Sri Lanka Technical Note

Background

Sri Lanka celebrates this year (2016) the golden jubilee of the establishment of its formal National Tourism Organization which started off as the “Ceylon Tourist Board” in 1966. It precedes the declaration in 1967 by the United Nations of the ‘International Tourism Year’ with the tagline ‘Tourism: Passport to Peace’. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has, through the years, supported the UN’s call made almost 5 decades ago to consider tourism as a means to promote peace.

It is relevant that Sri Lanka was one of the pioneering countries in Asia to develop its tourism industry on a firm and planned basis, which regrettably, was affected by an ethnic conflict lasting over two decades that had deep repercussions on the country as a whole and on the tourism sector in particular. While tourism did continue to maintain its presence in the country it could not be developed to its full potential and furthermore certain areas such as the North and East were partially inaccessible. However, with the cessation of hostilities in 2009 there has been a rapid and noteworthy recovery in tourism. The total arrivals in 2009 amounted to 448,000 and this figure almost doubled to 856,000 in 2011. The path to peace and reconciliation has been paved by a change in the political landscape of Sri Lanka in 2015 with the establishment of a unity government which comprises the mainstream political parties, an occurrence that is unique in the annals of Asian politics. The main aim of the national Government is to restore peace and bring about reconciliation.

The latest figures of tourist arrivals to Sri Lanka for 2015 indicate an increase of 17.8% over the previous year reaching almost 1.8 million visitors. The Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA) has targeted 2.5 million arrivals for 2016. These estimates have been based on viable policies and plans that take into consideration effective marketing and promotional campaigns. The opportunities for tourism development are great, nevertheless the challenges for recovery and reconciliation call for thought, discussion and a concerted plan of action by the public and private sectors.

It is in this context that the UNWTO conference on “Tourism: a Catalyst for Development, Peace and Reconciliation” has been scheduled in the Eastern seaside resort of Passikudah in Sri Lanka, from the 11th to the 14th July 2016. Please see the preliminary programme below for details.
UNWTO Conference on
“Tourism: a Catalyst for Development, Peace and Reconciliation”
Passikudah, Sri Lanka, 11 -14 July 2016

Provisional Programme

Sunday, 10 July 2016  Arrival of Delegates in Colombo

Monday, 11 July 2016  Transfer of Delegates from Colombo to Passikudah

For those who have checked-in The Gateway Hotel Airport Garden
10:00 & 10:30 - Shuttle service from the hotel to train station
11:00 – Train departs from Colombo
17:30 – Train arrives at Passikudah

For those who arrive the airport in the early morning of July 11
Ground transportation team of Sri Lanka will greet delegates at the airport
11:00 – Train departs from Colombo
17:30 – Train arrives at Passikudah

For those who cannot catch the train that departs at 11:00 to Passikudah
Private transfer will be arranged at 12:00PM to Passikudah (depend on number of arrivals)

19:00 – 21:00  Welcome Dinner hosted by Sri Lanka Government at Amaya Beach Resort

Tuesday, 12 July 2016

09:00 – 10:00  Registration

10:00 – 10:30  Opening Ceremony

Arrival of guests
Lighting of traditional oil lamp
National Anthem
Welcome remarks by Mr. Sugathadasa, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism Development and Christian Religious Affairs and Lands, Sri Lanka
Welcome remarks by Mr. Taleb Rifai, Secretary-General, World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

Keynote Address by HRH Princess Dana Firas, Chair, Petra National Trust, Jordan

10:30 – 12:00

Session 1: The contribution of tourism development to peace and reconciliation
The close link between tourism, peace and reconciliation as inter-dependent components in their overall political, economic and socio-cultural dimensions. The contribution of tourism development to this process and the opportunities and challenges faced both by the public and the private sectors. Reference to post-conflict areas with special mention of regional or provincial tourism development in areas that were totally or partially inaccessible to tourists.

Moderator: Mr. Xu Jing, Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, UNWTO

Setting the Scene: Mr. Martin Brackenbury, UNWTO expert and former president of the International Federation of Tour Operators (IFTO), United Kingdom

Panel

- Hon. Mr. Guy Didier Hyppolite, Minister of Tourism, Haiti
- Hon. Mr. Chantha Tith, Deputy Minister of Tourism, Cambodia
- Hon. Mr. Istvan Ujhelyi, Vice-Chair of the Committee on Transport and Tourism and Member of the Delegation for relations with China, European Parliament
- Mrs. P.S.M.Charles, Government Agent / District Secretary, Sri Lanka
- Mr. Jens Thraenhart, Executive Director of Mekong Tourism Coordinating Office
- Mr. Hiran Cooray, Chairman of Jetwing Hotels Ltd., Sri Lanka

Qs & As

12:00 – 13:30

Lunch sponsored by Tibet Hongji Group, member of China Chamber of Tourism at Amaya Beach Resort
Ceremonial Presentation of the UNWTO/WTTC Open Letter

Introduction by Ms. Anita Mendiratta, Special Advisor to the UNWTO Secretary-General
Remarks by Hon. Mr. John Amaratunga, Minister of Tourism Development and Christian Religious Affairs and Lands, Sri Lanka
Remarks by Mr. Taleb Rifai, Secretary-General, World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)
Video Message by Mr. David Scowsill, President & CEO, World Travel & Tourism Council
Remarks by H.E. Mr. Maithripala Sirisena, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

Delivery of the Open Letter by the UNWTO Secretary-General to the President of Sri Lanka

15:00 – 15:30
Tea break

15:30 – 17:00
Session 2: Local community involvement and “peace sensitive tourism”
Tourism development requires involvement of local communities in not only provision of goods and services (accommodation sector, tour guides, and catering establishments) but also in decision making to facilitate peace and reconciliation. This, and greater participation of foreign tourists in local cultural activities will lead to a sense of inclusiveness of the communities.

