



Report of the World Tourism Organization to the United Nations Secretary-General in preparation for the High Level Meeting on the Mid-Term Comprehensive Global Review of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010

1. Introduction

In recent years, tourism has been increasingly recognised for its economic potential to contribute to the reduction of poverty in developing countries. Its geographical expansion and labour intensive nature support a spread of employment and can be particularly relevant in remote and rural areas, where live three quarters of the two billion people under extreme poverty conditions.

Statistics show that tourism in LDCs is still limited: 2.6% of the world market share in terms of international tourist arrivals (ITAs) and of international tourism receipts (ITRs). However, the growth in ITAs has been faster in LDCs than in the developing countries as a whole: 42.5% in the former and 30.8% in the latter between 2001 and 2005 (15.8% for the world). Also in terms of ITRs: 50.3% growth in LDCs and 40.6% in the developing world between 2001 and 2004 (33.2% for the world).

There are several reasons that make tourism an especially suitable economic development sector for LDCs¹:

1. Tourism is consumed at the point of production; the tourist has to go to the destination and spend his/her money there, opening an opportunity for local businesses of all sorts, and allowing local communities to benefit through the informal economy, by selling goods and services directly to visitors;
2. Most LDCs have a comparative advantage in tourism over developed countries. They have assets of enormous value to the tourism industry - culture, art, music, natural landscapes, wildlife and climate, including World Heritage Sites. Visits by tourists to such sites can generate employment and income for communities as well as helping in the conservation of cultural and natural assets;
3. Tourism is a more diverse industry than many others. It has the potential to support other economic activities, both through providing flexible, part time jobs that can complement other livelihood options, and through creating income throughout a complex supply chain of goods and services;

¹ See "Tourism and Poverty Alleviation: recommendations for action", UNWTO (2004)

4. Tourism is labour intensive, which is particularly important in tackling poverty. It also provides a wide range of different employment opportunities especially for women and young people - from the highly skilled to the unskilled - and generally it requires relatively little training;
5. It creates opportunities for many small and micro entrepreneurs, either in the formal or informal economy; it is an industry in which start-up costs and barriers to entry are generally low or can easily be lowered;
6. Tourism provides not only material benefits for the poor but also cultural pride. It creates greater awareness of the natural environment and its economic value, a sense of ownership and reduced vulnerability through diversification of income sources;
7. The infrastructure required by tourism, such as transport and communications, water supply and sanitation, public security, and health services, can also benefit poor communities.

2. Tourism in the Brussels Programme of Action

The Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) for the Decade 2001-2010 clearly recognized the central role of tourism as “one of the few economic sectors through which LDCs have managed to increase their participation in the global economy. It can be an engine of employment creation, poverty eradication, ensuring gender equality, and protection of the natural and cultural heritage. These facts principally result from the existence, in most LDCs, of significant comparative advantages that are conducive to viable tourism specialization”².

In Brussels, governments agreed on a number of actions to be taken by development partners to support LDCs in their development efforts. Some of them are specifically geared to tourism development and others, which could also facilitate tourism development, are related generally to the trade in the services sector. With regard to the latter, development partners were called on to:

1. Support, through financial, technical and/or other forms of assistance, individual LDC efforts to develop the infrastructure for tradable services in which they have a comparative advantage;
2. Assist LDCs’ efforts to improve export promotion and marketing;
3. Support LDCs’ efforts in modernizing facilities and equipment, as well as upgrading skills in information technology, including through transfer of technology to service sectors in accordance with relevant WTO/OMC Agreements;
4. Provide support for LDCs in their strengthening of local banking systems and other financial services to make them competitive;
5. Assist LDCs through financial, technical and/or other forms of assistance to enhance their supply capacity in tradable services, especially in tourism, air transport and other sectors of interest to LDCs;

² See Paragraph 63 of the Brussels Programme of Action (A/CONF.191/11).

6. Remove restrictions and enhance market access opportunities for service exports from LDCs, as provided for in relevant WTO Agreements in areas of export interest to them³.

