



ORGANISATION MONDIALE DU TOURISME
WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION
ORGANIZACIÓN MUNDIAL DEL TURISMO
ВСЕМИРНАЯ ТУРИСТСКАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ
منظمة السياحة العالمية

Welcome Address

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**5th IPT African Conference
“Meeting the Challenges of Climate Change to Tourism
in Africa and the Developing World”
Lusaka, Zambia, 15-20 May 2011**

Your Excellency Mr. Rupiah Banda, President of Zambia, Your Excellency Mrs. Catherine Namugala, Minister of Tourism, Environment and Natural Resources, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) representing the tourism interests of 154 countries, I have great pleasure in welcoming you all to the 5th IPT African Conference: “Meeting the Challenges of Climate Change to Tourism in Africa and the Developing World” in a beautiful and rapidly developing city of Lusaka.

Zambia boasts an enormous tourism potential, based on its unique natural resources, wildlife sanctuaries, its rich traditions and well-known hospitality of its people. A large number of tourists from all over the world visit Zambia annually to witness the magnificent beauty of the Victoria Falls, one of the most celebrated tourist sites of the world. The country is the home to exotic wilderness that incarnates nearly the whole continent of Africa and fascinates travelers and tourists. That is why in order to guarantee a long-stand success of this destination, it is so important to keep untouched its natural wealth and to develop tourism on a sustainable and green basis.

First of all, let me praise the Government of Zambia for choosing such a timely and appropriate theme as the challenges of climate change. A conference on this subject is a vivid proof of the fact that Zambia is developing tourism in line with the global trends enhancing its sustainable development aimed at conserving the natural and cultural heritage. We at the UNWTO are extremely pleased that our friends in Zambia, side by side with the world tourism community, attach their particular attention to the issues of climate change and sustainable tourism development.

Before passing directly to the subject of the Conference, let me begin by looking at what we know about the tourism industry of today:

- 25 million international arrivals in 1950
- 165 million in 1970
- 687 million in 2000
- 935 million by 2010
- 1.6 billion forecasted for 2020

Tourism's growth, even if it seems to be slowing down somewhat, is not approaching any asymptote; there is no evidence of saturation of demand, at least on a global level.

International tourism receipts almost doubled in the same period – from US\$482 billion in 2000 to almost US\$900 billion a year.

At the same time, like those gases that physics tells us tend to fill all the space available to them when the conditions are right, tourism is spreading far and wide; in other words, it is becoming globalized. In 1950, the top 15 destinations in the world accounted for 87 percent of foreign visitor arrivals, in 1970 for no more than 75 percent and in 2009 for only 56 percent. When there is too much pressure on a region, tourists travel to another one; it is what could be called “Mariotte's law of tourism.” I am referring to the law formulated by the 17th century French physicist and not to the American hotelier Marriott! Tourism growth today goes hand-in-hand with globalization.

Few places on this planet escape the curiosity of its inhabitants. Even the Antarctic is now visited. The complete exploration of Earth has not sated men's appetite for research and adventure or their desire to discover the customs of those that are like them – or unlike them.

Besides man's insatiable curiosity about the world in which he lives, three developments caused international tourism to explode: the increase in purchasing power, and in discretionary income in particular, of middle- and working-class households in the developed world; access to private motor cars and cheap air transport; and the expansion of free time, regulated and developed in many countries by social legislation in favor of employees. Benjamin Disraeli was to write in the nineteenth century: “Increased means and increased leisure are the two civilizers of man.”

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In the past fifty years, tourism and leisure have been a potent factor of economic development in the countries of Europe and North America with a long industrial tradition. The developing countries of Asia, the Middle East, Latin America and a few African ones have, in their turn, reaped the benefits; they have discovered that wherever tourism advances, poverty retreats.

An important contributor to the balance of payments (the contribution of tourism to economic activity worldwide is estimated at some 5 percent) tourism has proved to be a prodigious creator of added value, wealth and jobs. It has opened up, especially in the

countries of the South, new prospects for entrepreneurship and individual fulfillment. Its function as a factor of both social and cultural integration has also been remarkable. At once the manifestation and instrument of increasingly widely shared cultural attitudes and consumer habits, tourism has fostered the growing unity of society and helped to integrate within it those who could otherwise have been excluded. Since it promotes encounters and dialogue between visitors and hosts, it has furthered their knowledge of each other and the mutual recognition of individuals and groups.

Growth, globalization and integration, then, are three words that we can without any hesitation associate with tourism.

Three more can be added to the list – multidisciplinary, vulnerability and resilience.

Tourism is, by its very nature, multidisciplinary. We can think of it as a chain whose links are infrastructure, hospitality, freedom of movement across borders, product quality, which includes the quality of food and health, as well as the quality of the environment, staff training, transport, businesses' ability to respond, the efficiency of public services, the security of visitors...

