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REPORTS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SELECTED COMMISSION RESOLUTIONS,  
INCLUDING RESOLUTION 60/1 ON THE SHANGHAI DECLARATION:  
MANAGING GLOBALIZATION**

(Item 4 (c) of the provisional agenda)

**REGIONAL STUDY ON THE ROLE OF TOURISM IN  
SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

*Note by the secretariat*

**SUMMARY**

In its resolution 62/3 of 12 April 2006 on the implementation of the Plan of Action for Sustainable Tourism Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2006-2012) and the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Tourism Development, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to prepare and conduct a regional study on the role of tourism in socio-economic development. The study is meant to assist members and associate members of ESCAP in considering various measures for developing tourism in line with the Plan of Action by providing information on the impact of the tourism industry on the economy of the region and its social development. The present document proposes a common approach to monitoring the implementation of the Plan of Action and concludes with a set of policy recommendations aimed at increasing the effectiveness of tourism for socio-economic development and poverty reduction.

## CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
I. THE IMPORTANCE OF TOURISM IN THE ASIAN AND PACIFIC REGION .....	1
A. International tourism development .....	1
B. Intraregional travel.....	2
C. Importance of domestic tourism .....	3
D. Tourism and least developed countries.....	4
II. THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF TOURISM .....	4
III. THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF TOURISM .....	4
IV. ASSESSING THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF TOURISM.....	5
V. TOURISM AND THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS.....	7
VI. THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT .....	11
A. Tourism ministries .....	11
B. Tourism plans .....	11
C. Empowerment of poor communities, property rights and development control .....	11
D. Legislation and regulations.....	12
E. Training, capacity-building and certification.....	12
F. Taxes and levies.....	12
G. Microfinancing and facilitating market access and linkages .....	12
H. Marketing.....	13
VII. THE ROLE OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR .....	15
VIII. ALLIANCES AND PARTNERSHIPS.....	16
A. Regional and subregional marketing alliances .....	16
B. Networks, clusters and ICT .....	16
IX. IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING OF THE PLAN OF ACTION .....	18
X. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	19
A. Summary and conclusions .....	19
B. Recommendations for consideration.....	20
Annex. Suggested reporting format .....	23

## BOXES

1. Domestic tourism: roadside facilities and services .....
2. Activities of ESCAP in the fields of tourism and poverty reduction.....
3. Creating microenterprise opportunities for the poor: two examples from Nepal .....
4. Nomadic tourism.....
5. The “Thai Village” at the Rose Garden .....

CONTENTS (*continued*)

	<i>Page</i>
<b>TABLES</b>	
1. International tourist arrivals and receipts in Asia and the Pacific, 1995-2005, and tourism employment, 2006 .....	1
2. Contribution of tourism to achieving the Millennium Development Goals .....	9
<b>FIGURES</b>	
1. Inbound tourism in the Asia-Pacific region, 2003 .....	3
2. Linkages between tourism and poverty reduction .....	8

## I. THE IMPORTANCE OF TOURISM IN THE ASIAN AND PACIFIC REGION

### A. International tourism development

1. Tourism has become one of the world's largest and fastest growing industries. Over the period 1995-2005, international tourist arrivals grew at an average annual rate of 4.1 per cent, exceeding the 800 million mark in 2005 (table 1). This outstanding performance can be attributed to several factors, including the following: rising levels of disposable income; improvements in transportation and the introduction of low-cost airline services; easier access to destinations by tourists from traditional source markets and the emergence of new source markets such as China and India; and the diversification of the industry with new market niches, such as cultural tourism, ecotourism and adventure tourism.
2. During the 10-year period, the Asian and Pacific region outperformed the rest of the world, with increases in arrivals averaging 6.5 per cent annually, raising its global share of the tourist market from 15.3 per cent in 1995 to 19.2 per cent in 2005. By contrast, the two more mature regions, Europe and the Americas, saw their global shares decrease from 58.3 per cent to 54.8 per cent and from 20.2 per cent to 16.6 per cent respectively.