Recommended actions in the BPoA that specifically relate to tourism include:

1. Supporting LDCs' efforts to encourage investment in the tourism industry and enterprise development in the wider tourism economy, in particular through increased access to finance and the development of local human resources;
2. Assisting LDCs in their efforts to enhance their economic efficiency, competitiveness and the sustainability of tourism operations, in particular by assisting them to access and participate in global distribution systems and use appropriate technology;
3. Assisting LDCs in their efforts to promote synergy between transport and tourism, with particular reference to air transport; and
4. Considering providing financial, technical and/or other forms of assistance to support LDCs' efforts to strengthen their national capacities in the field of tourism⁴.

This strong acknowledgement of the Brussels PoA on the role of tourism in the development of LDCs, and the corresponding recommendations for international support included in the Programme of Action, are an integral part of a growing recognition of the key contribution that tourism development can make to equitable economic and social progress and poverty alleviation. Tourism development, if properly developed and supported, can indeed be a "quick-win" in overcoming the economic and social conditions that prevail in LDCs and in accelerating their integration into the world economy.

Along with the Brussels Programme of Action, the PoAs for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), which include many of the LDCs, have also especially highlighted the role of tourism in development of these countries⁵. UNWTO has been encouraged and challenged by this recognition and it is poised to play its part to help countries to fully realize the potential for poverty alleviation and equitable development offered by sustainable tourism development.

3. UNWTO and the BPoA

Even before it became a UN Specialised Agency in 2003, the World Tourism Organization had been assisting LDCs and other developing nations in promoting the development of their tourism resources and attractions in a sustainable manner. In recent years, this work has intensified, especially as it refers to LDCs and other developing nations. In this section, a summary of the main activities and assistance programmes of UNWTO are presented, while a detailed description of such activities is given in the Annex on a country-by-country basis.

³ See Paragraph 70 (ii) of the Brussels Programme of Action.

⁴ See Paragraph 64 (ii) of the Brussels Programme of Action.

⁵ Respectively, the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (Barbados Programme of Action, A/CONF.167/9) and the Almaty Programme of Action.

In the period 2001-2005 the World Tourism Organization has undertaken extensive and in-depth research to understand better the mechanisms through which tourism contributes to poverty alleviation, as well as to identify the obstacles that prevent the full optimization of tourism earnings in favour of local, poor people in LDCs. The results of such research have served to set up policy guidelines, specific tools and project evaluation criteria that have been widely disseminated during 2004 and 2005.

The following principles have been adopted by UNWTO and recommended to governments in connection with Tourism and Poverty Alleviation:

1. *Mainstreaming*: ensure that sustainable tourism development is included in general poverty elimination programmes. Include poverty elimination measures within overall strategies for the sustainable development of tourism;
2. *Partnerships*: develop partnerships between international, government, non-governmental and private sector bodies, with a common aim of poverty alleviation through tourism;
3. *Integration*: adopt an integrated approach with other sectors and avoid over-dependence on tourism;
4. *Equitable distribution*: ensure that tourism development strategies focus on more equitable distribution of wealth and services - growth alone is not enough;
5. *Acting locally*: focus action at a local/destination level, within the context of supportive national policies;
6. *Retention*: reduce leakages from the local economy and build linkages within it, focusing on the supply chain;
7. *Viability*: maintain sound financial discipline and assess viability of all actions taken;
8. *Empowerment*: create conditions which empower and enable the poor to have access to information and to influence and take decisions;
9. *Human rights*: remove all forms of discrimination against people working or seeking to work in tourism and eliminate any exploitation, particularly against women and children;
10. *Commitment*: plan action and the application of resources for the long term; and
11. *Monitoring*: develop simple indicators and systems to measure the impact of tourism on poverty.