The failure of any one of its links affects the tourism product as a whole.

The character of being multidisciplinary, along with the resulting fragility, constitutes the vulnerability of tourism – vulnerability to external shocks, to wars, to terrorism, to the disruption of transport infrastructure, to social movements or to environmental accidents.

As we all know, the global economic recession, closure of air traffic in Europe due to the Icelandic volcanic eruption, terrible natural disasters as the earthquake in Japan, a catastrophic nuclear accident in Fukushima and the current situation in the Middle East caused a lot of harm to tourism flows and confirmed once again its vulnerability. International tourist arrivals declined by 4.2 percent in 2009 to 880 million. International tourism receipts reached US\$852 billion (611 billion Euros) in 2009, corresponding to a decrease in real terms of 5.7 percent on 2008.

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Though vulnerable, the paradox is that tourism is, at the same time, profoundly resilient.

The past year clearly illustrated this dual nature. In 2010, world tourism recovered even more strongly than expected from the shock it suffered in 2008 and 2009 due to the global financial crisis and economic recession. The vast majority of destinations worldwide reported positive and often double-digit increases, sufficient to offset recent losses or bring them close to their target.

Worldwide, international tourism rebounded strongly, with international tourist arrivals up 6.7 percent throughout 2009 to 935 million. As a reflection of the economic conditions, recovery was particularly strong in emerging countries, where arrivals grew

faster (+8 percent) than in advanced ones (+5 percent). Africa's 6 percent growth is an increase on the positive results of 2009. Supported by worldwide exposure created by the FIFA World Football Cup, hosted by South Africa, the region maintained momentum in 2010, achieving a total of 49 million arrivals.

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This is what tourism looks like today, summarized by a few key concepts:

- Growth
- Globalization
- Integration
- Multidisciplinary
- Vulnerability
- Resilience

To the above key concepts we can add the emergence of new destinations; the world has opened up. New destinations have emerged. Within the past ten years, we have witnessed the rise of emerging countries – tourism has followed the same trend. In 2000, emerging economies held a 38 percent share of international tourist arrivals; by 2010 this has increased to 47 percent

And we also need to mention technology. Technology has transformed our sector. Tourists can now search and book holidays on the Internet. When they arrive at their destination, they can check the weather, buy tickets for tourism attractions or download a city guide. E-visas, air and ground traffic handling, border systems, waste reduction and energy efficiency technologies. All these areas have developed rapidly throughout the past ten years and revolutionized the way we travel creating a myriad of new opportunities.

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Our tourism sector faced major challenges in the past years, but we all know that the biggest challenges provide the biggest opportunities. Today world leaders are working together in ways that would have been unimaginable at any time in the past, to coordinate and collaborate on their economies, their climate response and their development agenda.

We meet here against a backdrop of a recovering economy and significant geopolitical shifts.

Unbalanced economic recovery across the globe, faster in emerging economies but still subdued in many advanced ones, continues to pose risks for world economic stability and the desired sustained growth.

Global unemployment is at a record high for the third straight year since the start of the economic crisis. And at the current pace, it is estimated it will take up to five years to see employment back at pre-crisis levels.

Oil and food prices could rise even more sharply than currently predicted.

Interest rates in major advanced economies might start to rise again after having been maintained at unprecedented low levels for close to two years.

And, finally we cannot forget our environmental challenge – the topic that gathered us together today and that is most characteristic of the global society that we are living in. As the world works to leave the economic crisis behind, the energy/climate crisis continues to advance. Greenhouse gases have reached record levels and our natural capital is running dangerously low.

Despite all this, 2011 is set to be a year to consolidate the growth recovered in 2010. UNWTO forecasts international tourism to grow between 4 to 5 percent, this is above long-term average of 4 percent.

Now – with recovery underway – it is time to look forward and ask what the next ten years hold for the sector. Should we expect the indefinite advance, clearly beneficial but unbridled, of world tourism? As things stand at present, this is undoubtedly the most likely scenario, given that the democratization of transport is so attractive and in view of people's strong inclinations towards leisure activities and their appetite for discovery, whetted by the enticements of modern means of communication.

But such a form of exponential growth would surely be unacceptable to many. Already international air transport, transformed by global alliances between airlines, is seriously disrupted by crowded skies and airport facilities, as a consequence, not only of the vertiginous increase in traffic, but also of poorly controlled deregulation. The physical environment and host communities are already suffering from the anarchic development of sites or the unrestrained exploitation of destinations. While the pressure is mounting, there are obvious signs of rejection.

