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Report of the Secretary-General

Part I: Current situation and activities

(e) UNWTO activities in the United Nations system

I. Introduction

1. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has continued forging strong links with the United Nations (UN) and its relevant entities and institutions, including but not limited to the UN General Assembly (UNGA) and its subsidiary bodies, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and various inter-agency mechanisms and networks. The aim is to ensure that tourism is recognized at the international level as a multidisciplinary sector, contributing to economic growth, sustainable development and poverty reduction. The present report provides a summary of the main activities with regard to the UN system.

2. With the aim of further enhancing its UN-related coordination and cooperation efforts and strengthening the Organization's resource mobilization capacities, the UNWTO Secretariat has decided to assign a Liaison Officer in Geneva, Switzerland, as of 1 March 2015.

A. Participating in UN system substantive issues and activities

3. UNWTO participated in several events of the sixty-ninth (69th) session of the UN General Assembly. This included the "high-level" debate session held from 24 to 30 September 2014. During these meetings and sessions, themes relevant for the UNWTO included, inter alia, indigenous peoples; population and development; climate change; security issues; and the Ebola outbreak in West Africa.

4. Among the resolutions adopted by the 69th UNGA session, the most relevant and important among them for UNWTO was entitled, "*Promotion of sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environment protection*". Adopted, by consensus, the resolution, notably, was sponsored by an impressive total number of 107 Member States. The resolution requested a further report to be submitted on its implementation to the seventy-first UNGA session in 2016.

5. Another resolution adopted by consensus, reaffirmed the outcome document of the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS), the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (also 'Samoa Pathway') and urged its speedy implementation. It is particularly



noteworthy that an operative paragraph (para. 4) of the resolution specified and provided an elaboration of the sustainable development priorities for the SIDS which, among others, includes “sustainable tourism”.

6. Furthermore, at the Third Conference on SIDS, held in Apia, Samoa (1-4 September 2014), UNWTO played an important role and significantly contributed to several events. UNWTO’s Secretary-General moderated the CEB high-level side event on “The UN system partnering for the people of SIDS”, which aimed at improving policy coherence and programmatic coordination around the main thematic clusters discussed by the Executive Heads of the CEB Membership such as advancing SIDS’ sustainable economic and social development, combating climate change, strengthening disaster risk management and SIDS’ resilience. The UNWTO delegation also participated in such key events as the Private Sector Partnerships Forum, which focused on the sustainable development of SIDS through genuine and durable partnerships.

7. The UNGA also approved a resolution endorsing the outcome of the Second UN Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), held in Vienna from 3 to 5 November 2014. By that text the Committee called upon all international, regional, and sub-regional organizations to integrate the Vienna Programme of Action (VPoA) into their work and support landlocked and transit developing countries in the implementation of the VPoA for the LLDCs for the Decade 2014-2024, in all its six priority areas (which also includes sustainable tourism), in a coordinated and coherent manner.

8. One of the key outcomes of the Rio+20 Conference was the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production (10YFP) and, together with the experience built from the Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism (GPST), the Sustainable Tourism Programme (STP) was launched on 5 November 2014 during the World Travel Market (November 2014). UNWTO is the Lead actor for the 10YFP STP with the Governments of France, Morocco and the Republic of Korea as Co-Leads. The 10YFP STP provides an optimal framework to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production patterns in the tourism sector through evidence-based decision-making, efficiency, innovation and collaboration among stakeholders.

9. In its various meetings the High Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) Working Group on the New Urbanization Agenda, of which UNWTO is a participating member, stressed that globally rapid urbanization is unavoidable. While currently 55 percent of the world’s population lives in cities and towns, within the next few decades, this proportion will rise to 75 percent. The problems, prospects and opportunities of urbanizations are being discussed in HLCP with a view to providing substantive inputs to enable the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) to contribute towards the ongoing global preparatory process for the successful holding of HABITAT III, to be held in 2016 where UNWTO expects to play a contributing role in placing the challenges and opportunities for urban tourism in such a context.