**Table 1. International tourist arrivals and receipts in Asia and the Pacific, 1995-2005, and tourism employment, 2006**

Destinations	Arrivals (millions of people)		Receipts (billions of United States dollars)		Employment (thousands of jobs)
	1995	2005	1995	2005	
<i>World</i>	<b>540.0</b>	<b>806.0</b>	<b>410.8</b>	<b>680.0</b>	<b>234 305</b>
<i>Asia-Pacific</i>	<b>82.4</b>	<b>155.4</b>	<b>81.9</b>	<b>138.6</b>	<b>140 122</b>
North-East Asia	41.3	87.6	38.1	70.8	85 577
South-East Asia	28.8	49.3	26.7	33.4	21 743
South Asia	4.2	8.0	3.4	9.8	30 891
Oceania	8.1	10.5	13.7	24.5	1 911

Source: World Tourism Organization and World Travel and Tourism Council.

3. In the region, North-East Asia has emerged as the most dynamic subregion, posting a growth rate in arrivals of 7.8 per cent during the period. This has raised its global share from 7.6 per cent in 1995 to 10.9 per cent in 2005. China was the strongest performer, averaging an 8.9 per cent increase over the period. In absolute terms, the number of international visitors to China more than doubled, reaching 46.8 million in 2005, almost equivalent to the total number of tourists visiting South-East Asia. This remarkable performance benefited from growing international and intraregional demand, the

increased availability of low-cost airline services and the continued liberalization of outbound travel from China.

4. In spite of an escalation in disasters and other crises, other subregions in Asia and the Pacific succeeded in maintaining a solid positive trend in annual tourist arrivals, varying from a 5.5 per cent increase in South-East Asia to an increase of 6.6 per cent in South Asia and 2.6 per cent in Oceania (Australia, New Zealand and Pacific island countries and territories). Cambodia had an average annual growth rate of 21.1 per cent; the Lao People's Democratic Republic, 61 per cent; Viet Nam, 9.8 per cent; and Thailand, 5.3 per cent. India had an average annual growth rate of 6.4 per cent; the Islamic Republic of Iran, 14.0 per cent; and Maldives, 7.8 per cent.

5. Worldwide, international tourists spent some US\$ 680 billion in 2005, a net increase of US\$ 269.2 billion, which is equivalent to an average increase of 5.2 per cent annually, over the period 1995 to 2005. The Asian and Pacific region, in line with its growth performance in terms of arrivals, posted significant increases in international tourism receipts, with an average annual growth rate of 5.4 per cent over the last 10 years. This was slightly higher than the global rate of 5.2 per cent, outclassing the mature regions of Europe and the Americas. As a result, the global share of tourism receipts in the Asian and Pacific region increased from 19.9 per cent in 1995 to 20.4 per cent in 2005, almost equivalent to the share recorded by Europe.

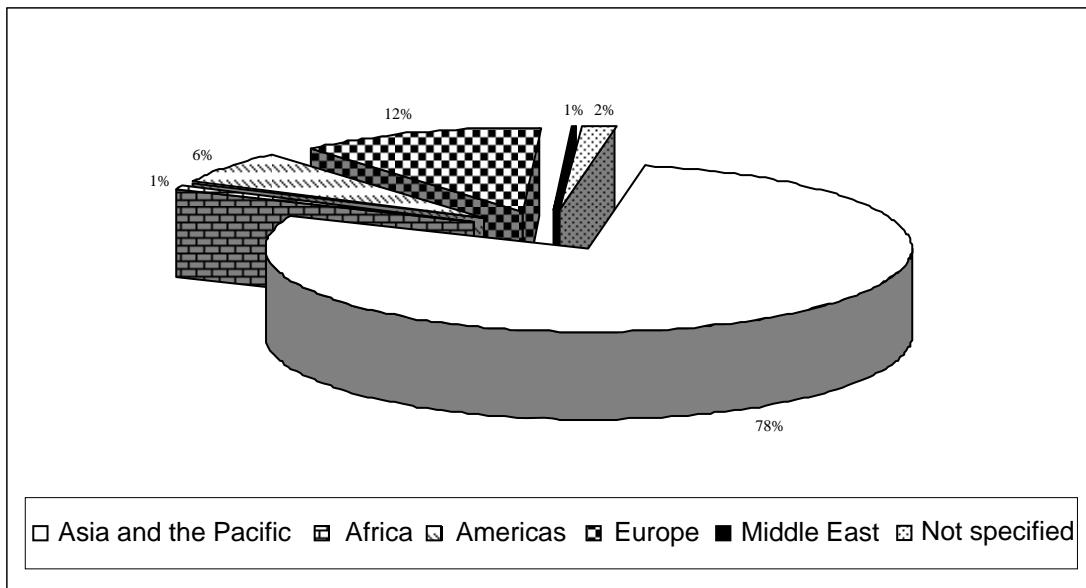
6. South Asia emerged as the most dynamic subregion, with a two-digit percentage increase in tourism receipts, followed by North-East Asia and Oceania. South-East Asia, despite recent disasters and crises, managed to report positive annual average growth of 2.3 per cent during the period 1995 to 2005. Two countries in the Greater Mekong Subregion fared particularly well: in Cambodia, for example international tourism receipts rose by 33.4 per cent and in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, by 10.8 during the same period.