Based on these principles, UNWTO's general programme of work includes a number of activities aimed at maximizing the impact of tourism for the benefit of developing countries in general and LDCs in particular. Since 2002, the World Tourism Organization has published four reports focusing on poverty alleviation:

1. "Tourism and poverty alleviation" (2002);
2. "Tourism and poverty alleviation: recommendations for action" (2004);
3. "Tourism, microfinance and poverty alleviation" (2005); and
4. "Poverty alleviation through tourism – A compilation of good practices", including cases from three LDCs (Ethiopia, Mali and Mozambique).

At the Johannesburg Summit in 2002, the World Tourism Organization launched the Sustainable Tourism-Eliminating Poverty Initiative (ST-EP). After promoting the concept among potential donors, in 2004 ST-EP activities started with some pilot

missions fielded to Ethiopia, Cameroon and Zambia, to identify potential tourism development projects that could specifically aim at reducing poverty levels. These missions multiplied in 2005 and some 140 ST-EP projects have so far been identified in 19 countries and some trans-frontier areas.

In parallel, an international not-for-profit foundation, ST-EP Foundation, has been established in late in Seoul in late 2005, thanks to an initial contribution of USD 5 million of the Government of the Republic of Korea. The ST-EP Foundation will work in cooperation and in partnership with international organizations, development agencies, governments, foundations, corporations and individuals. It will provide countries and organizations with the financial resources required to implement poverty reduction tourism development projects, starting in 2006.

In collaboration with the Netherlands Development Organization (SNV), a multi-donor Trust Fund was set up in 2004 with the objective of supporting ST-EP projects through the provision of technical assistance. SNV provided an initial contribution of 2 million euros. The Italian Government has provided a financial contribution to this Fund and discussions with other potential donors are underway.

With these three funding sources, a total of 44 ST-EP projects are currently being implemented, including in the following LDCs: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Lao PDR, Mali, Mauritania, Nepal, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, and Uganda.

4. LDCs in the process of tourism trade liberalization

In addition to the poverty reduction programme in favour of LDCs, in 2005 and as part of its permanent mission to assist Members in the related to the Doha Development Agenda, UNWTO began to identify tools for developing countries, and LDCs in particular, to enable them to assess liberalization and draft national competition laws in the field of tourism. This activity continues in the 2006-2007 programme of work.

In the field of air transport and tourism, a guide document was prepared in 2005 in cooperation with ICAO on *Essential Air Services as Essential Tourism Development Routes*, which allows LDCs to negotiate special treatment for access by air transport through easing regulatory constraints. The guide is publicly available and is open to follow-up by interested LDCs.

Following several regional seminars on tourism quality systems and the establishment in 2005 of a technical committee on Tourism and Related Services of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), UNWTO supported LDCs' quest for developing technical standards and respect their product diversity in tourism activities, so as to allow LDCs to better market their tourism products, compete in the world marketplace and develop commercial approaches.

5. Pending challenges and some proposals

Notwithstanding the efforts undertaken by UNWTO, other UN and bilateral assistance agencies and NGOs, as well as governments of LDCs to the extent of their abilities, the

potential of tourism to act as an engine for sustainable development, poverty alleviation and the achievement of several other MDGs in these countries is far from being fully realized.

The main specific constraints -in addition to those of a general nature such as political instability, insecurity and corruption affecting all areas of activity- that prevent such potential to be fully developed are:

1. **The high proportion of economic leakages, outside the local economy.** In many developing countries and in practically all LDCs, a generally high percentage of the foreign exchange income generated by international tourist arrivals leaks out of the economy. This leakage can be in the form of repatriation of benefits of foreign tourism companies, fees to hotel management companies, remuneration of foreign staff and, last but not least, imports of goods and services to respond to the tourists' needs.

The less diversified the economic structure of a country, the higher the level of imports and of leakages. But even in countries where the economy is capable of producing many of the inputs required by the hotel industry, such as agricultural produce, textiles and furnitures, the tendency is towards importing such goods to ensure quality consistency and regularity of supply.

Much can be done by governments, and particularly by the foreign and domestic hotel and tourism companies operating in LDCs, to improve this situation in order to reduce the leakages and increase the linkages between the tourism industry and other local economic activities. UNWTO is currently engaged in action research projects in this respect, working with hotel trade associations and governments of a few developing countries with a view to find the most suitable operational mechanisms to better integrate tourism with the rest of the local economy.

