

FOCUS SESSION XVI:

Tourism as an Engine for Growth and Development

15 April 2014, at 15h00, Room Montejo 4

Speakers/Panelists:

- Mr. Javier Guillermo Molina, Head, Department Affairs and International Co-operation, Secretaría de Turismo, México, D.F.
- Mr. Márcio Favilla L. de Paula, Executive Director, Operational Programmes and Institutional Relations, UNWTO
- Mr. Schneider Romain, Minister, Development Cooperation, Luxembourg
- Mr. Martin Malan, Chargé d’Affaires, Embassy of the Republic of South Africa in Mexico
- Mr. Soares Sambu, Minister of Economy and Regional Integration, Guinea Bissau

Moderator: Mrs. Zoritsa Urosevic, Head, Institutional Relations and Resources Mobilization, UNWTO

Conclusions and key messages:

- Despite being a high-impact economic activity, a major job generator and key export sector – accounting for 6% of total trade, tourism receives only 0.5% of the total Aid for Trade (AfT) disbursements and a mere 0.13% of the total Official Development Assistance (ODA).
- Tourism accounts for 42% of the exports of services of emerging markets and developing economies and has been identified by half of the least developed countries as a priority instrument for poverty reduction.
- UNWTO called for higher support to tourism in international aid flows as to maximize the growing contribution of the sector to socio-economic development. The case for tourism’s higher prioritization in the development agenda was reiterated throughout the session.

Highlights of Panelist's remarks:

- **Marthinus van Schalkwyk**, the Minister of Tourism of South Africa and chairperson of the UNWTO Working Group on ODA, highlighted in his message to the meeting, that “the intersection of the three policy imperatives of tourism development, social inclusion and green growth could hold the key to substantial new resources as well as the more effective deployment of existing resources. Tourism has a major task ahead – to convince OECD Development Assistance Committee, the World Bank, regional development banks, developed-country donors and other United Nations agencies of the sector’s important contribution to poverty eradication, the green economy and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals”.
- **Márcio Favilla** noted that “tourism should be part of the new architecture of the Effective Development Cooperation Agenda helping to promote an inclusive, sustainable and people centered growth” and further stressed that “cooperation flows for tourism can act as catalyzers for national development efforts at different levels in middle income and least developed countries. These flows can then trigger private sector investment, contributing to a greater effectiveness of Aid and poverty reduction”.
- **Javier Guillermo Molina** underlined how “tourism is recognized as a crucial economic activity and engine for development in Mexico. Representing 8.4% of our GDP, the sector employs the largest percentage of young people between 16 and 24 years, and a majority of the tourism work force is women. The National Development Plan states that development policies in the tourism sector must include criteria aimed at increasing the contribution of tourism to reduce poverty and allowing social inclusion. Because of the importance of the sector, the President recently announced the National Tourism Policy, recognizing tourism as one of the economic activities with the greatest potential for growth and the capacity to generate employment and foster development”.
- **Roman Schneider** stressed the importance of strengthening the role of the private sector. “Governments provide the enabling environment but growth has to be generated by the private sector. This is in tourism even more obvious. The national strategies that we support in our partner countries include a strong private sector component through the hotel industry as well as local small and medium enterprises (SME)”.

Press Release: *UNWTO calls for increased support for tourism in the development agenda* (click [here](#)).