7. Although Asia-Pacific destinations do not figure strongly in the list of top arrivals and earners, they are expected to dominate global economic growth in the travel and tourism industry in the years to come. *Tourism 2020 Vision*, published by the World Tourism Organization, forecasts that international arrivals will reach nearly 1.6 billion annually by the year 2020. Furthermore, it is forecast that, by 2020, East Asia (comprising North-East Asia and South-East Asia) and the Pacific will be receiving an estimated 397 million visitors annually.

## **B. Intraregional travel**

8. Growth as both a generator and receiver of international tourist arrivals in the Asian and Pacific region is due to easier access from traditional source markets and to the expansion in volume and prosperity of people in the middle class within the region. Figure 1 shows that, in 2003, intraregional arrivals in Asia and the Pacific accounted for 78 per cent of international travel in the region, amounting to 94 million visitors. It can be assumed that intraregional travel will continue to grow rapidly for the foreseeable future, becoming a more and more significant part of the regional economy.

**Figure 1. Inbound tourism in the Asia-Pacific region, 2003**



Source: World Tourism Organization, *Asia Tourism Market Trends* (2004 Edition).

### C. Importance of domestic tourism

9. As the developing countries of the region have become more prosperous, a significant domestic tourism market has emerged, often using the same facilities as international tourists. In India, it is estimated that there are more than 100 domestic tourists for every international tourist. Similar figures for China suggest that the ratio is 26 to 1, while for Thailand and Indonesia the ratios are 7 to 1 and 6 to 1 respectively. This type of tourism is often overlooked; yet, it brings wealthier urban dwellers to poorer marginal rural areas, providing opportunities for wealth redistribution and economic development as well as a contribution to national pride as citizens learn more about their own country.

#### **Box 1. Domestic tourism: roadside facilities and services**

One area of interest where domestic tourism supports a spatial redistribution of income and employment are the concepts of *michi-no-eki* (roadside service centre) in Japan and *dhaba* (restaurants at truck stops) in India. In addition, a cultural phenomenon observed in many countries is that he who travels outside his home town is expected to bring back gifts for friends and relatives that reflect the speciality of the area visited. In Thailand, for example, this leads to large numbers of roadside stalls, shops and agglomerations selling fruit in the north-eastern part of the country, dried fish in the eastern part and confectionery in the western part.

#### **D. Tourism and least developed countries**

10. Tourism has become a significant source of foreign exchange revenues for many countries of the region, including some least developed countries and island developing economies. For example in 2006, tourism activities in Maldives contributed 66.6 per cent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) and accounted for 65.9 per cent of its exports, while in Vanuatu the tourism industry contributed 47.0 per cent of the country's GDP and 73.7 per cent of its total export earnings. In 3 of the other 13 least developed countries in Asia (Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Nepal), tourism accounted for more than 15 per cent of export earnings.

### **II. THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF TOURISM**

11. The economic impact of the tourism industry can be seen in its contribution to a country's GDP and exports. The largest contributions to GDP are seen in the island States of Fiji, Tonga and Vanuatu. Indeed, many small island economies are highly dependent on tourism, as evidenced by the significant share of tourism in their total export earnings. In 2006, tourism alone contributed 43.5 per cent of the total export earnings of Fiji and one third of its GDP. Other small islands, such as Tonga and Vanuatu, are dependent on tourism for half or more of their export earnings.

12. Tourism in China has also provided a substantial contribution to its GDP, amounting to 13.7 per cent in 2006. Taking full advantage of the potential of their natural and cultural tourism resources, countries in the Greater Mekong Subregion are benefiting from the tourism industry. In 2006, tourism in Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic accounted respectively for 22.3 and 21.4 per cent of their total export earnings and contributed 19.6 and 9.3 per cent respectively of their GDP.

