

WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION

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REPORT ON THE ENTITIES ASSOCIATED WITH UNWTO

Note by the Secretary-General

The present document is submitted to the General Assembly for information and appropriate action.

REPORT ON THE ENTITIES ASSOCIATED WITH UNWTO

1. In accordance with Decision CE/DEC/17/LXXXV of the Executive Council, the Secretary General submits the present document to the General Assembly for information.

2. The growth of the tourism sector and the increased awareness about its economic and social importance worldwide, have led the World Tourism Organization to expand its fields of action over the last decade in order to respond to a number of new challenges. The sustainability of tourism and its interaction with biodiversity and climate change; the growing concern about responsible and ethical practices in tourism; the contribution that tourism can make to the Millennium Development Goals and to poverty alleviation in particular; the need to enhance the quality and competitiveness of tourism destinations; the key role played by human resources in tourism and the need to enhance their capabilities are, among others, areas in which the UNWTO has responded to Members' initiatives and developed new programmes for assisting its Members in recent years.

3. In several of these areas, some Member States have offered to provide the Organization with a special, voluntary support, either in cash or in kind, over and above their assessed contributions to UNWTO's budget. This generous and voluntary contribution of various countries has been instrumental to allow the Secretariat to expand its services to Members and to the entire tourism community in these increasingly important and some relatively new areas of work. Numerous development assistance projects, training courses, technical publications and other services have been delivered by UNWTO thanks to the voluntary contributions made by a growing number of Member States, such as Andorra, Canada, China, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Mexico, the Netherlands, Spain, Thailand, Uzbekistan, Macao (China) and others.

4. The spreading of areas of activity and the multiplication of voluntary contributions have, at the same time, led to the creation of a number of semi-independent entities linked in one way or another to UNWTO, but established outside the headquarters of the Organization, usually in the territory of the country making the contribution.

5. As of June 2009, the following entities linked in one way or another to UNWTO are in operation outside Madrid (in brackets, location and year of establishment):

- Regional Support Office for the Pacific (Osaka, Japan, 1995)
- Themis Foundation (Andorra, 1998)
- Silk Road Secretariat (Samarkand, Uzbekistan, 2004)
- STEP Foundation (Seoul, Korea, 2005)
- Consulting Unit on Tourism and Biodiversity (Bonn, Germany, 2006)
- Centre of Excellence for Destinations (Montreal, Canada, 2007)
- Permanent Secretariat of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics (Rome, Italy, 2008)

6. Details of the activities undertaken by each of these entities in recent years have been reported to the Executive Council and can be consulted online in the UNWTO website under http://www.unwto.org/conferences/ec/en/pdf/085_9.pdf

7. The type of arrangements between the corresponding donor government and the UNWTO Secretariat for the management and operation of each of these seven entities has been established on an ad-hoc basis; no clear, common or standardised pattern can be identified in such arrangements. As a result, the governance, funding sources, decision-making processes, management structures and operational methods of each of these entities follow different criteria.

8. Over the years, experience has shown that this lack of clarity has made it difficult for external parties first –be they users or beneficiaries of their services, including Member States and other UN agencies- to understand what is the relationship of each entity with UNWTO, what is the level of responsibility that the Organization, and by extension the UN system to which it belongs, has in the operation and management of these entities, etc.

9. Secondly, it has also made it difficult for the officials in charge of these entities to know what are their direct responsibilities and their accountability vis-à-vis their government on the one hand and the UNWTO Secretariat on the other; who do they have to report to?, who is responsible for their appointments, contracts, job descriptions, etc?

10. Thirdly, also the UNWTO Secretary General and its staff find it often difficult to discern to what extent they can intervene in, and be held responsible for decisions taken and for actions undertaken by these entities. No standard procedure has been established for the control of expenditure of these entities, let alone for their auditing. In some cases, these entities generate their own sources of income apart from the initial funding granted to them by the government of the corresponding Member State, providing some services to third parties on a commercial basis. Some of these entities use the UNWTO logo in their official documentation and some others do not.

11. Concerned about this unclear situation and in the light of the audits conducted at some of these entities by the UNWTO auditors and the general review of UNWTO procedures conducted by the UN Joint Inspection Unit, the Secretary General a.i. reported about it to the Executive Council at its 85th session (Bamako, May 2009). He requested the Council to adopt in the near future a clearer, uniform policy regarding the governance model of the current external entities, and those that might be created in the future. The Executive Council shared the Secretary General's concern and decided the following:

- “1. Agrees that an appropriate policy framework should be adopted regarding all these bodies;*
- 2. Requests the Secretary General to prepare within the above policy framework, a proposal including the governance relationship with UNWTO, as well as the management and financial aspects applicable to all non-Headquarters based entities associated with the Organization, and*
- 3. Entrusts the Secretary-General to present this proposal at its eighty-eighth session, after having consulted the above mentioned entities.”*

12. In line with the above the Secretary General a.i. has already started the analysis of each of these entities; as a first step, the Secretariat conducted a survey with all these entities to collect the relevant standardised information regarding their governance and management. This will be followed by direct consultations with each of them in the next few months so as to be able to report to the 88th session of the Executive Council.