

# DECLARATION

## “Harnessing Tourism for the Millennium Development Goals”

*A representative group of government, industry, UN specialized agencies and civil society leaders met in New York, at the invitation of the World Tourism Organization in its capacity as Specialized Agency of the United Nations, on the eve of the Special United Nations General Assembly, on 13 September 2005, and adopted the following declaration:*

*Noting:*

The growing socioeconomic importance of tourism all over the world, and especially in many developing countries;

The effective contribution of tourism to the achievement of several Millennium Development Goals, as already recognised by the WSSD in Johannesburg and the Brussels Programme of Action, especially those relating to poverty alleviation, environmental conservation and creation of employment opportunities for women, indigenous communities and young people;

The role that tourism plays in most developing, least developed and small island states, as the main - and sometimes the only - means of economic and social development on a sustainable basis, with meaningful linkages to other productive sectors, such as agriculture and handicrafts;

That the increase in mobility is essential to achieve the goal of creating more jobs and eliminating poverty through tourism but that in recent years mobility has been limited by factors such as the lack of security and the rise in the price of fuel affecting air transport.

*Noting as well that:*

Tourism has not yet been given sufficient recognition by many governments and international development assistance agencies, particularly in view of its enormous potential to generate economic, environmental and social benefits.

*Convinced that:*

The tourism sector can therefore make a substantially greater contribution to poverty alleviation, economic growth, sustainable development, environmental conservation, inter-cultural understanding and peace among nations.

*WE CALL ON the United Nations General Assembly and URGE governments, international and bilateral development assistance agencies, financial institutions, private corporations, NGOs and other interested parties to:*

1. Fully recognize tourism, when sustainably developed and managed, as an effective tool to realize the Millennium Development Goals - especially poverty alleviation;
2. Integrate tourism in national development programmes and poverty reduction strategies to contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals;
3. Encourage good governance, ensuring that all stakeholders, especially at the local level, are duly consulted and responsibilities are clearly defined;
4. Mobilize further domestic resources, in cooperation with financial institutions, micro credit entities, business service providers and encourage the further development of the local private sector to facilitate community driven tourism programmes, and small and medium size tourism enterprise programmes;
5. Encourage large national and multinational companies operating in developing and least developed countries to act in the most sustainable manner, in the context of the tourism sector, adopting strong social responsibility measures towards local communities, and taking specific measures to increase the level of employment of poor people and the supply of goods and services by the poor;
6. Pay increased attention to the social and cultural dimensions of tourism, to further implement the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, and to continue the fight against exploitation of children in the tourism industry;
7. Encourage cooperation between the public and private sectors to ensure that the necessary infrastructure to facilitate tourism development is in place, as well as to ensure that the necessary conditions of political stability, peace and governance of public affairs are conducive to tourism development;
8. Give higher priority to tourism in development assistance programmes, including ODAs, especially

those focused on planning, infrastructure development, capacity building, technology transfer, and access to markets as well as safety and security, and facilitation of travel;

*WE FURTHER INVITE the consideration of all stakeholders to:*

9. Follow the UN Secretary General's advice and give support to the activities undertaken by the World Tourism Organization in favor of developing and least developed countries, and to its Sustainable Tourism – Eliminating Poverty (ST-EP) programme and provide funding to the ST-EP Foundation and, where appropriate, to the ST-EP Trust Fund, with a view to creating a large number of sustainable SMEs in areas such as ecotourism, community-based tourism, rural tourism, and sport-related tourism forms;
10. Draw the attention of governments and other interested parties concerning:
  - a) The crucial role that tourism can play in Small Island Developing States and other tourism-dependent developing economies given the linkages it can forge with other economic activities;
  - b) The fact that such linkages are often limited by the leakage resulting from imports of inputs and financial remittances. In this respect, we recommend governments:
    - Measure such economic linkages and leakages by putting in place Tourism Satellite Accounts according to the methodology adopted by the UN Statistical Commission in 2000 following an initiative of the World Tourism Organization and,
    - Establish programmes to reduce the leakages and generate positive linkages with other economic activities in their countries (such as agriculture, construction, manufacturing industries or handicrafts production).
11. Underscore the interrelation existing between tourism and air transport, particularly in the case of the poorest countries, emphasize the need to offer development support for infrastructure, capacity building and technology that will enhance safety, security and facilitation of air transport, and ensure that, in so doing, all states fully comply with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) safety standards, recommended practices and oversight mechanisms;
12. Endorse in principle the UN Secretary General's initiatives aimed at putting in place innovative financial support mechanisms for development, in addition to the Monterrey consensus on public aid, but recommend that any proposal, such as the voluntary solidarity tax for air

passengers does not negatively affect tourism flows to the developing and least developed countries;

13. Integrate tourism in current and future actions regarding climate change, especially in light of the forthcoming conference convened by the World Meteorological Organization and taking into account the Djerba Declaration on Climate Change and Tourism (2003);
14. Harness the human resource potential of poor people in the delivery of quality services through the tourism value chain. There is a pressing need for capacity building at the local destination level, including a) improved employment policies; b) expanded education and training opportunities at the general education, vocational and professional levels; and c) dissemination of know how and good practices through enhanced knowledge management systems;
15. Facilitate access to Global Environmental Facility (GEF) funding for those tourism development projects, including ecotourism, that contribute to biodiversity conservation, protection of coastal areas, oceans and seas, and similar environmental objectives;
16. Integrate tourism into current debates concerning water resources, since in many cases the needs of tourism development compete with those of host communities, while in many others it is tourism that permits the funding of large water supply or water treatment infrastructure projects;
17. Facilitate access of LDCs to trade in tourism services, following UNCTAD's Sao Paulo Conference in 2004, especially in the post-Doha negotiations and in preparation of the forthcoming negotiations and debates on trade in services to be held at the Summit of the World Trade Organization in Hong Kong.

In conclusion, we encourage the World Tourism Organization to actively participate in the Global Partnership for Development, including the achievement of the goals contained in the Millennium Declaration, the Brussels Programme of Action and the Monterrey Consensus. We strongly reiterate our determination to contribute to the timely and full realization of the development goals and objectives that have emerged from major United Nations Conferences and Summits, especially the Millennium Development Goals, which have galvanized unprecedented efforts towards helping the world's poorest people overcome poverty.

