



UNWTO Commission for Africa

Fifty-eighth meeting
Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, 19 April 2016
Provisional agenda item 10

CAF/58/3
Madrid, March 2016
Original: English

Item 10 of the provisional agenda

The International ST-EP Organization

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General informs the Members of the Commission about the International ST-EP Organization.

Report of the Secretary-General

The International ST-EP Organization

Report on the transformation process of the UNWTO ST-EP Foundation into the International ST-EP Organization

1. UNWTO and the UNWTO ST-EP Foundation (hereinafter referred to as the “ST-EP Foundation”), with the guidance from the UNWTO Member States and the ST-EP Foundation’s Board of Directors, have been working for the past two and a half years on the transformation process of the ST-EP Foundation into the International ST-EP Organization.
2. In 2002, UNWTO launched the Sustainable Tourism-Eliminating Poverty Initiative at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. In the framework of this initiative, UNWTO and the Republic of Korea signed an agreement in 2004 to establish the ST-EP Foundation, located in Seoul, with the aim to promote poverty elimination through sustainable tourism development programmes and projects. The ST-EP Foundation was established pursuant to the resolution of the General Assembly [503(XVI)] as a non-profit foundation under Korean Law, operating under the control and supervision of UNWTO.
3. In 2009, the 18th session of the General Assembly held in Astana, Kazakhstan, welcomed the initiative of the Secretary-General to review the existing association agreements with the external entities associated with UNWTO (including the ST-EP Foundation) and “their relationship with the UNWTO Secretariat and its programme of work” (resolution 574(XVIII)).
4. Following an exhaustive analysis of the ST-EP Foundation’s governance and operations and relevant consultations with the Government of the Republic of Korea and the ST-EP Foundation, the need for a change of status and governance relationship with UNWTO appeared to be essential for the effective fulfilment of the Foundation’s activities. In view of this, at the 20th session of the UNWTO General Assembly in August 2013, the Secretary-General proposed that the ST-EP Foundation would become fully independent from the UNWTO, with a conversion into an international organization, the International ST-EP Organization, operating under International Law, appearing as a preferred option.
5. The 20th session of the UNWTO General Assembly in August 2013 approved the proposal to transform the ST-EP Foundation into an independent organization, the new International ST-EP Organization (resolution 622 (XX)).
6. In September 2013, the Chairperson of the ST-EP Foundation and the UNWTO Secretary General sent a joint communication to all UNWTO Member States, inviting them to join the new International ST-EP Organization. This first communication was followed by two other communications, sent out in February and August 2014, in which UNWTO Member States were encouraged to start the ratification process to be able to sign the Agreement on the Establishment of the International ST-EP Organization. The responses from the countries were very positive, and by January 2015, 24 Member States had submitted an official expression of interest to join the new ST-EP Organization.

7. During the Thirteenth Meeting of the Board of Directors of the UNWTO ST-EP Foundation, held in Madrid, Spain, on 30 January, 2015, the Board adopted the decision on the transformation process of the UNWTO ST-EP Foundation into the International ST-EP Organization. Bearing in mind that article 22.1 of the Agreement on the Establishment of the International ST-EP Organization provides that the Organization will be effectively established after two instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession have been deposited with the Depositary, the Board of Directors of the ST-EP Foundation decided to dissolve the Foundation in view of the establishment of the International ST-EP Organization that will succeed the Foundation, and it agreed that the ST-EP Foundation would continue to operate until the International ST-EP Organization has been established and that the dissolution would be effective on the date of the establishment of the new International ST-EP Organization.

8. On February 4, 2015, six countries (Cambodia, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Paraguay, Peru and the Republic of Korea) expressed their will to join the International ST-EP Organization by signing their intention to join the International ST-EP Organization. Subsequently, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Myanmar, Sudan, Timor-Leste, Tunisia, Uganda, and Zambia also expressed their intention to join the International ST-EP Organization.

9. The 21st session of the UNWTO General Assembly in September 2015 noted with appreciation the important work of the Secretariat, the UNWTO ST-EP Foundation and the Government of the Republic of Korea in facilitating the transformation process of the ST-EP Foundation into the new International ST-EP Organization; and thanked the Member States which have expressed their will to join the International ST-EP Organization and encouraged other Member States to join the Organization after the Government of the Republic of Korea has completed the domestic procedures (resolution A/RES/655(XXI)).

