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Report of the Secretary-General

Part I. Current situation and activities

(b) Mainstreaming tourism in the global agenda

I. Introduction

1. As defined in the *UNWTO White Paper*, tourism development should address both short-term market challenges and long-term sustainable development imperatives; this fundamental need is at the core of UNWTO's mandate and the two pillars of its programme of work—competitiveness and sustainability.
2. Moreover, positioning tourism's contribution to economic growth, inclusive social development and environmental sustainability in the national and international agendas continues to be a major priority for the Organization.
3. The below report highlights the main actions planned and/or recently implemented by the Secretariat to address the challenge of mainstreaming tourism in the global and national agendas.

II. Mainstreaming tourism in the global agenda

4. The **UNWTO/WTTC Open Letter on Travel and Tourism** campaign continues to advance. The campaign, a joint initiative by UNWTO and the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), comprises the presentation of an Open Letter to Heads of State and Government worldwide, seeking their acknowledgement of the relevance of tourism in facing today's global challenges and their support for policies that support the growth of the sector. During the period under review, four new countries have been presented with the Open Letter—Angola, Bulgaria, Chile and Ethiopia—bringing up to 64 the total number of Heads of State and Government who have received the Open Letter since February 2011.
5. The Secretariat continues to work within the **United Nations system and with other international and regional organizations to move tourism higher on the sustainable development and development aid agendas**. In this regard, it is important to highlight UNWTO's engagement in:



- (a) The post Rio+20 process, namely in the framework of the **10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production (10YFP)**: considering that sustainable tourism was among the five initial programmes to be developed within the 10YFP, UNWTO continues to follow up closely the ongoing process to identify a 'lead actor' to develop the tourism programme (see document CE/99/3(e));
- (b) The build-up to the **post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**: UNWTO actively participates in the Open-ended Working Group (OWG) of Member States established by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) to develop the sustainable development goals (SDGs). As of July 2014, and following intensive consultations and negotiations, three targets on sustainable tourism have been included in the current draft document: Target 8.9 on economic growth (Goal 8); Target 12.b on sustainable consumption and production patterns (Goal 12) and Target 14.7 on oceans, seas and marine resources (Goal 14). The support of Member States to having these targets included in the final document is of high importance (see document CE/99/3(e));
- (c) The promotion of the links between **tourism and culture** in close cooperation with UNESCO. The preparations for the **UNWTO/UNESCO International Conference on Tourism and Culture**, to be held in Cambodia on 4-5 February 2015, are well under way. Member States are kindly invited to engage in this event and mobilize their ministries of culture and other relevant stakeholders to attend this important event;
- (d) The positioning of tourism in the trade agenda through UNWTO's participation as an observer in the **Enhanced Integrated Framework Board (EIF)**;
- (e) The advancement of tourism as a tool for development in the framework of the **UNWTO Working Group on Aid for Development** (see document CE/99/3(g)) and the **First High-Level Meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation** (Mexico City, April 2014) where UNWTO, Mexico, South Africa and the UN Steering Committee on Tourism for Development (SCTD) organized a *Focus Session on Tourism as an Engine for Growth and Development* (see document CE/99/3(e));
- (f) The **tourism and security agenda**. UNWTO participated, for the first time, in the UNGA's biennial review of implementation of its Counter-Terrorism Strategy adopted in 2006. On the occasion, UNWTO Secretary-General addressed the UNGA, the first time a head of a specialized agency was given this privilege. UNWTO has also become a member of the Committee on Protection of Critical Tourism Infrastructure under the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF), which is entrusted with the implementation of the Counter-Terrorism Strategy under guidance of the General Assembly (see document CE/99/3(e));
- (g) **Promoting the fight against trafficking**. UNWTO, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and UNESCO have joined forces to promote a global campaign urging travellers to support the fight against a number of forms of trafficking. The campaign, running until the end of 2014, was presented to the tourism sector at ITB (Berlin, Germany March 2014). **Your Actions Count – Be a Responsible Traveller** (<http://www.bearesponsibletraveller.org>) aims to raise awareness about the most common illicit goods and services that tourists might be exposed to while travelling. The campaign provides guidance to recognize possible situations of trafficking in persons, wildlife, cultural artefacts, illicit drugs and counterfeit goods, and invites travellers to take action through responsible consumer choices and is supported by Marriott International and Sabre Holdings. Member States are invited to join the campaign and promote it nationally and among their private sector;

(h) The **Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS)** (1-4 September 2014, Apia, Samoa). Building upon UNWTO's Conferences on Sustainable Development of Tourism in Islands held in Reunion Island, France (2013) and in Bahamas (2014), UNWTO's participation at the SIDS Conference will highlight the contribution of tourism to sustainable economic development, climate change, risk management and accessibility. The latest zero draft outcome document of the Conference (the *Samoa Pathway*) features a substantive section on sustainable tourism (see document CE/99/3(e)).

6. **Travel facilitation:** Recognizing that travel facilitation can reap important economic benefits by increasing tourism demand, UNWTO continues to advance the visa facilitation agenda. During the period under review, UNWTO supported Member States in reviewing their visa openness status and contributed to the Paper of the World Economic Forum (WEF) on *Smart Travel: Unlocking Economic Growth and Development through Travel Facilitation*. To support UNWTO's and Member States advocacy in this area, the following reports on travel facilitation are currently available:

- Tourism Visa Openness Report;
- The Impact of Visa Facilitation in the APEC Economies;
- The Impact of Visa Facilitation in ASEAN Member States;
- Impact of visa facilitation on job creation in the G20 economies;
- Tourism Visa Openness Report for the Silk Road Countries.

7. **Taxation:** The Secretariat continues to advocate for intelligent taxation, raising awareness of the need to evaluate the economic impact of the raise or introduction of new taxes on travel and tourism. In this regard, an econometric model to assess the impact of changes in fiscal policies in tourism has been developed in cooperation with WTTC.

8. **Connectivity:** Considering that half of all international tourists arrive to their destinations by air, the Secretariat continues to promote a closer coordination between tourism and aviation policies. In this respect, the 1st UNWTO/ICAO Ministerial Conference on Tourism and Air Transport in Africa will take place in the Seychelles on 13-15 October 2014, opening the opportunity to discuss key issues for air transport and tourism development in the region and to initiate a dialogue between Tourism and Transport Ministers that can be replicated in other regions.

III. Actions to be taken by the Executive Council:

9. The Executive Council is requested:

- (a) To take note of the work of the Secretariat in mainstreaming tourism in the global and national agendas;
- (b) To commend the Members which have accepted the Open Letter and encourage those which have not yet to do so;
- (c) To encourage Member States to support tourism's positioning in the international agenda, in particular in the framework of the ongoing UN processes;
- (d) To encourage Member States to join and promote the UNWTO/UNODC/UNESCO anti-trafficking campaign; and

(e) To encourage Member States to take an active role in the UNWTO/ICAO and UNWTO/UNESCO Conferences.