10. Held on the margins of the High Level Segment of the 69th Session of UNGA, and widely attended by the Member States, the UN Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) Group of Friends Ministerial Meeting was held on 26 September 2014. In addition to the Foreign Ministers/Deputy Foreign Ministers and Ambassadors from both developed and developing countries, participants included representatives of various UN-related and multilateral institutions, who also addressed the meeting. The theme of the meeting was “New and Emerging Ideological Threats to Global Peace and Co-Existence”. UNWTO highlighted that its work in promoting sustainable, responsible and accessible tourism is important for promoting interactions between cultures, appreciation of each other’s heritage and promotion of understanding between peoples and societies.

11. UNWTO has strengthened its cooperation with the UN agencies and organizations, including the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) and Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF), as well as other relevant multilateral and regional organizations for promoting tourism security. In this regard, the Organization has also joined the CTITF's Working Group on Protection of Critical Infrastructure, Vulnerable Targets, Internet and Tourism Security in 2014.

12. In November 2014, UNWTO submitted a first project proposal to the CTITF Working Group on the "Protection of Critical Infrastructure, Vulnerable Targets, Internet and Tourism Security" that focuses on capacity-building activities, supporting Member States in integrating tourism in the national emergency planning and mechanisms more effectively.

13. The UN Secretary-General (UNSG) presented to the UN General Assembly, on 8 January 2015, an advance version of his much-publicized report entitled, "The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives and Protecting the Planet". Terming 2015 as the "year of opportunity," he issued an urgent call for transformative global action that would ensure sustainable development and human dignity for all. The year offered an opportunity to make major advances across the three inter-connected pillars of the UN's work: development, peace and human rights. The UNSG welcomed the outcome produced by the Open Working Group (OWG), noting its 17 proposed SDGs and 169 associated targets clearly expressed an agenda aiming at ending poverty, achieving shared prosperity, protecting the planet and leaving no one behind. He also stressed that financing and other means of implementation would be essential. Such issues of financing and means of implementation will be of particular importance in view of the forthcoming Third Conference on Financing for Development to take place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in mid-July 2015 and UNWTO's preparations for the Conference.

14. The 12th Inter-Agency Consultative Group (IACG) meeting on implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) was held at the United Nations in New York, on 20 February 2015, with participation from a large number of agencies and organizations of the UN system. The Under-Secretary-General (USG) and High Representative for the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, who chaired the meeting, recalled the developments in the implementation of IPoA since the last IACG meeting, held in Geneva last November. IACG was briefed on the upcoming events leading to the holding of the Comprehensive High-level Mid-term Review of IPoA, to be hosted by Turkey, in Antalya, for three days in June 2016. The High-level Mid-term Review itself would consist of four thematic round tables meetings; and a private sector forum on investment in LDCs, in addition to plenary meetings. UN Secretary-General would also chair a UN system high-level event. UNWTO made a statement outlining its efforts and contributions towards implementation of the IPoA in the tourism sector and reaffirmed its continued commitment to support the LDCs as well as for the successful holding of the mid-term review.

15. UNWTO participated in the main part of the ECOSOC Operational Activities Segment, which was held in New York, from 23-25 February 2015. It was mostly organized around several panel discussions under the broad theme: "Reviewing the longer-term positioning of the UN development system (UNDS) and progress in implementation of GA resolution 67/226 on the QCPR (quadrennial comprehensive policy review)". The issues addressed focused on the evolving issues of operational activities of the UN system that will have implications for the post-2015 development agenda. The UNSG's report also stated that UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) continued to serve as a key tool for strengthening coherence at the country level, that a larger proportion of "Delivering as One" (DaO) countries strongly agreed on the value of UNDAF, and that there was a "clearly increasing" interest among countries for adopting the DaO.

16. As a follow-up to the UNGA resolution welcoming the OWG proposal on the SDGs adopted at its 69th session, the next phase of Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGNs) on the Post-2015 Development Agenda commenced in January 2015 and will continue each month until July 2015 when the Agenda is expected to be agreed upon by the Member States and submitted for adoption by the Summit of Heads of State and Governments to be held in September, 2015. As a result of concerted efforts of the UNWTO Secretariat and its New York Liaison Office (NYLO), the OWG proposal included three targets relating to sustainable tourism under the goals on economic growth, sustainable consumption and production patterns, oceans and SIDS.

