rules, harmonization of donor reporting and action to address the effect of the dollar weakness on UN pensions. Additional meetings of March 2008 and February 2009, UNWTO participated through tele/videoconference. Among the main issues discussed were: results-based budgeting, international accounting standards, auditing and oversight mechanisms, financial reporting, programme support costs, fraud prevention, capital budgeting, cost recovery, common treasury services and IPSAS.

C.4 In February 2008, UNWTO participated via teleconference with the **UN Task Force on Accounting Standards**, a special sub-unit that reports to the CEB, and again in person at the end of June 2009. The Task Force is working on the implementation of a system-wide international public sector accounting standards (IPSAS), which is expected to be completed by 2010. In June 2009 a meeting with Geneva-based UN Organizations (WIPO, WO, ITU and UNOG) was held to support ISAS implementation at the UNWTO.

C.5 UNWTO participates in the working group on **Multi Donor Trust Fund Office of UNDP** in the execution of several MDTF projects. This group works to facilitate the coherent mechanism of oversight in MDTFs, including developing some standard fiduciary and legal instruments. UNWTO was represented at the April 2008 meeting hosted at UNESCO. Budget and Finance staff attended the MDTF workshop on financial processes held in November 2008.

C.6 The UNDG's **Working Group on Joint Funding, Financial and Auditing issues (WGJFFI)** has the responsibility of enhancing coherence, effectiveness and harmonization of issues related to joint funding, financing and auditing at the country level. UNWTO attended the following meetings in this regard:

- (a) Task Team on Joint Funding – conducted by teleconference meeting on 9 June 2009. Main issues discussed were: guidance, oversight mechanism and inter-agency database for Multi-donor Trust Funds (MDTFs).

- (b) WGJFFI – teleconference held on 10 June 2009. Main issues covered: cost recovery, harmonization of financial regulations and rules, financial reporting, budget code system, guidance on common budgetary framework and issues related to MDTFs.

C.7 The **Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Network** works towards a system-wide approach to leveraging advanced technology to support the goals of the UN. In addition to its primary mission as an advisory body to the HLCM on matters of information technology services, the network functions as a forum to coordinate system-wide ICT policy and practices. The last meeting of this body was held in October 2008, with participation of UNWTO.

C.8 In March and July 2008, the Director of Administration and the Chief of Human Resources held meetings, respectively, with the **United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF)** to address matters related to staff pension.

C.9 The **Joint Inspection Unit (JIU)** is the common internal audit facility to UN bodies. A first JIU Audit of UNWTO was undertaken in April 2008, referring to Management and Administrative practices at the UNWTO. A preliminary report has been sent to the UNWTO, which has been submitted to the Committee on Budget and Finance and the Executive Council in a separate document. A special working group consisting of Secretariat staff and Member States has been established to provide a unified response to the JIU report, examine ways to implement its recommendations and submit a report for the Secretary-General a.i. to present at the 86<sup>th</sup> Session of the Executive Council of UNWTO.

C.10 The **Human Resources Network (HR Network) of the United Nations** brings together senior human resource managers of the UN Common System with a view to provide strategic advice to its Chief Executives on human resource management developments, ensuring best practices across the system, and to prepare on behalf of the CEB, input and exchange with the International Civil Service Commission responsible for the regulation and coordination of the conditions of service of the United Nations Common System of organizations. Meetings of the HR Network are usually hosted by the UN or its specialized agencies. A HRM Strategic Group met in November 2008. The Organization's involvement has been further enhanced through its invitation to host the 17<sup>th</sup> Session at the UNWTO Secretariat (Madrid, March 2009) which brought together more than 60 participants representing around 40 organizations. A summer session of the HR Network was held in June 2009 in New York.

C.11 In April 2008, the Legal Adviser represented the Organization at the annual Meeting of Legal Advisers of the UN system, which was held in Washington. In-depth technical debates took place, particularly regarding the following items of the agenda:

- The privileges and immunities of international organizations and their agents, notably, the issue of reservations to the Convention of 1947, and the initiative aimed at encouraging this year the ratification of the Convention,
- The reform of the administration of justice in the United Nations,
- The issue of inter-agency mobility
- The participation of regional economic organizations in the work and projects of specialized agencies.