13. In the other countries of the region, the contribution of tourism to GDP and to total exports averaged between 7 and 10 per cent, mainly because their economies are much more diversified. However, in the light of the expected continuing growth of the tourism industry in the foreseeable future, it can be assumed that the share of tourism in the region's economy will become more significant.

### **III. THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF TOURISM**

14. While there are various definitions of social development, most of them converge around the concepts of improving the well-being of a country's citizens, promoting higher standards of living, employment and conditions of economic and social progress. Therefore, in the absence of better indicators to measure the social impact of tourism, its importance for employment has been used in the present document.

15. The tourism industry contributes significantly to the creation of employment, both directly and indirectly. In 2006, the industry in the Asian and Pacific region provided jobs for about 140 million people, representing an average of 8.9 per cent of total employment. Tourism employment in North-East Asia is estimated at 86 million jobs, or 10.1 per cent of total employment. This situation is

attributed mainly to China, where 1 out of 10 persons works in a tourism-related industry. In Oceania, the workforce in the tourism sector accounted for 14.5 per cent of total employment, or 1 in every 6.9 jobs. The importance of tourism becomes more significant when the structure of the workforce in selected Pacific island economies is analysed. For instance in 2006, 1 in every 3.2 persons was employed in the tourism sector, while in Vanuatu the ratio was 1 in every 2.4 jobs.

16. A comparison with countries in other subregions indicated that the share of total employment in the tourism sector in 2006 varied from 5.4 per cent in India to more than 10 per cent in both the Philippines and Thailand.

17. Fueled by sustained growth, the tourism industry has managed to become a significant provider of employment in countries of the Asian and Pacific region, thereby improving the economic situation of the people of those countries. In addition, revenue generated from tourism has enabled Governments to allocate financial resources for improving education and health conditions. For example, in Maldives, where tourism activity is the economic mainstay, almost 100 per cent of the population is now literate. The infant mortality rate has improved from 121 per 1,000 in 1977 to 38 per 1,000 in 2004. Over the same period, the average life expectancy at birth increased from 47 years to 67 years.

#### **IV. ASSESSING THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF TOURISM**

18. A full assessment of the socio-economic impacts of tourism requires that the linkages between tourism and socio-economic development be clearly identified. Having established the linkages, policymakers are then in a better position to consider specific interventions that can raise standards of living and reduce poverty.

19. Techniques to assess such impacts fall into two broad categories: “top-down”, aggregate or macrolevel approaches; and “bottom-up”, project or microlevel approaches.

20. Aggregate approaches include the related tourism satellite accounts, input-output tables,<sup>1</sup> social accounting matrices and computable general equilibrium models, as well as econometric and regression analysis.

21. Among the aggregate approaches, satellite accounts were used in the previous section to describe the importance of the tourism sector. The leading organization in generating the relevant data is the World Travel and Tourism Council, which produces annual data on the sector’s contribution to GDP, employment and exports. Since 1998, the Council has developed tourism satellite accounts for 173 countries; of that number, 31 are members or associate members of ESCAP. In addition to the activities of the Council, countries are producing their own satellite accounts (for example, India, the Philippines and Thailand). These accounts distinguish between the “travel and tourism industry” and

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<sup>1</sup> During the first half of the 1990s, ESCAP undertook separate studies on the economic impact of tourism in 11 member countries using input-output table methodologies. Publications relating to these studies can be found at <[www.unescap.org/ttdw/index.asp?menuname=PublicationArchives](http://www.unescap.org/ttdw/index.asp?menuname=PublicationArchives)>.

the “travel and tourism economy”. Essentially, the term “industry” includes all activities in direct contact with visitors, whereas the term “economy” refers to the suppliers of goods and services to the industry. Once constructed, the accounts can be used to answer questions such as the following: What are the direct (industry) and indirect (economy) impacts of tourism on GDP and employment? How strong are the linkages between tourism and other sectors of the economy? What are the multipliers (the change in income and employment resulting from a change in expenditure) and the leakages (the proportion of tourist expenditure that does not remain in the economy)?