17. The UNWTO Secretariat and the NYLO have continued to work in close concert, including by participating in the IGNs and in the Statistical Commission and engaging actively with relevant senior officials of the UN Secretariat to promote the mainstreaming of sustainable tourism in the Agenda, develop a set of quantifiable and measurable indicators and advocate for the inclusion of concrete indicators for monitoring and reviewing of progress in the implementation of the Agenda. The first two meetings of the IGNs have shown a strong consensus that the SDGs should be at the centre of the Agenda and that it should have four key sections: a short and visionary Declaration embodying the shared aspirations of mankind for the future we want, the SDGs, Means of Implementation, and Monitoring and Review.

18. UNWTO participated, among other select UN agencies, at a Sustainable Tourism Consultation, organized by the Patel College at the University of South Florida (USF), which was held in Tampa, Florida, on 24-25 October. At that event, a large number of students from the graduate class presented a wide-ranging set of good practices and case studies on sustainable tourism. During the consultation, case studies, covering both policy and practice, were also presented by academic, public and private sector representatives showcasing success stories, lessons learned and making forward-looking recommendations. The college also proposed to set up an Observatory on sustainable tourism in Tampa, Florida, in collaboration with UNWTO.

19. To support the global efforts to contain the Ebola virus disease (EVD) and provide a coordinated international response for the tourism sector, the heads of the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), Airports Council International (ACI), International Air Transport Association (IATA), the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) and UNWTO, activated a Travel and Transport Task Force to monitor the situation and provide timely information to the sector as well as to travellers. A joint statement on travel and transport in relation to the EVD outbreak was issued by the Task Force in which the UN system highlighted the importance of strengthening international efforts and cooperation to contain the virus, stop transmission to other countries and mitigate the effects in those affected.

B. Participating in UN meetings

20. UNWTO participated in the 65th Annual Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Conference, organized by the UN Public Information Department (DPI), was held in New York, on 29-30 August 2014, with participation by some six hundred DPI-affiliated NGOs. The meeting concluded with the adoption of a Declaration, whereby several parts refer to tourism as a driver of sustainable development.

21. On 22 October 2014 and 20 January 2015, UNWTO participated in the meetings of the International Health Regulation Emergency Committee (IHR) on Ebola, which were convened by the Director-General of WHO.

22. A meeting of the Chief Statisticians of the UN system was held New York, 1 March 2015, in which UNWTO took part. As endorsed by the UN Statistical Commission (UNSC), the UN Chief Statisticians hold regular meetings for improved coordination and report back to the Commission that is the apex entity of the international statistical system.

23. UNWTO was represented at the 24th and 25th sessions of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA) held in Rome from 11-12 September 2014 and New York, 2 March 2015, respectively. The former CCSA meeting focused its work on a more efficient functioning of the international statistical system as a whole – to establish common standards and methodologies. The “data revolution” (or “big data”) has become one of the key themes in the debate among statisticians regarding the post-2015 development agenda. The latter CCSA meeting prepared four items for the 46th session of the UN Statistical Commission: (i) Broader measures of progress (ii) Emerging issue: the data revolution, (iii) Big data, and (iv) Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.

24. The Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services (TFSITS), of which UNWTO is a member, met in Geneva on 22-23 October 2014. The group participated in the final drafting of the compilation guide for trade in services and ensured coherence between the UNWTO compilation guide and the compilation guide on trade in services.

25. UNWTO took part in a workshop on “Delivering Together in a Post-2015 World” organized by the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and the UN Development Operations Coordination Office (DOCO) on 27-31 October 2014 in Istanbul, Turkey. Among the principal aims was to explore resource-efficient ways to take advantage of the UN system at the country level and seek opportunities for engaging UNWTO’s Regional Programmes for strengthening Member States support.

26. The Regional Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Development, (7-8 November 2014, Budva, Montenegro) was organized by the Centre for Sustainable Development of Montenegro in cooperation with UNDP and the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism. UNWTO participated as a panellist on Sustainable Tourism and Sustainable Spatial Development, and held meetings with UNDP and the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism regarding the project “Montenegro Towards Carbon Neutral Tourism”.

27. UNWTO participated in a UN Expert Group meeting on the indicator framework for the post-2015 development agenda at the UN Headquarters in New York, 25-26 February 2015. The Inter-Agency Expert Group is being tasked to develop an indicator framework for the monitoring of the goals and targets of the post-2015 development agenda.

