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**UNWTO COMMISSION FOR EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC
UNWTO COMMISSION FOR SOUTH ASIA
Twenty-ninth Joint Meeting
Chittagong, Bangladesh
17 May 2017**

Item 6.4 of the Provisional Agenda

**REPORT OF THE UNWTO COMMITTEES:
COMMITTEE ON STATISTICS AND TSA**

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General submits to the Joint Meeting of the two Commissions for Asia and the Pacific a report of the Committee on Statistics and TSA

Report of the Committee on Statistics and Tourism Satellite Account

Seventeenth meeting
UNWTO Headquarters, Madrid, Spain, 24-25 January 2017

The [17th meeting of the Committee on Statistics and Tourism Satellite Account](#) gathered over fifty participants from 18 UNWTO Members States as well as Canada and Sweden, various UNWTO Affiliate Members and other representatives from academia, the private sector, regional tourism administrations and tourism observatories, in addition to the UN Statistics Division (UNSD), International Labour Organization (ILO), Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and Eurostat.

Overview of the Committee on Statistics and Tourism Satellite Account

The Committee is a subsidiary advisory body of the Executive Council. As such, it contributes to the fulfilment of the [Agreement](#) signed with the United Nations whereby UNWTO became a UN specialized agency (Art. 13):

The World Tourism Organization recognizes that the United Nations is the central agency for the collection, analysis, publication, standardization and improvement of tourism statistics serving the general purposes of international organizations.

The United Nations recognizes UNWTO as the appropriate organization to collect, to analyze, to publish, to standardize and to improve the statistics of tourism, and to promote the integration of these statistics within the sphere of the United Nations system.

Consequently, the Executive Council requires the collaboration of the Committee in:

- initiatives related to the design and implementation of international tourism statistics recommendations;
- promoting international comparability of tourism statistics by proposing initiatives relative to the collection, homogeneity, processing and dissemination of data;
- supporting efforts to integrate such data into the frameworks of the system of national tourism statistics and the Tourism Satellite Account (TSA);
- helping member countries in their initiatives to improve their respective national systems of tourism statistics and in the development of the TSA;
- liaising with other international bodies with delegated responsibilities for leadership and coordination of related international statistics and their standards within the sphere of the UN system.

The Committee on Tourism Statistics and TSA has existed since the early 1990s and has a strong track record of professionalism, worldwide consensus building and pioneering developments, such as:

- The International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics 2008
- The Tourism Satellite Account: Recommended Methodological Framework 2008
- The ongoing work towards a statistical framework for measuring sustainable tourism.

The Committee reports to the UN Statistical Commission, the highest decision making body in statistics. The Committee meets physically once a year, traditionally at UNWTO Headquarters, and works with its Secretariat, UNWTO's Statistics and Tourism Satellite Account Programme, throughout the year.

The Committee, held in January 2017, considered the following items **for discussion**:

1. The Statistical Framework for Measuring Sustainable Tourism (MST) under development
2. Measuring tourism at subnational levels
3. Sustainable Development Goals indicators
4. UNWTO's Programme of Work, including the official report to the UN Statistical Commission and the planned development of a TSA Compilation Guide

1. **Towards a Statistical Framework for Measuring Sustainable Tourism (MST)**

The Committee was informed of the progress on MST, including:

1. annotated outline of the Statistical Framework for Measuring Sustainable Tourism (SF-MST),
2. annotated outline and tables for the technical note on System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) and TSA,
3. the discussion paper "Allocation of environmental flows to tourism",
4. proposed MST research programme, and
5. progress on pilot studies and countries' progress (Canada, Italy and The Netherlands were presented and the work of Fiji, Mexico and Wales/UK was referred to)

The Committee was informed about the Working Group of Experts (WGE) on Measuring Sustainable Tourism whose formation was welcomed by the Committee in its 16th meeting (26-27 January 2016) and subsequently set up by UNWTO with the support of UNSD. The Committee endorsed the conclusions of the 1st meeting of the WGE, emphasizing that:

- developing a Statistical Framework for Measuring Sustainable Tourism (SF-MST) is a priority;
- the core rationale for developing a statistical framework is to support the measurement of sustainable tourism in its various dimensions (economic, environmental and social) and at the relevant spatial levels (global, national, sub-national) by providing a common language for integration and an organizing structure;
- integrated data is needed to support integrated policy responses at national and subnational level;
- the statistical framework should make use of the richness of data already available;
- SF-MST is the natural evolution of and complement to the existing statistical standards on tourism statistics (TSA and IRTS);

- the starting foundation of MST is the bridging of economic and environmental dimensions through the linking of the TSA and the System of Environmental Economic Accounting (SEEA);
- the work will form a solid foundation for integrating in time the social and cultural dimensions (like the ongoing work on Cultural Satellite Accounting), notwithstanding, social and cultural data can already be considered in the framework acknowledging that these will for the moment not be sourced from an integrated framework;
- a standards-based statistical framework will support the credibility, comparability and outreach of data and of various measurement and monitoring programmes pertaining to sustainable tourism, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicators.

The Committee approved the Research Agenda, noting the need to develop a realistic work plan for the coming 1-2 years that reflects UNWTO's limited resources and welcoming suggestions from the group to set priorities.

