



# General Assembly

Twentieth session

Victoria Falls, Zambia/Zimbabwe, 24-29 August 2013

Provisional agenda item 5(l)(f)

A/20/5(l)(f) Rev.1  
Madrid, 26 August 2013  
Original: English

## Report of the Secretary-General

### Part I: Programme of work

#### (f) Reform of the ST-EP Foundation

#### I. Introduction

---

1. In 2002, UNWTO launched the Sustainable Tourism-Eliminating Poverty Initiative at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. In the framework of this initiative, UNWTO and the Republic of Korea signed an agreement in 2004 to establish the UNWTO ST-EP Foundation (hereinafter referred to as the "ST-EP Foundation" or the "Foundation"), located in Seoul, with the aim to promote poverty elimination through sustainable tourism development programmes and projects. The ST-EP Foundation was established pursuant to the resolution of the General Assembly [503(XVI)] as a non-profit foundation under Korean Law, operating under the control and supervision of UNWTO.

2. In 2009, the 18<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly held in Astana, Kazakhstan, welcomed the initiative of the Secretary-General to review the existing association agreements with the external entities associated with UNWTO (including the ST-EP foundation) and "their relationship with the UNWTO Secretariat and its programme of work" (resolution 574(XVIII)). While acknowledging the invaluable contribution of Member States hosting these entities (the Government of Korea in the case of the ST-EP Foundation) that has allowed the Organization to expand its services to Members and to the entire tourism community in relatively new areas of work, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare a proposal including the governance relationship with UNWTO, using among others the examples and experiences of other UN agencies and international organizations which have similar entities.

3. Following an exhaustive analysis of the ST-EP Foundation's governance and operations and relevant consultations with the Government of the Republic of Korea and the ST-EP Foundation, the need for a change of status and governance relationship with UNWTO has appeared to be essential for the effective fulfilment of the Foundation's activities. In line with other similar initiatives undertaken by WHO or UNDP (e.g., the International Vaccine Institute), and after consultation with the UNWTO ST-EP Foundation's Board of Directors and with the Government of the Republic of Korea, the Secretary-General is hereby proposing that the ST-EP Foundation become fully independent from the UNWTO.



Likewise, the conversion of the Foundation into an international organization, operating under International Law, appears as an effective option.

4. Such conversion, if approved, should not affect the existing cooperation between the Foundation and the Organization but rather contribute to reinforce the strategic partnership between the two in the field of the ST-EP initiative. In addition, this will provide more visibility and autonomy to the ST-EP Initiative, attracting and encouraging donors to concentrate their financial and fundraising efforts through a clearer channel and towards a specific cause: eliminating poverty through sustainable tourism.

## II. The “International ST-EP Organization”

---

5. Building on the successful experience of UNDP’s initiative for the establishment of the “International Vaccine Institute” with the support of WHO, an international organization—the International ST-EP Organization—could be established to mirror that model. Under this scheme, the International ST-EP Organization would succeed to the rights and obligations of the UNWTO ST-EP Foundation. This new status would enable the Foundation to effectively pursue its objectives at the international level with more independence and flexibility, being only subject to the instructions of its Members.

6. In order to create the International ST-EP Organization, a constituent treaty would be open for ratification by States with the Government of the Republic of Korea. Once ratified by two States, the Organization would become established and be able to start its operations. The Agreement for the establishment of the International ST-EP Organization and Constitution of the Organization are available for reference (A/20/5(l)(f) Doc.ref.).

7. If approved, the Secretary-General wishes to encourage UNWTO Member States to consider their membership in this new International Organization which, although having its own and distinct mandate inherited from the ST-EP Foundation, shares the values and objectives of UNWTO and will enhance and support its work and role.

## III. Characteristics of the “International ST-EP Organization”

---

8. The proposal scheme for establishing an International ST-EP Organization has the following characteristics:

(a) Mandate: The Organization’s mandate is to promote poverty alleviation in emerging and developing countries through sustainable tourism development programmes and projects contributing to the achievement of the United Nations (UN) Millennium Development Goals (UN MDGs) by 2015 and the Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) by 2030, while covering the four dimensions of sustainable development: economic growth and the end of poverty, social inclusion, environmental sustainability, and good governance. Under this overall mission, its functions will build on the UNWTO ST-EP Foundation’s achievements and include the following among others: coordinate the implementation of projects, support research and tourism projects in line with the UN Millennium Development Goals and the UN Sustainable Development Goals and carry out projects with countries, international organizations, associations and corporations focusing on sports, culture, education and human resource development.

(b) Membership: Admission to Membership will be open to States ratifying the constituent international treaty and the Constitution of the Organization. International Organizations will participate as Strategic Partners. UNWTO would participate in the Governing Body of the Organization as the Founding Strategic Partner, particularly to ensure the coordination of the programme of work of both Organizations.

(c) Governing Bodies: The Board of the Organization will be composed of representatives of the Members and decision-making will be adopted by a simple majority of the Members (on the basis of one Member one vote). The Board will adopt its own rules of procedure to clearly define its operation and functioning.

(d) Management of the Organization: The Board will be responsible for all affairs of the Organization and will direct the Organization's programme of work and budget. The Board will appoint a Secretary-General who will be in charge of the daily operation and management of the Organization.

(e) Financing: The Budget of the Organization will be primarily composed of the assets and funds inherited from the dissolved UNWTO ST-EP Foundation and resulting from the generous contribution of the Government of the Republic of Korea. In addition, the budget of the Organization will be funded on the basis of voluntary contributions from its members, international organizations, and other public and private entities.

(f) Location: Pursuant to the generous offer from the Government of the Republic of Korea, the Organization's Headquarters will be based in the Republic of Korea. The Government of Korea will also act as Depositary of the Constitution of the Organization.

(g) Relationship with UNWTO: The Organization would continue to enjoy a close relationship with UNWTO, while maintaining its independence and freedom of action. Both Organizations would be strategic partners to one another. The Organization will complement the mandate and the programme of work of UNWTO, avoiding any undesirable duplication of activities and will consult UNWTO when necessary to achieve effective coordination. Particularly, in the field of technical assistance projects, it will continue to work with UNWTO as executing agency in the formulation and implementation of projects closely related to UNWTO's programme of work.

#### IV. Actions to be taken by the General Assembly

---

9. The General Assembly is requested:

(a) To recognize the important contribution of the UNWTO ST-EP Foundation and particularly of the Government of the Republic of Korea to the work and mission of UNWTO since the establishment of the Foundation in 2004;

(b) To approve the proposal by the Secretary-General that the ST-EP Foundation become fully independent from the UNWTO management, thereby complying with the request of the General Assembly to establish a clear governance relationship with external entities through resolution 602(XIX);

(c) To take note of the proposed outline contained in document A/20/5(l)(f) Doc.ref. and, without prescribing the final outcome to prospective members, to welcome the conversion of the UNWTO ST-EP Foundation into an independent organization; and

(d) To encourage Members to consider joining such an organization in an effort to continue supporting the ST-EP Initiative and its impact on poverty alleviation and sustainable tourism development.