C. CEB and its subsidiary structure working groups

28. The UNWTO attended the HLCM and HLCP sessions held back-to-back in New York on 8-10 October 2014. The meetings held discussions on setting the UN response to the Ebola crises, while also reviewing several initiatives aimed at increasing the resilience of the UN as an Organization having to respond to emergencies and to improve the UN by making its mechanisms “fit-for-purpose.”

29. The UNWTO also attended a workshop for Designated Officials for Security held in Vienna, Austria, on 2-4 September 2014. This workshop reviewed security issues for UN duty stations located in Europe (UNWTO has delegated responsibility for UN security in Spain).

30. UNWTO participated in the biannual meeting of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) held in Geneva, Switzerland, on 2-3 October, 2014. The meeting addressed required reporting by the JIU on each Organization internal control mechanisms and follow up of JIU applicable recommendations.

31. On 8-10 September 2014, UNWTO attended the meeting of the CEB/HLCM Finance and Budget Network (FBN) Task Force on Accounting Standards at UN Headquarters, New York and discussed the implementation progress, including issues/challenges and proposed solutions, post-implementation, sustaining IPSAS compliance, among other issues. UNWTO also attended the CEB/HLCM/FBN, a video-conference meeting, on 15 December 2014 to discuss such issues as harmonization of cost-recovery rates, analysis of the options detailed in the draft proposal on cost recovery rate; survey of agencies and their responses.

32. The UNWTO hosted the 30th session of the UN Human Resources Network at the UNWTO Secretariat on 3-6 March 2015, which addressed such issues as the mandatory age for separation for staff, the ICSC Compensation Review, workforce and succession planning and other general updates and network issues were discussed.

33. At the 11th session of the UN Inter-Agency Travel Network (IATN) in Trieste, Italy, on 24-26 September 2014, where UNWTO was present, the main issues addressed joint airline negotiations, optimizing the travel work flow, security and safety and continued the review of the common system implementation of travel rules.

34. UNWTO attended the 23rd Information and Communications Technology (ICT) network in Geneva, Switzerland, (November 2014). A 2-day workshop, with participants of other UN agencies, focused on addressing challenges related to the role of ICT in supporting organizations of the UN system to become “fit for purpose”. Its main activity was making use of the “Design Thinking” approach, a methodology that brings new ideas for addressing business challenges.

35. The ICT Network UN Information Security Special Interest Group (UNISSIG) 2014 hosted the Information Security Symposium in Vienna, Austria, (October 2014) with UNWTO in attendance. The annual symposium together with private sector partners aimed to identify areas of common interest and develop a roadmap for collaboration including promoting best practices and harmonized approaches amongst UN system organizations to address the increasing challenges.

36. UNWTO attended the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) – Security Certification Programme (SCP - Security Professionals), as mandated by General Assembly A/57/365¹, and A/RES/59/276², and detailed in “DSS Strategic Framework 2006-09”, Goal # 2 “Achieve the highest level of professionalism among UN Security Staff”.

II. Actions to be taken by the Executive Council

37. The Executive Council is invited:

(a) To take note of the Secretariat’s ongoing participation in substantive issues of the UN system and to support the continuation of such participation and involvement in those issues as well as in the CEB subsidiary structure working groups;

(b) To acknowledge the decision of the Secretariat to assign a Liaison Officer in Geneva, Switzerland, for enhancing UN coordination and collaboration and increasing the Organization’s resource mobilization capacities;

¹ A/57/365: http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/57/365

² A/RES/59/276 (p.8): http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/59/276

- (c) To take note of the activities of the Organization in the area of advocacy of tourism as a driver of economic growth and development, including the growing importance acknowledged by special country groupings such as Small Island Developing States and Landlocked Developing States;
- (d) To acknowledge with satisfaction the ongoing work of the UNWTO on 10YFP STP and to thank Member States France, Morocco and the Republic of Korea for their active participation and support;
- (e) To support the Secretariat in continuing its contribution to the UN system response to the Ebola virus and similar global risks, including those related to tourism security;
- (f) To encourage the Secretariat to continue its active participation in the various UN working groups and streams which are addressing the overall framework of the Sustainable Development Goals, targets and indicators, as part of the post-2015 Development Agenda; and
- (g) To further encourage the Secretariat to follow and contribute to the preparations of the forthcoming Third Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in July 2015) and related processes, as well as to other initiatives that aim to implement the post-2015 Development Agenda.