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Report of the Secretary-General

Part III: General programme of work for 2012-2013

(b) Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the general programme of work

Addendum: Setting up Observatories of Sustainable Tourism under the auspices of UNWTO

I. Introduction

1. UNWTO has been promoting the use of sustainable tourism indicators since the early 1990s, as essential instruments for policymaking, planning and management processes at destinations. In 2004, the UNWTO published *Indicators of Sustainable Development for Tourism Destinations: A Guidebook*, the most comprehensive resource on this topic.
2. Based on this handbook, UNWTO organized a series of 15 regional and national workshops on sustainable tourism indicators to train tourism officials and professionals on their application, using a demonstration technique and participatory approach at pilot destinations.
3. The present document is to inform the Executive Council about the **summary of progress achieved** (Part II) in the establishment of observatories using the above-mentioned indicators and to present the recommended steps for the establishment of an observatory (Part III).

II. Global Observatory of Sustainable Tourism (GOST): summary of progress achieved

4. GOST is an initiative, launched by UNWTO in 2004, addressed to policymakers, planners and tourism managers in order to strengthen institutional capacities for information management and monitoring in support of decision and policymaking. More specifically it intends to facilitate the establishment of a network of observatories, through the use of a systematic application of monitoring, evaluation (sustainable tourism indicators) and information management techniques, as key tools for the formulation and implementation of sustainable tourism policies, strategies, plans and management processes.
5. In 2006, Yangshuo (Guilin, China) was established as a pilot destination to set up collectively with local stakeholders a monitoring system, called Sustainable Tourism Observatory. Since then, five other



observatories were launched, four in China and one in Greece, bringing to six the number of operating observatories. In addition, a letter of intent has been signed in April 2013 for the opening of an observatory in Honduras.

6. A collaboration agreement was signed in September 2010 between UNWTO and Sun Yat-Sen University in Guangzhou, for the establishment of a Monitoring Centre for Sustainable Tourism Observatories in China, with possible extension of its scope to all Asia, and one in February 2013 with the University of the Aegean, initially for the Aegean Islands, with possible extension to other destinations in Greece.

III. Steps to establish an observatory

7. Based on the experience outlined above, we could conclude that in order to operationalize an Observatory System, the following stages are recommended:

- **An application** for the establishment of the observatory has to be submitted by the authorities of the destination and endorsed by the tourism national authorities.
- **A preliminary study** on key sustainability issues, current monitoring processes, data availability, sources, gaps and needs, etc.
- **A stakeholder workshop**, in order to reconfirm/validate the findings of the detailed study and agree on the implementation plan.
- **A cooperation agreement** between UNWTO, the National Tourism Authority and an academic/scientific institution (hosting the Monitoring Center) at the destination which has the technical and human resources capacity to carry out regular monitoring reports, based on the UNWTO methodology.
- **Additional agreements may be signed between the institution hosting the Monitoring Center and other institutions providing financial or technical support to its activities.**
- **Continuous monitoring site program**, in order to develop data management system and build information management capacity.
- **Recommendations for corrective actions** to relevant stakeholders to address weaknesses and limitations found.

8. The official name of the observatory will be "Observatory on sustainable tourism under the auspices of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)". This new denomination will complement the Guidelines on the use of the signs by bodies other than UNWTO Secretariat approved by the last session of the General Assembly [resolution 601 (XIX)]. Observatories will follow the same procedure for the request and use of UNWTO signs under UNWTO conditions as any other external entity¹.

¹ Entities with agreement already signed with UNWTO before the establishment of the policy will temporarily follow their current denomination, until the agreement is renewed.

IV. Actions to be taken by the Executive Council

9. The Executive Council is requested:
- (a) To take note of all the activities carried out in the field of the Indicators of Sustainable Development for Tourism Destinations;
 - (b) To support the GOST initiative and the stages proposed for setting up observatories; and
 - (c) To endorse the official name: “Observatories of Sustainable Tourism under the auspices of UNWTO” and request the General Assembly to approve its use for Observatories, under the Guidelines on the use of UNWTO signs by bodies other than UNWTO Secretariat.