



**United Nations
Conference
on Trade and
Development**

Distr.
GENERAL

TD(XI)/PC/6
18 March 2004

Original: ENGLISH

Eleventh session
São Paulo, 13–18 June 2004

**Outcome of the Pre-UNCTAD XI High-Level International Meeting
of Experts on Sustainable Tourism for Development**

Held at Lisbon, Portugal, from 8 to 11 March 2004

Lisbon Declaration on Sustainable Tourism for Development

We, governmental and international experts gathered in Lisbon, Portugal, on 8–11 March 2004, for the High-level International Meeting of Experts on Sustainable Tourism for Development, organized in the context of the preparations for the eleventh session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD XI),

Recalling the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations, as well as the outcome of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), the International Conference on Financing for Development, and the World Summit on Sustainable Development,

Convinced of the necessity of harmonious cooperation among relevant international organizations, in particular UNCTAD and the World Tourism Organization, to promote sustainable tourism for development as a tool for poverty reduction in developing countries, particularly in the LDCs and SIDS,

Noting the valuable economic opportunities that sustainable tourism is bringing to many developing countries, including several LDCs, particularly in Africa, and the catalytic impact that tourism activities can have on the development process in general,

Conscious of the significant cultural and environmental assets most developing countries can draw upon in their desire to take advantage of sustainable tourism for development,

Aware of the severity of the handicaps that many countries, in particular LDCs, face in their efforts to promote sustainable tourism development, mainly because of deficiencies in terms of the necessary physical infrastructure, marketing and the availability of appropriately skilled human resources,

Convinced that, for a vast majority of developing countries, sustainable tourism can be an avenue for enhancing participation in the global economy and alleviating poverty, in particular through the creation of employment and the establishment as well as strengthening of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises,

Taking the opportunity offered by the eleventh session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to bring to the attention of the international community the benefits that can be expected from further international support for the development of tourism-related capacities in developing countries in general and in LDCs in particular,

Underlining the necessity of strengthening national and regional institutional capacities and promoting entrepreneurship to encourage the development of sustainable tourism endeavours that are respectful of the cultural, social and environmental heritage, and to that end, of developing relevant national human resources,

Emphasizing the importance of coordinating efforts, at the national level, of national tourism authorities and institutions in charge of trade and investment policies and international negotiations in these areas,

1. *Adopt* the attached set of recommendations to UNCTAD to support sustainable tourism for development in developing countries, based on the following three broad areas of action, to be implemented essentially through advisory services and human resource development activities:

- (a) Strengthening relevant national institutional capacities, in particular negotiating capacities of LDCs in international trade in services and capacities for attracting both domestic and foreign direct investment in tourism;
- (b) Encouraging local entrepreneurial involvement in the tourism economy, and promoting sound macroeconomic policies and an enabling environment for investment;
- (c) Promoting the use of information and communication technology in tourism development activities, including the use of dedicated platforms for the marketing of tourism resources;

2. *Recognize* that, in order to achieve any significant progress in tourism development, it is important to support local efforts to develop an adequate physical infrastructure, in particular in the areas of air transport and telecommunications; to that end, foreign and domestic support will be required so as to meet the costs of relevant capital investment;

3. *Encourage* cooperation among developing countries in developing sustainable tourism projects and processes that can be beneficial to all as a result of intraregional complementarities in tourism product specialization, promotional tools and logistical capacities;

4. *Invite* UNCTAD and the World Tourism Organization, as well as the World Trade Organization, the International Trade Centre (UNCTAD/WTO), the United Nations Environment Programme, the International Labour Office, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the International Civil Aviation Organization and other relevant organizations, to coordinate their efforts and consider establishing an inter-agency mechanism for cooperation in support of sustainable tourism for development;
5. In that context, *encourage* the international community to give favourable consideration to the activities of the UNCTAD secretariat, as well as of other organizations in the area of technical assistance for sustainable tourism as a tool for development, in partnership with civil society;
6. *Welcome* the further development of harmonious cooperation between UNCTAD and the World Tourism Organization, especially within the mechanism of the Sustainable Tourism – Eliminating Poverty (ST-EP) initiative launched at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, which focuses on the links between sustainable tourism as a tool for development and poverty alleviation;
7. *Invite* the Government of Portugal to transmit the outcome of the Meeting to the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for UNCTAD XI to enable the Committee to take the report into consideration in its deliberations;
8. *Commit* ourselves to transmitting the report of the Meeting to our national authorities for information and follow-up at UNCTAD XI;
9. *Express* our sincere gratitude to the Government of Portugal and UNCTAD for their generous financial, organizational and substantive support for the meeting.