22. One example of a computable general equilibrium model was developed by Adam Blake for Brazil. He and his co-authors concluded:

The results also show that tourism benefits the lowest income sections of (the) Brazilian population and has the potential to reduce income inequality. The lowest income households are not, however, the main beneficiaries of tourism and we have also shown that alternative revenue distribution by the government could double the benefits for the poorest households and give them around one-third of all the benefits from tourism.<sup>2</sup>

23. Among the project-level approaches to assessing the impacts of tourism are traditional cost-benefit analyses, including their extensions to social impact analysis and environmental impact analysis, livelihood analysis, accountancy-based lodging and enterprise assessments, local economic mapping, tourism value chain analyses and ex-post documentation of specific case studies. Because these types of analyses are done at the micro level, it is often easier to hypothesize and test linkages between particular interventions and improved standards of living.

24. These analytical techniques are all ways of identifying those who benefit from tourism interventions and of evaluating the level of their benefits. For example, interventions that provide infrastructure for tourists (roads, communications, electricity, water, waste treatment and disposal, and medical services, including clinics and hospitals) can also be designed to benefit local communities. In a longer causal chain, investment in physical access for tourists also makes the provision of health, education and extension services easier for the organizations and employees providing such services. Some of these analyses are obligatory when projects are financed by international financial institutions and bilateral donors.

25. One technique that has become increasingly popular in the current era of globalization is value chain analyses. In essence, this type of analysis can enable policymakers to consider each of the elements of a touristic experience and look at how the product is produced, distributed and sold, that is, the value added by each element. By analysing the value chain and working to retain value in the local economy, the positive impact of tourism on local economic development and poverty reduction can be enhanced. In 2006, the technique was used in the city of Luang Prabang, Lao People’s Democratic

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<sup>2</sup> Adam Blake and others, *Tourism and Poverty Alleviation in Brazil*, accessed at <[www.unb.br/cet/noticias/](http://www.unb.br/cet/noticias/)

Republic, where opportunities to increase earnings were identified by assessing value chains for accommodations, handicrafts, excursions and food.

26. The documentation and sharing of specific case studies is a means of illustrating the role of tourism in socio-economic development and poverty reduction. A search on the Internet using the words “poverty reduction tourism”, for example, yields a vast amount of information on the subject. In a contribution to this knowledge base, ESCAP has undertaken a number of activities that are highlighted in box 2.

**Box 2. Activities of ESCAP in the fields of tourism and poverty reduction**

**Workshops and seminars:**

- (a) Regional workshop on urban tourism and poverty alleviation, Colombo, November 2002;
- (b) Seminar on poverty alleviation through sustainable tourism development, Kathmandu, August 2003;
- (c) Expert group meeting on measuring and assessing the impact of tourism initiatives on poverty alleviation, Bangkok, October 2004;
- (d) Inter-agency expert group meeting on tourism and poverty reduction, Bali, Indonesia, December 2005;
- (e) Seminar on impact of tourism initiatives on poverty reduction, Bangkok, November 2006.