Professional training of local people at middle and senior technical levels, to allow them to replace foreign staff in hotels and other tourism establishments is another way of contributing to reduce the leakages and retain a higher proportion of the tourists' expenditure in the country.

2. **Insufficient awareness among national and international financial authorities** about the real potential of tourism, and especially about the need to carefully plan and decisively support its sustainable development. It is often believed that tourism can develop and bear fruits for the host society solely through the action of private investors, which in the case of most LDCs is mostly foreign. This concept has proved to be wrong, even in countries that have managed to attract tourism FDI and tourists. To become a sustainable development opportunity in LDCs tourism requires, in addition to natural and cultural attractions that are abundant in most countries, at least the following conditions:
 - a) the involvement of the local people in all aspects and stages of tourism development, management, operations and monitoring;
 - b) the definition of a clear long term strategy and carefully designed master plans to respect the environmental, social and cultural constraints in each

country and destination; and the implementation and respect of such plans by all concerned, including private investors and operators;

- c) intensive capacity-building and training of both, national public officials at central and local levels, and training and empowerment of local communities, to allow them to become active stakeholders and beneficiaries in the tourism development process;
- d) infrastructure support –at least in terms of transport, basic utilities and telecommunications- without which tourism development is impossible. The responsibility for the provision of such infrastructure is usually outside the realm of tourism authorities.

3. **Lack of coordination** among the many actors that intervene, directly or indirectly, in the tourism development process. This lack of coordination is observed at the national level, firstly **among different government departments** that make decisions on tourism related issues, for instance concerning transport infrastructure, or natural protected areas, or education, without considering the implications these decisions may have on the tourism sector.

LDC governments, at the highest political level, need to understand well the potential of tourism and especially its unique position, as compared to other economic activities, to generate entrepreneurial and employment opportunities even in the most remote places and suitable for everyone. They need to provide a high-powered political framework for this potential to develop, committing the involvement of all senior ministries, and not assuming that the tourism authority alone will be sufficient to generate all the conditions for that development to take place.

4. Secondly, there is often a **lack of cooperation and coordination between the public institutions concerned with tourism and the traditional tourism private sector** for establishing social requirements associated to tourism investments and operations in LDCs. This lack of cooperation is also manifest between these two stakeholders and the community-based organizations or single microentrepreneurs that have created a tourism offer, but that remains outside the mainstream marketing and promotional channels.

National governments as well as the large tourism trade associations could do much more to generate employment amongst the local poor in LDCs, improve the local supply chain and support traditional farming, fishing and small manufacturing activities linked to tourism. This could be done through voluntary agreements, technical assistance to local suppliers, provision of training for local people to become employees, and even through regulations regarding employment, levels of pay, import duties and the like.

In most tourism destinations of LDCs a considerable percentage of tourism revenues “leaks back” to external service providers and to source markets in developed countries, due in part to the lack of quality local supply. Therefore, the development of local capacities and the enhancement of linkages with local and national economies can greatly improve tourism’s contribution to reduce poverty levels.

5. Similarly, the **lack of coordination is also common among the UN and bilateral agencies**, as well as international financial institutions and NGOs that provide assistance to LDCs, either in tourism or in sectors that affect tourism.

UNWTO has made efforts in recent years to attempt a higher degree of coordination with the aim of increasing the effectiveness of the technical and financial assistance granted to these countries in connection with tourism. Some progress has been made in this regard, especially with a few UN agencies and a couple of bilateral agencies. But overall, the lack of ODA coordination remains and is often expressed in the form of incompatible projects, or isolated projects that become unviable, or repetition of inconclusive analysis, etc.