Moderator: Mr. Martin Brackenbury, UNWTO expert and former president of the International Federation of Tour Operators (IFTO), United Kingdom

Panel

- Mr. Louis D’Amore, Founder and President, the International Institute for Peace through Tourism (IIPT), United States of America
- Ms. Anita Mendiratta, Special Advisor to the UNWTO Secretary-General
- Dr. Liu Yi, Professor and Deputy Head, Department of Tourism Management and Planning, School of Tourism, Sun Yat-sen University, China
- Mr. H.M.G.S Palihakkara, Former Governor of Northern Province, Sri Lanka
- Dr. Vinya Ariyaratne, General Secretary, Sarvodaya, Sri Lanka

Qs & As
19:00 – 21:00  Dinner hosted by Passikudah Hotel Association

Wednesday, 13 July 2016

09:00 – 10:00  Session 3: Public private partnerships and peace tourism
While the public sector takes the lead in policy and planning, more public private partnerships especially with SMEs, are beneficial in the conflict areas that lack the infrastructure and the means to develop tourism.

Moderator:  **Ms. Anita Mendiratta**, Special Advisor to the UNWTO Secretary-General

Panel
- **Dr. Mario Hardy**, Chief Executive Officer, Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA)
- **Mr. Peter Wong**, Executive Chairman, China Chamber of Tourism (CCT), China
- **Mr. Hiroshi Sawabe**, Executive Director, Japan Association Travel Agents (JATA), Japan
- **Government representative** of Sri Lanka
- **Industry representative** of Sri Lanka

Qs & As

10:00 – 10:15  Tea break

10:15 – 11:15  Session 4: Marketing and rebranding of post-conflict destinations
How best to promote the destination in the aftermath of conflict through the international media and particularly the social media that plays such an important role in tourism today? Challenges and opportunities.

Moderator:  **Ms. Sandra Carvao**, Chief of Communications and Publications, UNWTO

Panel
- **Ms. Sarah Mathews**, Head of Destination Marketing APAC, TripAdvisor
- **Mr. Imtiaz Muqbil**, Executive Editor, Travel Impact Newswire, Thailand
• **Mr. Trevor Claringbold**, Creative Director at Globetrotter Television and Editor at Pro Traveller Magazine
• **Ms. Sonali Chatterjee**, Sales Director of India & South Asia, CNN Advertising Sales
• **Mr. Malik Fernando**, Director, Operations of MJF Holdings/Dilmah Tea, Sri Lanka

**Qs & As**

11:15 – 11:45  **Signing Ceremony of the Private Sector Commitment to the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism**

11:50 – 12:20  **Closing Ceremony**

Closing remarks by **Mr. Paddy Withane**, Chairman of Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority
Closing remarks by **Mr. Xu Jing**, Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, UNWTO

12:30 – 13:30  **Lunch**

14:00 – 21:30  **Technical visit to Trincomalee**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14:00</td>
<td>Departure from Passikudah Hotels to Trincomalee by bus</td>
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<tr>
<td>16:00</td>
<td>Arrival in Trincomalee</td>
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<td>Visit to Koneshwaran Temple</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Visit to beach park</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Site seeing of city and port by bus</td>
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<tr>
<td>18:00</td>
<td>Dinner at Nilaweli Beach Hotel (tentatively)</td>
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<tr>
<td>19:30</td>
<td>Departure from the hotel</td>
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<tr>
<td>21:30</td>
<td>Arrival at Passikudah hotels</td>
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Thursday, 14 July  

**Technical visit to Jaffna**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>07:30</td>
<td>Departure Time from hotel in Passikudah (luggage will be collected at the same time for departure to Colombo)</td>
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<td>08:30</td>
<td>Arrival in Batticola Airport</td>
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<td>09:30</td>
<td>Arrival in Palali Airport&lt;br&gt;Visit to Nagadeepa Purana Viharaya by boat&lt;br&gt;Visit to Jaffna Fort&lt;br&gt;Sightseeing of Jaffna City</td>
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<td>12:30</td>
<td>Lunch at Hotel Yal-Jetwing</td>
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<td>14:00</td>
<td>Visit to Nallur Kovil</td>
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<tr>
<td>15:00</td>
<td>Departure from Jaffna</td>
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<td>16:30</td>
<td>Arrival in Katunayake (BIA) Airport and transfer to The Gateway Hotel Airport Garden by bus</td>
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<tr>
<td>17:30</td>
<td>Arrival at The Gateway Hotel Airport Garden</td>
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*Note: The transfer from The Gateway Hotel Airport Garden to the Airport, which takes around 15-20 mins, will be arranged by the host according to the delegate’s flight schedule*

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Friday, 15 July  

**Departure**