It is easy to imagine the consequences – for the most part intolerable – that a tripling of flows in the space of a generation, predicted by UNWTO, in spite and beyond the current crisis, would bring in its wake if not properly managed:

- Unbearable pressure on natural environments, fragile areas, coastlines and mountains
- Serious congestion in city centers and overcrowding at the most popular sites and monuments
- Inadequate transport infrastructure, public facilities and services
- Mounting demands, competing with those of local populations, on water and energy resources
- Outmoded training systems
- Local cultures and traditions under threat

What will happen in 2020 when international visitor arrivals exceed 1.6 billion and those of national tourists are greater still?

In the face of such strong and legitimate fears, the time has come for the international tourism community to make its voice heard through the international tourism stakeholders' gathering like the 5th IIPT African Conference.

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Tourism and travel is a vital contributor to the global economy and especially important for many developing countries. Tourism is an effective way of redistributing wealth and a catalyst for gender equality, cultural preservation and nature conservation. As a result, the sector is also contributing to the UN Millennium Development Goals.

Climate change is one of the most serious threats to society, the economy and the environment and has been an issue of international concern for decades.

Climate change is not a remote future event for tourism, as the varied impacts are becoming evident at destinations. As a result, the effects of a changing climate will have considerable impacts on tourism, travel businesses and destinations and they will need to adapt to climate change in order to minimize associated risks or capitalize upon new opportunities, in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable manner.

Least developed countries (The 4th LDC Conference was just held in Istanbul 9-12 May 2011 also concentrating on tourism) and small-island developing states might be particularly affected. Coastal environments in general and especially in SIDS are vital for tourism-based regional and local economies; therefore, climate change affecting coastal zones puts their economies at risk.

In Africa, for instance, warming is very likely to be more significant than the global annual mean warming throughout the continent and in all seasons, with drier subtropical regions warming more than the moister tropics. Annual rainfall is likely to decrease in much of Mediterranean Africa and the northern Sahara, with a greater likelihood of decreasing rainfall as the Mediterranean coast is approached. Rainfall in southern Africa is likely to decrease in much of the winter rainfall region and western margins. There is likely to be an increase in annual mean rainfall in East Africa. It is still unclear how rainfall in the Sahel, the Guinean Coast and the southern Sahara will evolve.

There are a number of different impacts of climate change that will affect tourism destinations, the most severe being, direct-climate impacts (such as warmer summers, warmer winters, precipitation change (water supply), increased extreme events); indirect environmental change impacts (biodiversity loss (terrestrial and marine), sea level rise, disease); impact of mitigation policies on tourist mobility (affecting travel costs and destination choice); and indirect societal change impacts (global/regional economic impacts, increase security risks (social/governance disruption).

UNWTO, as the leading UN agency on tourism, has taken up the challenge of devising how the tourist industry can adapt to and mitigate the impact of global warming and how

the sector can incorporate the necessary changes, so that its growth is compatible with new patterns of energy consumption and new scenarios of low carbon economies.

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Since the Djerba Conference in 2003 we have witnessed or taken direct part in the happening of other milestone events regarding the realities and challenges of climate change. First of all, the Davos Conference in 2007, that UNWTO together with other UN agencies organized, which concluded with a Declaration that acknowledges the reality of climate change as well as its connection with tourism and the need for action from the tourist sector regarding mitigation of its greenhouse gas emissions, adaptation to climatic conditions, technological awareness and securing financial resources to help poor regions and countries. This was followed by another three meetings in 2007 – the London Ministers’ Summit on Tourism, UNWTO Cartagena de Indias General Assembly and the UN Climate Change Summit in Bali. Since then, the tourism sector has made significant advances in responding to the climate-change imperatives.

Allow me to present also the steps taken to date in response to the Bali Roadmap and Action Plan, while addressing mitigation and adaptation strategies within the tourism and travel sector.

Progress has been made in promoting the urgent adoption of a range of sustainable tourism policies. UNWTO is leading by example and will pursue its efforts in reducing its own emissions by raising awareness among its staff members, encouraging more efficient travel and investing in energy-efficient material, among other initiatives. In addition, in the framework of the “greening the UN” initiative, the Organization has calculated the GHG emissions generated by its own operations since 2008 and intends to compensate them in order to achieve climate-neutrality.

UNWTO understands that reducing carbon dioxide and other GHG emissions is important for the long term; however, there is also a pressing need for the tourism and travel sector to adapt to the impacts of climate change in the short and medium term. In this regard, there is an increasing demand for accurate, detailed climate information to allow tourism businesses to minimize the risks and capitalize on any new opportunities. This data could limit or affect how nations, especially developing countries, adapt to climate change. In response to this need, the WMO, in collaboration with UNWTO, established an Expert Team on Climate and Tourism in order to improve the application of information in the tourism sector and, in 2007, launched a Climate and Tourism Information Exchange Service to enable tourism stakeholders’ access to research and data. It was created as a repository for information and as a display for data, studies, policy papers, videos and other material related to tourism and climate change, which would facilitate tourism stakeholders working together to develop coordinated approaches to tackling mitigation and adaptation.

