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### Report on the progress of the reform of the Organization (White Paper)

#### Annex 4

#### Modernizing the UNWTO website

##### Background

1. The UNWTO and its programmes and Projects have been present on the Internet for many years; however, growing demand led to a bottleneck on the development and maintenance side, which aimed at the end to split the presence and the development into several different servers, technologies, design and resources.
2. An *ad hoc* programme was created in November 2010, as part of the efforts for modernizing the Secretariat. Its main aim is to build a common infrastructure that would host present and future web contents as well as developments from any programme within the Secretariat, putting in place the appropriate technologies and tools, and giving away the content ownership to each content creator. This renewed web infrastructure and PLATMA<sup>1</sup> (online network of the UNWTO Affiliate Members) constitute the two pillars of the online communication framework of the Organization.

##### Infrastructure

3. The first achievement has been the building of a brand-new and reliable web infrastructure to host all contents. The Secretariat chose to use “cloud” servers, which allow worldwide availability, scalability and stretched costs. Furthermore, all the new services are built with Open-Source software, which means that there are no license costs or maintenance fees. Infrastructure is built with Ubuntu Linux, MySQL Databases, coding with PHP, etc.

##### Software

4. The CMS (Content Management System) currently used by the Secretariat is Drupal (<http://drupal.org>), another leading worldwide open source project. The code allows great scalability and flexibility as a framework to achieve almost any web project. Numerous Internet companies or public institutions also rely on Drupal (the UN, Amnesty International, the White House, The Economist, etc.). The Drupal developer community is close to half a million professionals around the world, therefore UNWTO web projects are not anymore company or personal dependent.

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<sup>1</sup> See report of the Chairman of the Affiliate Members in document A/19/8

## Visual Design

5. The redesign of the website is gradual, but some elemental changes have been made according to a contemporary website. The Secretariat provides a consistent “look and feel” throughout the whole UNWTO network with global menus and search tools on every page. The multimedia and rich content allows using lightweight videos and images, with no need of proprietary technologies or plug-ins (no flash, wma, etc.). The goal is simply to have universal access from any web browser, from any device.

## Information architecture

6. Usually the visual design is the first approach that owners want to change when it comes to updating or modifying a website. However, in UNWTO’s case, the Secretariat was soon aware that the big challenge was the architecture of the site’s information.
7. Now, each user (Programme Coordinator or Director) within the Secretariat can directly upload the content that she/he is responsible for (text, photos, pdf, etc.) to the website’s database from a standard browser (no software needed), allowing real-time updating of websites and data-sharing across several programmes. Moreover, the new CMS easily manages multilingual content even with “right-to-left” languages such as Arabic. There is automated and integrated Search Engine Optimization (SEO) for any content that users don’t have to deal with.

## Content types

8. The information is created by granted users through several generic content types like: pages, news, events, web-forms, etc. However, there are also specific content containers created to meet specific access or needs such as: job vacancies, press releases, newsletters, photo contests, initiatives, technical products, concept papers, etc. The Secretariat has started with the basics with each programme and then progressively, figured out how to match specific needs.

## A UNWTO online global network

9. The UNWTO programme of work encompasses different areas, and is managed by different programmes, through regular activities or specific projects or initiatives, with central coordination and supervision. The same logic has been used with the UNWTO presence on the Internet.
10. The Organization has a corporate website <http://unwto.org>, but the Secretariat can set up as many websites as its programmes need, to host specific contents with specific granted access. Today, the **new network includes 17 different live websites** dedicated to programmes or projects, and 15 other websites are under development. Each programme in the Secretariat has the ownership of the design and content, and the same content can be showed simultaneously on other websites of the network. A sub-domain is used to highlight the link with the corporate website, but keeping their own URL: for example: <http://asiapacific.unwto.org>. It is like a backbone that hosts a complete network of applications or websites all connected.

## Users and visitors

11. One of the biggest changes in the last 10 years on the Internet has been the user engagement on websites. There are still a lot of anonymous visitors on our website but now, anyone can also create an account and login with a password. This makes a huge difference, because from now on, the Secretariat can identify its websites’ visitors and allow them to interact, with several levels of access. Moreover, there will be a single sign-on and a single account for all UNWTO websites.

12. The user can control his/her settings from a single control panel: preferences for e-mailing, personal profile data, subscription to newsletters, sign-up to events, voting to contests, filling out surveys and more to come. This is a strong advantage for Member States, since each and every NTA and NTO official can create her/his own profile and way of using UNWTO websites (personal alert system according to topics, etc.).

### **People and organizations' central database**

13. A preliminary study done last year raised the fact that there were several and different databases of people and organizations in use in the UNWTO Secretariat. It increased the risk of having many duplicated and obsolete records, but also missing opportunities when it comes to spreading global messages by e-mail. Some work has been done and the Secretariat is migrating now to a new online tool fully connected to the new UNWTO network.
14. It will allow each programme to manage its own contact database, keeping the ownership of the data but sharing at the same time common records. Moreover, if a contact has an account on the website, it will be linked and the user will be able to update her/his data and manage her/his contact preferences.

### **Mailings and electronic communications**

15. The standard way to directly communicate with someone on the Internet is usually by sending an e-mail. A considerable amount of e-mails and newsletters are being sent each week through our databases, with mass-mailing software.
16. After testing several platforms, the Secretariat finally launched an online tool to send professional mass mailings, which is completely integrated with the new online central database and with online users. The Secretariat will roll out progressively this function in the coming months. It means: no fees, total ownership, no software installation, easy to use and automatic user recipient's management.

### **Where are we heading?**

- Keep increasing data web infrastructure to ensure good service
- Support and train remaining programmes to finalize their presence in the network
- Rollout of the central database and mailing system for everyone
- Social network profile integration: signing in with Twitter, Facebook or LinkedIn
- Increase the interactivity and empowerment of users
- More indexed info data and statistics available for users
- Usage statistics to be available for web owners
- Electronic transactions (e-commerce), mainly for publications, and *Infoshop* integration
- Mobile-friendly access to websites (same content, just different visualization)
- Links with UNWTO Members' official NTA or NTO websites
- Open space for Member States for the presentation of their tourism destinations
- Online discussion forum for Members