The World Tourism Organization could certainly increase its coordinating role within the UN family, initially through the United Nations Tourism Exchange Network recently established to exchange information among the agencies. But the Organization could also extend its role to act as a catalyst for consistency and synergy among all the technical and financial assistance granted by a myriad of organizations to LDCs in the field of tourism. Only with such a coordination and consistency the assistance granted will truly achieve substantive objectives and realize the potential of tourism towards sustainable development and poverty alleviation. But to exercise this coordinating role effectively, UNWTO would need to be financially supported from sources other than the regular, programmatic contributions of its Member States.

6. **Lack of commitment of the private sector.** The private sector, especially that with an international vocation, though it has been active in numerous LDCs, - either as an investor in tourism infrastructure or as an air carrier or yet as operator of tourism circuits- has not always exercised full social responsibility vis-à-vis the local population and the local economic interests. Accusations regarding bad employment and pay practices, or unfair trading terms, or the inadequate use of natural or local cultural heritage assets, or the sudden suspension of air travel connections, among others, are common. Similarly, little efforts have been made by foreign tourism operators to intensify the use of local resources, in order to avoid the huge economic leakages that are typical of this industry in most LDCs.

Governments as well as other stakeholders should encourage the private corporations, and establish if necessary the appropriate mechanisms for the private corporate tourism sector to fully comply with its social responsibility vis-à-vis the least developed countries. For this purpose, the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, and the UN Global Compact initiatives can be considered as reference.

Annex
UNWTO Activities in LDCs by region and country
2001 - 2005

Africa

- The Government of **Senegal**, with the technical support of UNWTO and UNDP's funding, started during **2001-2002** a vast study on the impact of tourism on the Senegal economy.
- In **Mauritania**, the World Tourism Organization carried out a study entitled "National Tourism Development Strategy and Priority Actions" in **2002** in its capacity as an executing agency of UNDP.
- In **2002**, a UNWTO technical assistance project in **Niger** aimed at making the private sector the driving force of tourism development, taking into account the reinforcement of the partnership between the public and private sectors in order to lead all of the public bilateral and multilateral partners and funding agencies to an agreement on priority actions and international and national strategies for tourism.
- In **2002**, UNWTO was entrusted by UNDP to prepare a Plan of Priority Actions for the Revitalization of Tourism in **Rwanda** for the Ministry of Industry, Trade, and Tourism.
- In **Lesotho**, a project was finalized in **2002** to formulate a tourism policy geared to maximize the tourism industry's contribution to the economy while ensuring that the cultural heritage and natural environment were preserved and protected.
- In **2002**, UNWTO was entrusted by UNDP to conceive the Strategic Tourism Development Plan in **Malawi**.
- UNWTO sent a mission to **Niger** in **2002** for drafting a preparatory document on tourism recovery and public-private partnership.
- A mission was sent in **2003** to the **Democratic Republic of Congo** for assisting the Ministry of Land Affairs, Environment and Tourism in the redefinition of the competencies of the General Secretariat for Tourism and the National Tourism Office.
- A mission was fielded in **2003** to **Equatorial Guinea** for the formulation of a project/programme on institutional support to the Ministry of Information, Tourism and Culture, to conduct and coordinate activities related to tourism development in the country.
- During **2003**, **Mozambique** received a UNWTO mission on hotel classification in order for hotels to meet the conditions demanded at the international level.
- In **Mali**, a tourism sector development strategy was formulated in **2003** with the financial support of UNDP to help the Ministry of Handicrafts and Tourism develop a medium- and long-term strategy and define priority actions in order to ensuring as quickly as possible the sector's revitalization.
- In **2003**, the World Tourism Organization held a Regional Consultation for Africa on the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Tourism in Dakar, **Senegal**, in cooperation with the Government of Senegal. Several LDCs participated in the event (**Angola, Benin,**

Burkina-Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Uganda and Togo).