A draft annex regarding the revision of the amendments to the constitutive act and the conditions of adoption of the amendments by the new members of an organization was included in working documents of the 83<sup>rd</sup> Session of the UNWTO Executive Council.

C.12 The Secretary-General, the Director of Programme and Coordination and the Director of Administration have participated, respectively, in the three most senior coordination mechanisms of the UN System, namely the **Chief Executive Board (CEB)**, the **High Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP)** and the **High Level Committee on Management (HLCM)**. Since the beginning of 2008 until the first half of 2009:

- (a) CEB Meetings (in April and October 2008, April 2009) have addressed:
  - System-wide coordination of UN work on climate change
  - UN staff security
  - Impact of rising high prices on food security and poverty alleviation
  - Impacts of the current financial crisis.
- (b) HLCP Meetings (in March and September 2008, February 2009) have addressed:
  - Development policy issues
  - An evaluation of the "Delivering as One" pilot countries
  - Action framework for UN system response to the economic crisis
- (c) HLCM Meetings (in March and September 2008, February 2009) have addressed:
  - Safety and security of Staff
  - Cooperation with various networks on Procurement
  - Finance and Budget; Human Resources; Information and Communication issues; Network of Legal Advisors

**D. Ratification of the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialization and acceptance of the annex relating to the UNWTO**

1. At its last session (Cartagena de Indias, November 2007), the General Assembly approved the draft Annex to the Convention relating to the UNWTO and asked the Secretary-General to carry out the necessary formalities for the acceptance of the standard clauses of the Convention and of its annex.

2. The General Assembly also entrusted the Executive Council with authorizing the Secretary-General on its behalf to give final approval to the text of the Annex after its formal adoption by the United Nations Economic and Social Council, if it is approved without modification by the latter.

3. On 29 April 2008, at the resumption of the session, ECOSOC considered the Note of the Secretary-General of the United Nations referring to it the revised draft annex for approval and, at the proposal of its President, approved decision 2008/210 taking note of resolution 545(XVII) of the General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization and recommending the revised draft annex to the World Tourism Organization for approval.

4. Consequently and pursuant to the mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly, the eighty-third session of the Council (Jeju, Republic of Korea, June 2008) gave final approval, on behalf of the General Assembly, to the text thus revised and authorized the Secretary-General to notify the United Nations of such approval. On 30 July 2008, the Secretary-General transmitted to the Secretary-General of the United Nations the final text of Annex XVIII to the Convention.

5. The Secretary-General of the United Nations circulated to the Members of the United Nations and of the specialized agencies a certified copy of the Annex relating to the UNWTO on 16 September 2008.

6. The Annex to the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies of 1947 has therefore entered into force and the Member States are invited to approve it and to notify the Secretary-General of the United Nations of their approval.

7. This entry into force coincides with an action undertaken by the United Nations, to which the UNWTO has associated itself, to encourage States that have not yet done so to ratify this important Convention and those that have done so to extend its applicability by accepting new annexes relating to other specialized agencies, including that of the UNWTO.

**ANNEX 1****List of UN Inter-agency mechanisms and networks in which the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) is represented**

- Chief Executives Board (CEB)
- High-Level Committee on Programme (HLCP)
- High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM)
- Environment Management Group (EMG)
- Climate Neutral Activities Network
- Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs); Barbados Programme and the Mauritius Strategy for Small Island Developing States (SIDS)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) / Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Spanish Fund
- Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Tourism Statistics
- UN System of Influenza Coordination (UNSIC)
- Inter-Agency Security Management Network
- Task Force on Avian and Human Influenza
- UN System Inter-Agency Technical Working Group on Influenza
- Human Resources Network
- United Nations Development Group (UNDG)
- MDG Gap Task Force
- Inter-Agency Support Group on the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- UN System Legal Advisers
- Inter-Agency Travel Network (IATN)
- International Task Team on HIV-related Travel Restrictions
- United Nations Communications Group (UNCG)