



## Executive Council

Ninety-fifth session  
Belgrade, Serbia, 27-29 May 2013  
Provisional agenda item 3(l)(a)

CE/95/3(l)(a)  
Madrid, 15 April 2013  
Original: English

### Report of the Secretary-General

#### Part I: Current situation and activities

##### (a) International tourism in 2012 and outlook for 2013

#### I. International tourism in 2012 and outlook for 2013

---

1. Despite growing global economic volatility, particularly affecting the Eurozone, **international tourist arrivals grew by 3.8% in 2012 to reach a historic milestone of over one billion (1.035 billion)**. Demand held well throughout the year, with a stronger than expected fourth quarter. Emerging economies (+4.1%) regained the lead over advanced economies (+3.6%), with Asia and the Pacific showing the strongest results.

2. **By region, Asia and the Pacific (+7%) was the best performer**, while by sub-region South-East Asia, North Africa (both at +9%) and Central and Eastern Europe (+8%) topped the ranking. The Americas (+4%) saw an increase of 6 million arrivals, reaching 162 million in 2012. Arrivals grew by 6% in Africa to reach a new record (52 million) due to the rebound in North Africa (+9%) and to the continued growth of sub-Saharan destinations (+5%). Results in the Middle East (-5%) were still on the negative, in spite of the clear recovery in Egypt.

3. **Preliminary data on international tourism receipts for 2012, not yet complete for the full year, indicate that the growth in receipts may have been slightly higher than arrivals**. Among the top ten tourism destinations, receipts in the first three quarters of 2012 were up significantly in Hong Kong (China) (+16%), the USA (+10%), the UK (+6%) and Germany (+5%). At the same time, a significant number of destinations around the world saw receipts from international tourism increase by 15% or more – Japan (+37%), India and South Africa (both +22%), Sweden and the Republic of Korea (both +19%), Thailand (+18%) and Poland (+16%).

4. As for **outbound tourism as measured by international tourism expenditure**, data for the full year of 2012 for the top spenders shows that, although the highest growth rates in expenditure abroad among the ten top markets came from emerging economies – China (+41%), which became in 2012 the top spender in travel abroad in the world, and Russia (+32%) – important traditional source markets showed particularly good results. In Europe, and despite economic pressures, expenditure on international tourism by Germany grew by 6%, while the UK (+4%) returned to growth after two flat



years. In the Americas, expenditure by the USA and Canada increased by 6% and 7%, respectively. On the other hand, France (-6%) and Italy (-1%) registered declines in travel expenditure.

## II. Outlook for 2013

---

5. **UNWTO forecasts international tourist arrivals to increase by 3% to 4% in 2013**, much in line with its long-term forecast Tourism Towards 2030: +3.8% a year on average between 2010 and 2020.

6. **By region**, prospects for 2013 are stronger for Asia and the Pacific (+5% to +6%), followed by Africa (+4% to +6%), the Americas (+3% to +4%), Europe (+2% to +3%) and the Middle East (0% to +5%).

7. Considering that the current document was prepared in early April 2013, an update of the above information will be provided to the 95<sup>th</sup> session of the Executive Council.

## III. Actions to be taken by the Executive Council

---

8. The Executive Council is requested to take note of report of the Secretary-General on the current situation and prospects for international tourism.