- A Seminar on Ecotourism in National Parks and Protected Areas in Africa was held in **Rwanda**, in **August 2003**. About 100 participants from **Burundi**, Kenya, **Madagascar, Mozambique, Rwanda** and Zimbabwe attended the seminar.
- A course on Tourism Policy and Strategy was held in **Ethiopia**, in **September 2003**. **Benin, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia**, Kenya, **Lesotho, Mali, Sierra Leone, Sudan**, Tanzania, **Togo** and **Yemen** were the participating countries.
- Sub-regional Seminar on New Information Technologies in Tourism took place in Maputo, **Mozambique**, (**November 2003**). It was attended by 70 delegates from countries of Eastern and Southern Africa (**Angola, Ethiopia**, Kenya, **Mozambique**, South Africa, Swaziland, **Tanzania, Zimbabwe**), representing the public and the private sector.
- The World Tourism Organization organized a “Sub-regional workshop on tourism statistics and the elaboration of a Tourism Satellite Account (TSA)” in Dakar, **Senegal (December 2003)**. It was attended by 72 participants from Senegal, **Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Congo, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo**, Tunisia, **Gambia, Sierra Leone**, Ghana and Nigeria.
- In **2004**, UNWTO fielded a Preparatory Assistance Mission (PA) to **Eritrea** to conduct an assessment of the tourism sector and for the identification of technical assistance needs.
- A mission was fielded to **Sudan** in **2004** to conduct a preliminary assessment of the tourism sector and the context in which tourism operates, and, taking the assessment into account, to prepare a detailed project document for a Tourism Development Master Plan.
- A mission to **Zambia** was sent in **2004**, aimed at identifying possible local tourism development projects that could contribute to poverty alleviation, particularly through job creation, the development of small and medium-sized enterprises, and the sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage.
- The World Tourism Organization organized a seminar-workshop on Sustainable Tourism Development and Poverty Alleviation in Cotonou, **Benin**, in **May 2004**, in which 145 people from the following LDCs participated: **Angola, Benin, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Gambia, Guinea, Mali** and **Senegal**.
- The World Tourism Organization organized a seminar-workshop on Sustainable Tourism Development and Poverty Alleviation in Arusha, **Tanzania**, in **September 2004**. More than 160 public-sector officials, business managers, local communities, education institutions and NGO representatives attended it, coming from 11 African countries (**Ethiopia, Gambia**, Kenya, **Lesotho**, Mauritius, **Mozambique**, Swaziland, **Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia** and Zimbabwe).
- A seminar on Ecotourism in National Parks and Protected Areas in Africa was organized in Conakry, **Guinea**, (**November 2004**).

Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, **Gambia**, Ghana, **Guinea**, **Lesotho**, **Mali**, Nigeria, Senegal, **Sierra Leone**, South Africa, **Tanzania** and **Zambia** participated in the seminar.

- The World Tourism Organization organized a “Sub-regional workshop on tourism statistics and the elaboration of a Tourism Satellite Account (TSA)” in Addis Ababa, **Ethiopia (November 2004)**, in which 12 countries participated (**Chad, Ethiopia, Gambia**, Ghana, **Lesotho, Mali, Mauritania**, Nigeria, **Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda** and **Zambia**).
- In **April 2005**, UNWTO fielded a mission to **Mali** for the preparation of guidelines for the development of a Tourism Master Plan.
- UNWTO organized a seminar on the Measurement of the Economic Impacts of Tourism and its Contribution to Poverty Alleviation in **Mali**, in **May 2005**. Botswana, **Burkina Faso**, Cameroon, **Gambia**, Libya, **Mali**, Morocco, Mauritius, **Niger, Senegal, Sudan, Tanzania** and Zimbabwe participated in the seminar.
- Between **July** and **September 2005** the World Organization organized two technical seminars on quality systems in tourism in the framework of competitiveness, held in **Cameroon and Zambia**, respectively. They gathered some 550 tourism entrepreneurs and officials from 18 African countries. Post-seminar activities designed to help participants implement quality systems are included in the 2006-2007 programme.
- A regional seminar on Building Competitive Quality-Oriented Systems for African Tourism was held in **Zambia, September 2005**.
- A mission to **Ethiopia** was fielded in **February 2006** to assess and provide guidance to the university's new Department of Tourism Management, to address a growing need for tourism professionals at the managerial level in the country.
- Nine LDCs (**Angola, Burkina Faso, Chad, Ethiopia, Laos, Madagascar, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, and Togo**) are participating in the Tourism Safety and Security Network, a UNWTO service on the Internet. This activity provides basic national S&S information of interest to international visitors and helps consolidate national efforts in this area.
- An ongoing Regional Project on Sustainable Coastal Tourism in Africa, financed by the GEF, is coordinated between UNEP, UNIDO and UNWTO. Nine countries (Kenya, Seychelles, **Tanzania, Mozambique**, Nigeria, Cameroon, Ghana, **Senegal, The Gambia**) are participating in the project, which aims at reducing negative environmental impacts of tourism in coastal destinations, through introducing policy changes, strengthening public-private partnership and implementing on-the ground demonstration projects at selected pilot destinations. Its main components are ecotourism, reef management and Environmental Management System in coastal hotel establishments. It is envisaged that the project would be officially launched during September-October 2006 at an initial meeting in Maputo, Mozambique.

