



Convention on
Biological Diversity



JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

UNITED NATIONS WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION AND THE SECRETARIAT OF THE CONVENTION SIGN MEMORANDUM OF COOPERATION

Geneva, 4 September 2009 – Aiming to enhance cooperation between the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD) and to raise public awareness of the inter-relationship between biodiversity and tourism, the two institutions today signed a Memorandum of Cooperation, on the margins of the Third World Climate Conference in Geneva.

Because tourism and biodiversity are natural allies, the sustainable planning and management of tourism can play a critical role in the conservation of biodiversity.

Both parties will work towards maximizing tourism's positive contribution to conserving biodiversity and enhancing the quality of life of local people. Both institutions have policy tools that address the importance of managing tourism in such a way as to protect biodiversity, such as the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism and the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development.

UNWTO and the Secretariat agreed to cooperate on the following issues:

- Preparation of the meetings of their respective governing and subsidiary bodies
- Promoting exchanges of experiences and best practices on issues of relevance, and capacity building and training programmes
- Strengthening the linkages and synergies between regional, national and destination-level tourism development and biodiversity action plans, policies and strategies
- Public awareness and communication with all relevant stakeholders including youth, women, NGOs, local authorities, local communities and the private sector, and cooperate on joint outreach to industry bodies and trade associations
- Fundraising efforts to implement joint activities

The agreement is especially timely with 2010 to be celebrated as the UN International Year of Biodiversity. In addition, the UNWTO General Assembly in Kazakhstan (5-8 October 2009) will be considering a resolution to designate World Tourism Day 2010 around the theme of "Tourism and Biodiversity".

The sustainable development of tourism can directly contribute to the conservation of biodiversity and poverty reduction. "Tourism is often a positive alternative to other potentially damaging forms of development and also provides local people with an economic incentive to protect biodiversity", said Mr Taleb Rifai, Secretary General a.i. of UNWTO. "At the same time, tourism can increase revenues for conservation and community development and raise awareness of all biodiversity related issues", he added.

"Many of the ambitious post-2010 goals under the Convention, such as a globally consistent network of protected areas that is resilient to the impacts of climate change, can only be reached with the full cooperation of the tourism industry", said Mr. Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

