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Report of the Secretary-General

Part I: Current situation and activities

(c) Priorities and Management vision

I. Advancing UNWTO priorities 2014-2015

1. Following the endorsement by the 98th Session of the Executive Council of the priorities and management vision for 2014-2015, the present report summarizes the work carried out by the Secretariat to advance such priorities.

A. Short-term challenges

2. **The short-term challenges of travel facilitation, taxation and connectivity** were identified as **key policy issues** to be addressed by the Organization in the period 2014-2015. In this regard, the following activities have been or are scheduled to be carried out:

1. Travel facilitation

3. Recognizing that travel facilitation can reap important socio-economic benefits by increasing tourism demand, UNWTO continues to promote visa facilitation as a means to stimulate growth in the sector. In this regard, in January 2015, UNWTO published its *2014 Visa Openness Report*. The report shows that visa facilitation has experienced strong progress in recent years, particularly through the implementation of visa on arrival policies, reflecting an increased awareness among policymakers of the positive impacts of visa facilitation on tourism and economic growth. According to the Report, 62% of the world's population was required a traditional visa prior to departure in 2014, down from 77% in 2008. In the same year, 19% of the world's population was able to enter a destination without a visa, while 16% could receive a visa on arrival, as compared to 17% and 6% in 2008. The Report also shows that the most prevalent facilitation measure implemented has been "visa on arrival". Over half of all improvements made in the last four years were from "visa required" to "visa on arrival" (see all relevant reports at <http://rcm.unwto.org/content/facilitation-tourist-travel>).

2. Taxation

4. The Secretariat is currently finalizing a policy paper on tourism and taxation to be presented to



the 101st session of the Executive Council and the 21st session of the UNWTO General Assembly.

3. Connectivity

5. Within the cooperation framework with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), UNWTO has taken an active role in several ICAO meetings, including the seventh ICAO Air Services Negotiation Conference, held in Bali, Indonesia (November 2014), and ICAO's Meeting on the Sustainable Development of Air Transport In Africa (Madagascar, March 2015).

6. A report on *Air Connectivity and its Impact on Tourism in Asia and the Pacific* was developed by UNWTO, the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) and the Tourism Promotion Organization for Asia and the Pacific Cities (TPO), with the financial support of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of the Republic of Korea.

B. Medium- and long-term issues

7. The Secretariat continued to focus on advancing the overarching priority of UNWTO's work – **sustainability** in all its three pillars – through various initiatives, namely the expansion of the Sustainable Tourism Observatories under the auspices of UNWTO, the positioning of sustainable tourism within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda and the formulation of the Programme of Work of 'The Sustainable Tourism Programme of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production', led by UNWTO and co-led by the Governments of France, Morocco and the Republic of Korea.

8. Furthermore on the priorities identified in this areas, the following actions were taken:

1. Tourism ethics and corporate social responsibility

9. The Secretariat has advanced in the promotion of the implementation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism during the period under review. With the objective of widening the implementation of the Code by the private sector, the campaign of the **Private Sector Commitment to the Global Code of Ethics has been reinforced**. As of end-March 2015, a total of 400 private signatories from 54 countries (plus four regional associations and one global association) have committed to promote and implement the Code as well to report their actions in that regard to the World Committee on Tourism Ethics.

2. Tourism and culture

10. The *UNWTO/UNESCO World Conference on Tourism and Culture - Building a New Partnership* was held in Siem Reap, Cambodia on 4-6 February 2015. The Conference brought together over 900 participants, including over 45 Ministers and Vice-Ministers of Tourism and Culture, international experts, speakers and guests from 100 countries. The resulting *Siem Reap Declaration on Tourism and Culture* highlights the need to create a new framework for collaboration between tourism and culture, which includes active participation of host communities, visitors, the public and the private sector and sets a series of commitments covering the four key areas discussed at the Conference: tourism and cultural heritage; cultural routes; the linkages between tourism, living cultures and creative industries; and the contribution of cultural tourism to urban development (see document CE/100/3(e)) as well as tourismandculture.org).

3. Destination management and quality

11. As reported to the 98th session of the Executive Council, this area of work has been enlarged to include the issues of quality. In this regard, a new initiative, with the UNWTO.Themis Foundation, is being launched to promote quality and excellence in Destination Management Organizations (DMOs). The DMO Certification System aims at providing and implementing an integrated process in three consecutive stages of i) assessment, ii) training and iii) certification to support the enhancement of the quality and efficiency of the strategic and operational activities of the Destination Management Organizations.

4. Affiliate Members

12. To advance the further integration of the Affiliate Members into the programme of work of the Organization, maximizing their role in promoting effective models of public-private partnerships, the following key activities were implemented during this period:

- (a) Signature of specific memoranda with 23 Affiliate Members setting clear areas and activities of mutual interest;
- (b) Development and implementation of public-private partnership pilot projects – the UNWTO Prototypes – on City Tourism (Madrid, Spain) and Seasonality (Punta del Este, Uruguay); and
- (c) Development of thematic “networks” gathering Affiliate Members by areas of interest (shopping tourism and food tourism), following the model of the Knowledge Network, as well as full integration of the Knowledge Network into the Affiliate Members Programme.

13. For detailed information, please refer to documents CE/100/3(d), CE/100/3(e) and CE/100/8(a).

II. Actions to be taken by the Executive Council

14. The Executive Council is invited to take note of the report of the Secretary-General regarding the implementation of the priorities endorsed by it at its 98th session.