UNWTO has also developed and disseminated technical publications addressing climate change impacts and adaptation responses. The most important of these are “Climate

Change and Tourism: Responding to Global Challenges” in support of the Davos Declaration, and “Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation in the Tourism Sector: Frameworks, Tools and Practices” in coordination with the University of Oxford, the WMO and UNEP and released in 2008. This report provides a detailed and comprehensive synthesis of the state of knowledge about current and future predicted impacts of climate change on global tourism. UNWTO has also recently published a background paper “From Davos to Copenhagen and Beyond: Advancing Tourism’s Response to Climate Change,” which provides an update of our work addressing climate change imperatives.

UNWTO has assisted countries through their National Tourism Administrations to access the GEF Special Climate Change Fund by approaching other multi- and bilateral funding sources and private-sector organizations in order to secure co-financing. For instance, a pilot project on tourism adaptation in the Maldives has been initiated, through collaboration with UNEP and UNDP, and discussions initiated with SIDS in other regions.

In 2008, UNWTO launched the Hotel Energy Solutions Project, which is co-funded by the European Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation. UNWTO coordinates the project in partnership with UNEP, the International Hotel and Restaurant Association, the French Agency for Energy Management and the European Council for Renewable Energies. The international hotel sector is one of the largest drivers of global employment. However, in 2005, it was estimated that the accommodation sector accounted for 21 percent of the carbon dioxide emissions from tourism. The aim of this project is to provide energy-efficiency solutions and increased use of energy-efficient and renewable-energy technologies for the tourism accommodation sector across 27 European Union countries. This is seen as a significant way to reduce the impact of the sector on climate change by mitigating emissions.

Furthermore, UNWTO is providing “in-kind” support and support aimed at raising funds for governments and regional initiatives for climate change adaptation and mitigation projects in the tourism sector for key regional initiatives involving governments of numerous countries. The CARIBSAVE Partnership, formed in 2008, between the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) and the University of Oxford, and supported by a range of international partners including UNWTO, UNEP, UNDP, the World Bank, WWF and other international and regional partners is addressing the impacts and challenges surrounding climate change, tourism, economic development and community livelihoods across the Caribbean Basin.

The global impacts of climate change call for an integrated and inter-sectoral response, which is especially important for UNWTO, given the transversal nature of tourism.

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UNWTO has actively participated in major international events within the UN system efforts to develop a coherent framework response to climate change. We have

participated in the World Climate Conference-3 (2009), and the 15th Conference of the Parties to the UN framework Convention on Climate Change held at Copenhagen on 7-18 December 2009, in which UNWTO, together with the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), hosted a side event on “Addressing the Challenges of Climate Change: Perspectives from the Tourism and the Travel Sector,” which presented the steps taken so far in response to the Bali Roadmap and Action Plan, while addressing mitigation and adaptation strategies within the tourism and travel sector. The side event was a further step of the Davos Declaration process, and included interactive panels with tourism leaders from the public and the private sectors.

Most recently, UNWTO jointly with the Secretariat of Tourism of Mexico held a side event at the 16th Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 16), in Cancun, Mexico, from 29 November to 10 December 2010. The side event presented the initiatives undertaken so far to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, promote adaptation in tourism businesses and destinations, invest in new technologies and support developing countries through financing, as well as the UNWTO-initiated Hotel Energy Solutions Project aimed at increasing energy efficiency and the use of renewable-energy technologies by SME hotels in the European Union.

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The climate is changing and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. Global warming is a scientific fact. This will result in social, economic and environmental impacts. The degree of these impacts will depend on to what extent nations, industry and individuals mitigate emissions and adapt to changes.

The tourism and travel sector must address the climate change issue and UNWTO has embraced the challenge by establishing collaborative partnerships, raising awareness, developing guidance and providing support. The moment has come for public and private sectors to join efforts in order to develop innovative low-carbon initiatives that will not only create employment but will also contribute to the economy.

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According to the Davos Declaration on Climate Change and Tourism, the sector has to “rapidly respond to climate change, within the evolving UN framework and progressively reduce its Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions if it is to grow in a sustainable way.” The concept of sustainable development does not refer only to economic growth, social progress and environmental preservation. It has an ethical and cultural dimension.

Today, we have gathered here together in order to underline once again the necessity of tourism development on a sustainable basis and, giving a glance at the future, do our best in order that our children, and the children of our children may enjoy traveling around our beautiful, fresh and green globe without any fear.

I wish success and fruitful results to the participants in the 5th IIPT African Conference!