

**Message of the World Tourism organization (UNWTO)
for the AWG-LCA Workshop on Economic and Social consequences of response
measures under the LCA**

Tourism has become one the most important socio-economic phenomenon of our modern times. It is among the largest economic sectors, providing income, job and foreign exchange in many countries, through its multiplier effect stimulating a range of other related sectors. Tourism is also a key force for development and poverty alleviation, growing much more dynamically in developing countries than in developed ones. It has become the prime source of foreign exchange revenues for the 50 LDCs, and the principal export for 83 % of developing countries. In many Small Island Developing States, reliant on tourism for their national economy, this activity can constitute up to 40% of GDP.

Tourism is an energy intensive activity, contributing to greenhouse gas emissions mainly from energy use in transport and accommodation facilities. According to the study issued by UNWTO/UNEP/WMO¹, tourism contributes to around 5% of global GHG emissions. This may sound small, relative to the global socio-economic benefits tourism can bring; but the international tourism community recognizes the need to take mitigation actions. This need have been clearly articulated through the “*Davos Process*”, initiated at the 2nd International Conference on Climate Change and Tourism in Davos in 2007, and followed up through a range of policy forums and contributions to international processes, including the AWG-LCA.

The above-mentioned study has also made a projection of GHG emissions from tourism under business as usual and different mitigation scenarios. The calculations demonstrated that through a combination of introducing technological efficiency measures, transport modal shifts, and behaviour changes among tourists (like increasing average length of stay) it is possible to reduce emission levels even below the 2005 baseline levels that was used for calculations. To achieve this, there is a need for concerted actions at all levels, by public and private stakeholders jointly. Tourism is a very dynamic sector, has been the breeding ground for innovative technical and managerial solutions, that can be well-harnessed for climate change mitigation purposes, showing the way for measures transferable to other sectors as well.

Besides recognizing the need for mitigation, tourism stakeholders has also expressed clearly through the events of the Davos Process, that mitigation policies and measures should be defined and implemented in a balanced way, without punishing development countries dependent on tourism to meet their national development and poverty reduction agendas.

UNWTO has taken a series of actions, in order to address the impact of the implementation of response measures:

Enhancing practical approaches to address economic diversification:

- Promoting sustainable tourism as a means of diversifying national and local economies, as well as advocating for the diversification of tourism products and

1 Climate Change and Tourism - Responding to Global Challenges (UNWTO/UNEP/WMO 2008)

http://www.unwto.org/sdt/news/en/news_det.php?id=2421

destinations as a means to adapt to climate change and reduce dependency on tourism activities in highly vulnerable areas (e.g. developing cultural tourism products to diversify the conventional beach tourism offer).

Encouraging parties to provide information on their experiences and concerns:

- Advocating for balanced mitigation policies and measures that do not jeopardize national economies highly dependent on tourism.
- Organizing international conferences and policy forums to discuss on mitigation policies and their potential effects
- Coordinating with international and private sector organizations to advance with mitigation measures as part of sustainable development of the tourism and transportation sectors.
- Develop pilot mitigation projects (like the Energy Excellence in the Tourism Industry – an EU-funded project for the accommodation sector in Europe) addressing energy efficiency and renewable energies in an integrated way.
- Undertake awareness raising activities, such as the campaign developed for the World Tourism Day in 2008 that was designated to climate change issues
- Carry out a series of capacity building seminars and workshops to train tourism stakeholders on climate change adaptation and mitigation aspects
- Integrate energy management issues as part of environmental management practices at tourism destinations and operations through a series of pilot adaptation projects in the tourism sector of SIDS