



## CONCLUSIONS & HIGHLIGHTS: 6th UNWTO International Meeting on Silk Road Tourism Dunhuang, Gansu, 1-3 August 2013

To view the Meeting presentations and for more information on this event please visit [silkroad.unwto.org](http://silkroad.unwto.org)

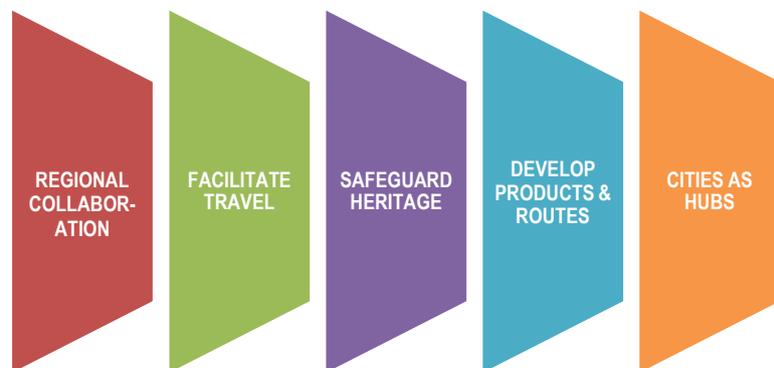
On 1-3 August 2013, the 6th UNWTO International Meeting on Silk Road Tourism took place in Dunhuang, an event jointly organized by UNWTO, China National Tourism Administration (CNTA) and the People's Government of Gansu Province. The Meeting highlighted the increasing interest in developing cultural routes associated with the Silk Road and brought together experts to raise the profile of tourism along one of the world's most legendary travel routes.

As the largest Silk Road event to ever take place in China, the meeting attracted over 300 delegates from over 25 countries. Major international institutions, including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the World Bank, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) and the Council of Europe, joined the meeting to share best practices and discuss opportunities for collaboration

During the Meeting, the Chinese Chamber of Tourism, along with eight of the country's most influential tourism corporations, signed the private sector's commitment to the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics, by which companies pledge to implement the ethical provisions of the Code in their policies, plans and business operations. The Meeting also marked the opening of the 3rd Dunhuang Silk Road International Tourism Festival, which showcased local arts and cultural performances to an international audience.

### Growth through Five Approaches

The Meeting consisted of a number of interactive sessions and presentations delivered by experts from across the Silk Road. Throughout the meeting, five thematic approaches emerged as being key to creating opportunities for tourism growth along the Silk Road:



China Chamber of Tourism signs the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics

## i) Regional Collaboration

The region has seen an increase in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) over recent years. However, further regional integration is necessary to strengthen achievements made in market liberalization. A better synergy between FDI and tourism promotion can also prove helpful in attracting much needed investment in air and land transport, and in information and communications technologies (ICT).

Vast opportunities exist for business and trade at the regional level. The majority of Silk Road destinations are strategically positioned between growing markets such as China, India, Russia and Turkey. China became the number one source market in 2012 and 95 million Chinese nationals are expected to travel internationally by the end 2013.

In recent years, Asia has also excelled in concentrating marketing efforts on its own region. According to UNWTO, intra-regional tourism in Asia and the Pacific accounted for 79 per cent in 2010.

## ii) Facilitate Travel

UNWTO/WTTC research shows that facilitating travel leads to increased international arrivals, economic growth and job creation. Improvements can be achieved by providing clear information on visa policies; establishing regional agreements; instituting visas on arrival and electronic visas; improving border crossing procedures and air transport liberalisation. Proven results have been seen in Azerbaijan, China, Georgia, Italy, Republic of Korea, Russia, Tajikistan and Turkey.

## iii) Safeguard Heritage

Cultural tourism is growing and now accounts for around 40% of global tourism. The benefits derived from visitation to the Silk Road's exceptional cultural and natural sites are various: job creation, the promotion of local activity through arts and crafts, and the generation of revenue. Effective destination management is key, and the UNWTO Observatories, which are now active in four provinces of China, play an important role in monitoring sustainable tourism development.

Additionally, technology is becoming essential in terms of measuring and minimising the negative impact caused by tourism to World Heritage Sites. The Mogao Grottoes, located in Dunhuang, are being preserved digitally and a new visitor centre is being established to minimise damage to paintings caused by the heat and humidity in caves.

## iv) Develop Products & Routes

Interrelated cultural routes create additional opportunities for regional cooperation, such as the Spice Route and the Maritime Silk Road. By working together under a common framework, destinations can combine efforts in marketing and promotion, safeguarding heritage, promoting peace and developing trans-

boundary cultural products. Cultural routes also play a major role in promoting intercultural dialogue, cooperation, social cohesion and peace.

## v) Cities as Hubs

Cities are key linking points along the Silk Road. Cities should increase cooperation by sharing best practices and pooling resources in order to promote sustainability, heritage management and travel facilitation more effectively. As demonstrated by Gyeongju (Korea), friendship agreements and sister-city programmes are positive means of strengthening international relations, stimulating intercultural dialogue and promoting trade between cities.

Strategies are required to simulate visitor flows that create opportunities for enhancing development in less visited destinations, while minimizing congestion in major Silk Road cities such as Venice. An integrated approach is also needed to guarantee consistent and high quality interpretation, thus ensuring that visitors are well educated about the Silk Road and sustainable travel practices.



*Performing arts at the 3rd Dunhuang Silk Road International Tourism Festival*

## Gansu and the Silk Road

Located in China's northwest, Gansu province, which comprises around 1,600 kilometers of ancient Silk Road routes, was for centuries a vital corridor between China and Central Asia. Gansu today boasts many ancient monuments and World Heritage Sites, including temples, monasteries, pagodas, towers and ancient palaces. The architecture, crops and attractions of Gansu still have the influence of the people who settled and passed by during the time of the ancient Silk Road. Gansu has identified tourism as a key pillar of economic growth and is now focusing on investing heavily in its outstanding cultural and natural heritage.

**6th UNWTO International Meeting on Silk Road Tourism organized in collaboration with:**



*China National Tourism Administration*



*People's Government of Gansu Province*