The Committee warmly welcomed the pilot study work, highlighting that continued testing in countries of the relevance and feasibility of the framework under development is fundamental.

Overall, the Committee enthusiastically supported the work of the Working Group of Experts towards a Statistical Framework for Measuring Sustainable Tourism.

The Committee requested the progress to be taken to the next UNWTO Executive Council with the recommendation for the Council to support the conclusion by the Working Group of Experts on Measuring Sustainable Tourism and the UNWTO Committee on Statistics and TSA that developing a Statistical Framework for Measuring Sustainable Tourism is a priority, and to request the Secretary General and the General Assembly for support in its further development.

2. Measuring tourism at subnational levels

The Committee was informed of initiatives towards the measurement of tourism at subnational levels, notably the work of INRouTe entitled "Tourism, territory and sustainability: a statistical insight at subnational levels".

The Chair of the Committee transmitted a note with his recommendations to the Committee on this item. Following the discussion, the Committee acknowledged that subnational measurement is key and commended INRouTe for the document which is an impressive collection of thoughts, ideas, recommendations, references and research that very well substantiates the importance of measuring tourism at subnational levels and venues for doing so. The Committee noted that the INRouTe document be considered draft and recommended further work to be done, agreeing that (further) developments of some key elements of subnational measurement be integrated in the forthcoming statistical framework for Measuring Sustainable Tourism (following a systems approach) and a future TSA Compilation Guide.

The Committee encouraged all to provide comments to the INRouTe document as part of the global discussion process open until 28 February 2017.

3. Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) indicators

During the meeting, the Committee was informed of the status of development of SDG indicators by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs). Concern was expressed on the recent modification made to indicator 8.9.2, which is now “Proportion of jobs in sustainable industries out of total tourism jobs”, and concerns were reiterated on indicator 12.b (“Number of sustainable tourism strategies or policies and implemented action plans with agreed monitoring and evaluation tools”). The Committee discussed the note prepared and agreed that it would serve as a statement by the UNWTO Committee to be shared by Chair with the IAEG-SDG and the UN Statistical Commission.

While the Committee generally supports the indicator framework proposed for Resolution, it feels there is a need to raise awareness about the issues confronting indicators 8.9.2 and 12.b. The Committee also hopes for closer collaboration with the IAEG-SDG on indicators related to sustainable tourism, and so as to link to the ongoing work towards a Statistical Framework for Measuring Sustainable Tourism. In this sense, there is the possibility of contributing to the process of the „annual minor refinements“ to indicators specified in para. 21 (c) of the UNSC Report of the IAEG-SDG (<https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/48th-session/documents/2017-2-IAEG-SDGs-E.pdf>), or to the more „comprehensive review“ that will be submitted to the UNSC in 2020 according to para. 22 of the Report.

During the meeting, the Committee also stressed the importance that each member of the Committee informs the Chief Statistician of his/her country on the issue so that Chief Statisticians can voice these matters in the relevant platforms, notably the upcoming UN Statistical Commission in March 2017.

4. UNWTO’s Programme of Work, including the official report to the UN Statistical Commission and the planned development of a TSA Compilation Guide

The Committee was informed on the report of UNWTO on tourism statistics that will be circulated for discussion and decision at the UN Statistical Commission in March 2017. The report describes the planned development of the SF-MST to support more integrated measurement and policy in the context of the SDGs and also proposes the development of a compilation guide for TSA, and a technical note on linking the System of Environmental Economic Accounting (SEEA) and the TSA.

The Committee welcomed the UNSD and UNWTO initiative to work on a Compilation Guide for TSA, underlining that many countries would benefit from this. The outline for the guide has been circulated among the Committee Members, and it should be based on and build on existing relevant work.

The Committee was also informed of the Lunchtime Seminar “[Accounting and statistics for sustainable tourism](#)” that will be held during the Commission meeting and in the framework of the 2017 International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development.

The Committee welcomed all **items for information**:

1. 6th UNWTO International Conference on Tourism Statistics: Measuring Sustainable Tourism, Manila, the Philippines, 21-24 June 2017

The Philippines informed the Committee about the Sixth UNWTO International Conference on Tourism Statistics. Its theme and importance warranted its designation as official event of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, 2017. A first preliminary programme has been shared with the Committee but further work is needed. The Philippines and UNWTO have committed themselves to having the first draft of the SF-MST be presented at the Conference, in addition to the first draft of the technical note on TSA and SEEA and other central papers.

2. Opportunities and challenges from big data

Eurostat presented the lessons learnt from the ongoing work of the international Task Force on Big Data. It was recognized that Big Data offers many opportunities, and more specifically tourism statistics is an area that is at the frontline of developments on big data, but there are also risks associated (continuity, ownership, quality controls, managing high volumes of data, etc.).

3. Roundtable discussion on the so-called “sharing economy”

UNWTO’s Tourism Trends and Marketing Programme presented its work and provisional findings on private tourism services through digital platform. The City of Vienna presented their innovative approach to the policy challenge of newly emerging booking platforms and the implications it had for accommodation statistics.

4. Various (country) presentations

Presentations were given of the excellent work being carried out by Canada, Italy, Mexico, Peru and The Netherlands as well NECSTouR, Sun Yat-Sen University, and University of the Aegean which all contribute to promote the use and further development of tourism statistics worldwide.