Recommendations

Introduction

1. International tourism and tourism-related economic activities play an important role in the sustainable development of developing countries. For many developing countries, particularly least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing States (SIDS), tourism constitutes one of only a few viable development options and is often the principal source of foreign exchange earnings. Sustainable tourism development involves all pillars of sustainable development, namely economic, social, environmental and cultural. Promoting sustainable tourism development requires the participation of a wide range of stakeholders at the national level and close cooperation between relevant intergovernmental organizations. Sustainable tourism development involves multifaceted and complex issues that cut across different areas of UNCTAD's mandate.
2. UNCTAD, in cooperation and coordination with the World Tourism Organization, the International Trade Centre (UNCTAD/WTO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Labour Office (ILO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and other relevant intergovernmental organizations, should continue its analytical work and capacity-building activities to help enhance the contribution of sustainable tourism to export diversification, development and poverty reduction in developing countries. UNCTAD should assist Governments in maximizing the benefits of the tourism industry by

strengthening linkages with other sectors, thus reducing leakages from the economy. UNCTAD should also cooperate with the private sector and relevant NGOs. UNCTAD, through advisory services and human resource development activities, should enhance its focus on tourism in relevant areas of its work such as investment, multilateral trade negotiations (particularly trade in services), competition law and policy and trade, environment and development, small enterprise development, and information and communication technology. UNCTAD's ability to support the development of sustainable tourism activities is relevant to the needs of developing countries, particularly LDCs and SIDS.

Enhancing institutional capacities to facilitate sustainable tourism development

Sustainable tourism development investment policy

3. UNCTAD should: (a) assist developing countries in the formulation of sound sustainable tourism investment policies, with particular focus on the institutional and regulatory framework; and (b) develop a training programme on how to attract responsible tourism investment, including foreign direct investment in the tourism industry.

Multilateral trade negotiations

4. UNCTAD should continue to assist Governments of developing countries in integrating sustainable tourism development principles into their national trade policy framework, in particular in mainstreaming sustainable tourism development strategies into national commitments under the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS).

Tourism-related competition policy

5. UNCTAD, in the context of its support for policy makers in designing national competition law to prevent anti-competitive practices, should answer the particular needs of these countries in relation to the specific problem that such practices pose in the sphere of tourism services. UNCTAD should promote international cooperation aimed at the adoption of bilateral, regional and multilateral sets of principles on competition in tourism trade whenever such principles are deemed necessary.

Trade, environment and development

6. The Capacity-Building Task Force of UNCTAD and UNEP on Trade, Environment and Development should be used as an important framework for promoting the development of sustainable tourism strategies, in cooperation with the World Tourism Organization. In this regard, particular emphasis should be placed on the rational use of natural resources, the diversification and enhancement of tourism products, responding to changes in international demand, and strengthening linkages between tourism and local products such as organic products and handicrafts. UNCTAD, taking advantage of the BioTrade Initiative, should continue to promote sustainable tourism as a means to generate income for local communities, support the protection and sustainable use of biodiversity, enhance export diversification and protect cultural heritage.

Encouraging local entrepreneurial involvement in the tourism economy

7. UNCTAD, in cooperation with other relevant international organizations, should provide technical assistance to developing countries to encourage and strengthen entrepreneurship in the tourism economy, not only in the hospitality industry, but also in the many supply sectors that are closely linked to that industry, particularly the farming sector. Adequate attention should be given to

the needs of small and medium-sized enterprises and local communities. This implies development of training and sensitization activities, and could also involve developing printed material for relevant population targets such as school leavers and young potential entrepreneurs. UNCTAD should also seek to promote networks of research institutes with a view to strengthening research capacities in developing countries aimed at sustainable tourism development and productivity in the tourism industry.

Promoting the use of modern information and communication technology in tourism development

8. UNCTAD, through its etourism initiative, should continue its assistance to developing countries in making use of information and communication technologies to promote their tourism products. It should develop, in cooperation with other relevant organizations, including the International Trade Centre (UNCTAD/WTO) and the World Tourism Organization, technical assistance packages to assist developing countries in implementing and managing their own e-tourism platform to facilitate the promotion of their tourism product.

Two cross-cutting modalities of UNCTAD action: advisory services and human resource development

9. UNCTAD should continue to offer advisory services to developing countries on tourism-related policies, within UNCTAD's mandate. Advisory services should, to the largest possible extent, include transfer of knowledge to local authorities. It should also develop integrated human resource development (HRD) activities in relation to sustainable tourism development, through direct training activities on tourism-related subjects within UNCTAD's competence and training of trainers to develop local HRD capacities. Networking among beneficiary countries, South-South cooperation and cooperation with relevant institutions in more advanced countries should be encouraged. There is also a need to strengthen research capacities in developing countries.

Sustainable tourism development in the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States

10. UNCTAD should continue its analytical work on the contribution of sustainable tourism to the economic specialization and development and poverty reduction prospects of the three special categories of countries that receive particular attention from the United Nations.

Cooperation with other international organizations

11. UNCTAD and the World Tourism Organization, the World Trade Organization, the International Trade Centre (UNCTAD/WTO), the United Nations Environment Programme, the International Labour Office, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and other relevant international organizations should coordinate their efforts and consider establishing an inter-agency mechanism for cooperation in support of sustainable tourism for development. Such a mechanism could, for example, develop an inventory of best practices of sustainable tourism, which should in turn be widely circulated.