Asia and Pacific

- UNWTO fielded in **2001** a technical assistance mission to **Cambodia** to review and analyze the situation of human resources for tourism. On the basis of the conclusions and recommendations that emerged from this

mission, UNWTO prepared a project document for the long-term development of human resources in Cambodia.

- UNWTO conducted in **2002** a preliminary mission to draw up the terms of reference for a long-term Tourism Development Master Plan for the sustainable tourism development of **Nepal**. The project liaised with other agencies linked to tourism related programmes, especially Tourism for Rural Poverty Alleviation Project (TRPAP). Of particular importance was the review and analysis of all past and present studies completed on tourism related issues by all the agencies and organizations.
- A technical assistance mission was fielded to **Cambodia** to study the investment incentives in tourism in **2002**.
- An Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Development of Ecotourism was organized in **the Maldives**, in **February 2002**. It was a follow-up to the seminar on ecotourism in 2001 and one of a series of regional conferences UNWTO organized to address region-specific issues related to ecotourism. Over 20 case studies were delivered focusing on ecotourism planning and product development; monitoring and regulation of ecotourism; and cost and benefits of ecotourism.
- UNWTO organized, jointly with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), a National Seminar on Sustainable Tourism Development in Vientiane, **Laos (March 2002)**. The seminar's conclusions included the adoption of a destination management model for major destinations in Laos in order to ensure sustainable and integrated tourism development, train government officials responsible for cultural heritage conservation in resource and empower local communities to protect their heritage and to manage their tourism.
- In **2003**, UNWTO and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) organized a National Seminar on Sustainable Tourism Resource Management in Phnom Penh (**Cambodia**), in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism. The objective of the seminar was to strengthen the national capability of Cambodia in sustainable tourism resource management through case study presentations by international experts.
- A UNWTO's project was set up in **2003** to encourage local villagers to adopt a sustainable approach for the use of natural resources to protect the precious natural resources of the Kiriom National Park in **Cambodia** and the surrounding area.
- In **2003**, the World Tourism Organization developed a project on Capacity Development and Public Awareness for Tourism in **Cambodia**. The project was to provide the basis for the orderly expansion of tourism in the country through the organization of a series of training programmes in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap. It helped set up a National Centre for Hospitality Management and a publicity campaign to make the community aware of the beneficial impact of tourism.
- In **April 2003** a Technical Seminar on Crisis Management was held in **Nepal**. It was the first time the Organization was organizing a seminar on crisis management in the Asia-Pacific region. The timing coincided with the war in Iraq. During the seminar UNWTO presented its crisis guidelines for the tourism sector and participants were informed of

successful and practical experiences of crisis management in tourism from other countries including Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, India, **Nepal**, Egypt and Australia.

