



UNWTO-ASEAN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON TOURISM AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Legazpi City, Albay Declaration on Tourism's Response to Climate Change

From 19 to 20 May 2014, ministers, senior tourism officials and industry experts from 18 countries as well as representatives of international organizations met in Legazpi City, Albay, Philippines in conjunction with the 40th Annual Meeting of ASEAN NTOs and the 26th Joint Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific and the UNWTO Commission for South Asia in order to:

- analyze and enhance the understanding of climate change impacts and climate related risk on tourism in the Asia Pacific region;
- explore opportunities for international & regional cooperation to strengthen the sector's ability to respond to the opportunities and to address the threats and the challenges of climate change;
- enhance the understanding of the public and private sectors of the opportunities presented by sustainable tourism for building low carbon development;
- further mainstream climate change mitigation and adaptation into development planning across sectors such as tourism.

Recognizing that the Asia-Pacific Region has been at the forefront of tourism growth and development in the last decades and is set to continue leading world tourism in the decades to come,

Bearing in mind that Asia-Pacific is one of the most economically dynamic regions in the world today, with many countries being among the world leaders and that much of what happens on the global sustainability agenda depends on what happens in this region,

Acknowledging that climate change can have a significant impact on socio-economic development, and particularly on destinations that rely on tourism activities, as climate impacts on natural environment can result in significant impact on livelihoods,

Adopting the Legazpi Declaration on Tourism's Response to Climate Change,

Calling on United Nations bodies and other international agencies, and governments, national and local authorities of Asia-Pacific, relevant agencies, non-government organizations, international bodies and the private sector wherever appropriate:

- 1) To give full recognition and promote awareness of tourism's importance in the development agenda and its growing contribution to socio-economic development;

- 2) To reaffirm the tourism sector's commitment to the Davos Process -acknowledging that mitigation is the best form of adaptation and that the sector must progressively reduce its Greenhouse Gas (GHG) contribution if it is to grow in a sustainable manner;
- 3) To provide clear, evidence-based information and policy guidance and other technical support to national and local governments to enable them to establish, pursue and prioritize low carbon strategies for tourism development;
- 4) To increase coordination among relevant agencies, non-government organizations, international bodies and the private sector in making tourism an instrument to accelerate the shift towards more sustainable consumption and production patterns;
- 5) To consider climate change impact and vulnerability assessments within broader risk management processes, in order to develop and implement climate resilience and adaptation measures to minimize the impact of climate change to tourism including, but not limited to, coastal erosion, damage to coral reefs, destruction of infrastructure and property, risk to human life and health, as well as the wide range of other basic and integral resources to the sector including availability and quality of freshwater supply;
- 6) To scale up knowledge mechanisms which cater for the specific needs of the tourism sector in building its resilience to the impacts of climate change, including mechanisms underpinned by multi-dimensional research, accurate data and robust methodologies;
- 7) To avoid duplication and enhance co-ordination to build resilience to climate change by assessing, building on and learning from existing policy response strategies in governments, local communities and business to climate and weather-related shocks, such as National Adaptation Plan Action, National Disaster Reduction Strategies, Water Management Plans amongst others;
- 8) To facilitate the creation of critically needed enabling environment to enhance public-private partnerships by encouraging the public and private sectors to work together to design cost effective and inclusive adaptation strategies and responses, taking into account the local context and needs of the tourism sector; while acknowledging that the public sector will nevertheless remain an important source of funding for adaptation and climate resilient strategies critical to the tourism sector;
- 9) To invest in cost-effective energy efficiency and renewable energy options that reduce reliance on carbon-emitting fossil fuels;
- 10) To encourage private investment, corporate responsibility and business practices consistent with socio-environment protection and climate-resilience including development of enabling environments, adequate policy, regulatory and institutional framework and conditions in vulnerable destination countries to strengthen the tourism sector's response to climate impact and enhance sustainable development.
- 11) To use the potential that the tourism sector has, to accelerate the shift towards more sustainable consumption and production patterns taking existing research in the area of consumer behavior duly into account;

- 12) To highlight that existing initiatives, such as the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria, the UNWTO Global Observatories on Sustainable Tourism and the Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism, and pilot projects on the ground, such as STREAM “Sustainable Tourism through Energy Efficiency with Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Measures in Pangandaran (Indonesia) and PEEK “Program for Energy Efficiency in Thai Hotels” (Thailand), could trigger and accelerate the needed shift and demonstrate the feasibility of relevant measures on the ground;
- 13) To support the mobilization of the necessary financial resources to strengthen the resilience of the tourism sector.

Sincere appreciation was extended to the Government of the Philippines for their warm hospitality and the excellent arrangements for the Conference, as well as their contribution to advance the agenda of tourism and climate change in the Asia-Pacific Region.

Legazpi, 20th May 2014