10. On 22 January 2016, an initiation ceremony was organized at the UNWTO Head Office in Madrid, during which the final text of the statutes of the International ST-EP Organization was presented to Member States. The ceremony was attended by representatives from over 30 UNWTO Member States. During the ceremony, a cooperation agreement was signed between the Korea Tourism Organization (KTO), the ST-EP Foundation and UNWTO for the implementation of new ST-EP projects in 8 countries (in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ghana, Lebanon, Timor-Leste, Tunisia, Uganda, and Zambia and Zimbabwe) with a generous contribution from the Korea Tourism Organization.

11. On 28 March 2016, a ceremony will be organized for the adoption of the final text of the Agreement on the Establishment of the International ST-EP Organization. During this ceremony, the duly authorized representatives of UNWTO Member States will convene to adopt the final text of the Agreement.

12. The Government of the Republic of Korea has prepared a document, which outlines the procedures for the establishment of the International ST-EP Organization. This document describes the different steps to be taken from the adoption of the final text of the Agreement (March 28, 2016) onwards. The document is included as Annex 1 in this report.

13. The establishment of the International ST-EP Organization will mark the start of a new era in the ST-EP Initiative. It is the intention that many countries will join the International ST-EP

Organization, so that a sound membership base will be created, serving as a strong fundament to provide guidance to the future direction of the ST-EP Initiative, to raise awareness on the important contribution that tourism can make to poverty reduction, to help identify new opportunities for project interventions, and to mobilize donor funding. In view of this, the endeavour of the International ST-EP Organization is to welcome at least 40 members in the near future , representing the different regions of the world.

14. Stakeholders are confident that when a large number of countries will join the International ST-EP Organization, the activities of the ST-EP Initiative can be further elaborated, in particular the ST-EP project portfolio, which has grown to 115 projects, benefiting 45 countries, with a total value of approximately US\$ 12 million.

15. As sustainable development and poverty reduction are among the main challenges the world is facing today, UNWTO endeavours to address these challenges and to contribute towards the achievement of the new Sustainable Development Goals. It is pertinent to mention that UNWTO remains committed to further developing ST-EP as an inclusive initiative, which is accessible to the Members, and will continue working with partners, including the new International ST-EP Organization, to consolidate and expand the ST-EP activities.

ANNEX 1 Document prepared by the Government of the Republic of Korea on the Procedures for the Establishment of the International ST-EP Organization.

1. Adoption of the Final Text of the Agreement (March 28)

The duly authorized representatives of UNWTO member States convene to adopt the final text of the Agreement.

2. Transmission of Certified Copies

Upon the adoption of the text, the Depositary (the Government of the Republic of Korea) shall transmit certified copies of the Agreement to all concerned States in accordance with Article 16 of the Agreement

(The Treaties Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will forward the copies to the diplomatic missions thereof in the Republic of Korea).

3. Signature

(a) In accordance with Article 18, the Agreement shall be open for signature as of 1 June 2016 and shall remain open for signature for a period of two (2) years.

(b) The Agreement is open for signature to any States which have completed the domestic procedures thereof.

- If no official signing ceremony is held, any person authorized to sign the Agreement shall visit the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea to sign the original text.

- If that person is not Head of State, Head of Government or Minister of Foreign Affairs, he or she shall present full powers in accordance with Article 7 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties.

4. Deposit of Instruments of Ratification, Acceptance, or Approval

(a) Since this Agreement is subject to ratification, acceptance or approval in accordance with Article 19 of the Agreement, the Signatory States shall, upon the completion of domestic procedures thereof, submit instruments of ratification, acceptance or approval to the Depositary, which shall be, before the establishment of the Secretariat, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea and, after the establishment thereof, the Secretariat.

(b) In accordance with paragraph 3 of Article 16, the Depositary (the Government of the Republic of Korea or the Secretariat) shall notify concerned States of the receipt of such instruments.

5. Entry into Force

(a) In accordance with Article 22, the Agreement shall enter into force on the date of the deposit of three (3) instruments of ratification, acceptance, or approval. The Depositary shall notify the entry into force of the Agreement to concerned States.

6. Accession

Any State which has not signed the Agreement by the expiration of the period for signing may accede to the Agreement by depositing instruments of accession in accordance with Article 20.

7. Depositary

If the Secretariat is established after the entry into force of the Agreement, it shall take over the functions of the Depositary from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea. /end/