- Representatives of national tourism administrations of **Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic** and **Myanmar** participated in a Consultation for Asia on the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Tourism organized by UNWTO in Bali, Indonesia, in **June 2003**.
- UNWTO fielded a mission in **2004** to formulate a regional project for the development and promotion of tourism in the **Emerald Triangle region**, covering **seven provinces** on the tri-border area between Thailand, **Lao PDR, and Cambodia**.
- In **2004**, UNWTO fielded a project formulation mission for the development and promotion of cultural heritage sites in five countries within the **Greater Mekong Subregion**. Visits were made to the five primary destinations constituting the Heritage Necklace, namely Siem Riep (**Cambodia**), Luang Prabang (**Lao PDR**), Bagan (**Myanmar**), Nan (Thailand) and Hue (Vietnam).
- UNWTO fielded a project formulation mission to **Bhutan** in **2004** to carry out a detailed review and assessment of the key aspects of its national tourism industry, whilst identifying areas for further development.
- UNWTO assisted the Government of **Timor-Leste** in its efforts to utilize tourism as an essential building block for national development and fielded a project formulation mission (**January 2004**).
- A Technical Seminar on Cultural Tourism and Poverty Alleviation was held in **Cambodia**, in **June 2004**, within the forty-first (41st) Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific.
- Three missions were fielded to **the Maldives** in **2004** and **2005**:
 - To review the Government's objectives, policies and strategies in relation to human resource development;
 - For the classification and grading of resort properties and service;
 - To assess the economic impact of the Tsunami on the national tourism industry, as part of a broad range of assistance for tourism recovery included in the Phuket Action Plan.
- During **2005**, UNWTO has been working in collaboration with the South Pacific Tourism Organization (SPTO), whose members include the Pacific Island nations of the Cook Islands, Fiji, **Kiribati**, New Caledonia, Niue, **Samoa, Solomons**, Tahiti (French Polynesia), Tonga, **Tuvalu, Vanuatu** and Papua New Guinea (China is also a country member of SPTO), towards the implementation of the **Regional Tourism Development Component (RTDC) of the Pacific Regional Economic Integration Programme**. With the support of the European Union (EU), the project aims at developing a standardized system for the recording, classification and analysis of tourism statistics.
- UNWTO, in partnership with the Netherlands Development Organization SNV, extended its technical assistance to the Royal Government of **Bhutan** during **2005**, launching a project for the Formulation of Sustainable Tourism Legislation in the country. To this

end, detailed studies were undertaken by UNWTO in a number of key areas.

- UNWTO held a National Seminar on Sustainable Tourism Development in Dhaka, **Bangladesh**, in **June 2005**. The two-day seminar was jointly organized by the World Tourism Organization and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) in collaboration with the Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC). The objective of the Seminar was to enhance national capacity of Bangladesh to formulate appropriate policies and strategies to develop tourism in a sustainable manner.
- UNWTO is backing an ASEAN Regional Public Education Campaign to Protect Children, which was launched in Vientiane, Lao DPR, in **September 2005**. With the participation of National Tourism Administrations (NTAs) from **Cambodia, Lao PDR** and **Myanmar**, this campaign is conducted by an Australian child protection agency and supported by the Australian Government (AusAid).
- In **Bangladesh** a new project was launched in **November 2005**, to formulate economic opportunities for the Chittagong Hill Tracts Area and UNDP invited UNWTO to provide its expertise in assessing the feasibility of developing community-based tourism to drive forward socio-economic growth in the CHT.

Middle-East

- UNWTO has sent to **Yemen** the following technical advisory missions:
 - In **May 2002** on Crisis Recovery Strategy and Image Building Programme;
 - In **June 2002** on Development of a long-term Tourism Development Policy and Strategy; and
 - In **April-May 2005** on Institutional and Legal Organization of Eco-tourism in Socotra Island.

Latin America and Caribbean

- The World Tourism Organization fielded a mission to **Haiti** in **2004** to promote sustainable tourism development and poverty reduction.
- In **2005**, UNWTO organized a mission to **Haiti** for the development of a trans-border tourism development project in the Dominican Republic and **Haiti** and later on another mission to review the Tourism Master Plan launched in 1996.