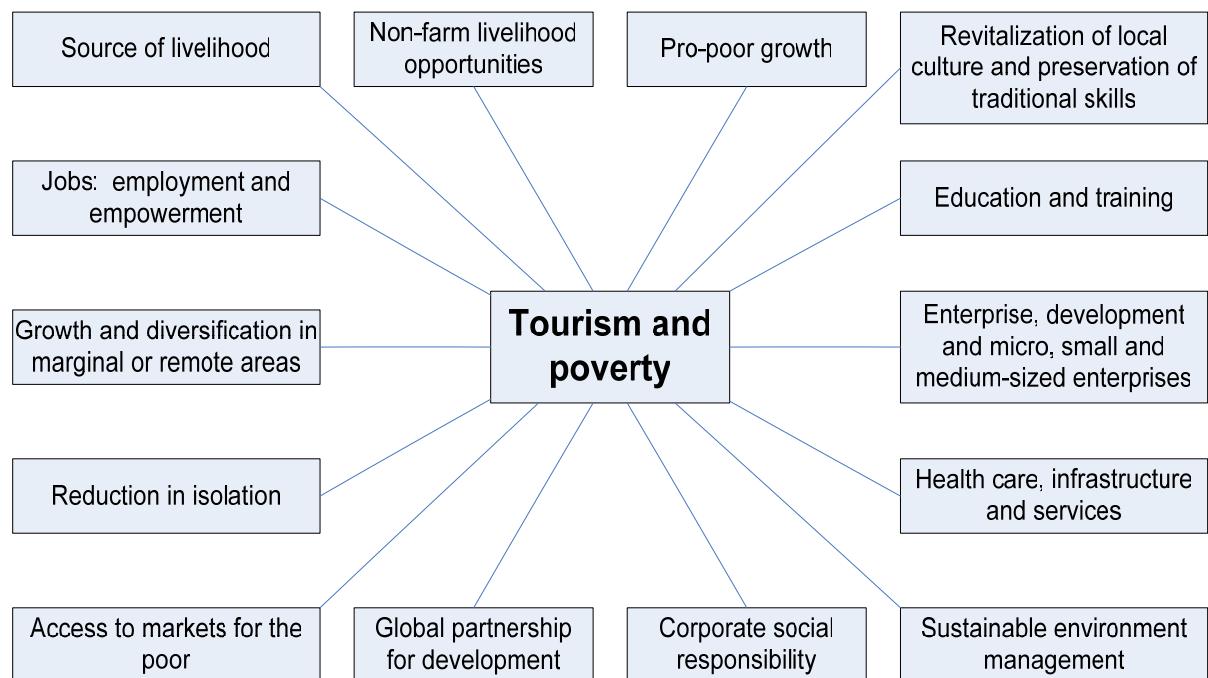
**Publications:**

- (a) *Poverty Alleviation through Sustainable Tourism Development*, August 2003 (ST/ESCAP/2265).
- (b) *The Contribution of Tourism to Poverty Alleviation*, ESCAP Tourism Review No. 25, December 2005 (ST/ESCAP/2380).

**V. TOURISM AND THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

27. Targeted interventions to address the issues raised in the Millennium Development Goals require that the linkages between tourism and poverty be identified. Figure 2 illustrates many of these linkages.

**Figure 2. Linkages between tourism and poverty reduction**



Source: Modification of Sheet No.3: *Tourism and Poverty Reduction – Making the Links*, Pro-poor Tourism Partnership, 2004.

28. Table 2 develops the figure further and provides a listing of the potential contributions that appropriate interventions in the tourism sector can make to the achievement of each of the Goals. As discussed above, one of the principal means is through the creation of income and employment, which contribute to reducing the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day (target for Goal 1).

29. Similarly, the provision of infrastructure facilities and services for tourists (for example, roads, communications, health and sanitation services) can be designed to benefit local communities also. Such facilities can contribute to the achievement of Goals 4, 5, 6 and 7. In the area of gender equality and the empowerment of women (Goal 3), tourism is recognized as a sector that employs a high proportion of women.

30. Consideration of the linkages between tourism and the Millennium Development Goals clearly illustrates the potential of tourism. The challenge for Governments is to translate these potentials into actual achievements.

**Table 2. Contribution of tourism to achieving the Millennium Development Goals**

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Contribution of tourism</b>
1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Tourism stimulates economic growth both at the national and local levels and promotes the growth of the agricultural, industrial and service sectors;</li> <li>(b) Tourism provides a wide range of employment opportunities easily accessible by the poor. Tourism businesses and tourists purchase goods and services directly from the poor or enterprises employing the poor. This creates opportunities for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in which the poor can participate;</li> <li>(c) International and domestic tourism spreads development to poor regions and remote rural areas of a country that may not have benefited from other types of economic development;</li> <li>(d) The development of tourism infrastructure can benefit the livelihood of the poor through improvement in tourism-linked service sectors, including transport and communications, water supply, energy and health services.</li> </ul>
2. Achieve universal primary education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) The construction of roads and tracks to remote areas for tourists also improves access for school-age children and for teachers;</li> <li>(b) Tourism can help local resource mobilization, part of which can be spent on improvement of education facilities.</li> </ul>
3. Promote gender equality and empower women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) The tourism industry employs a high proportion of women and creates microenterprise opportunities for them. It promotes women's mobility and provides opportunities for social networking.</li> </ul>
4. Reduce child mortality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) The construction of roads and tracks to remote areas for tourists also improves access to health services;</li> </ul>
5. Improve maternal health	
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(b) Revenues accruing to national and local governments through taxes on the tourism industry can be used to improve health services and nutrition for young children and their mothers;</li> <li>(c) Tourism raises awareness about HIV/AIDS issues and supports HIV/AIDS-prevention campaigns;</li> </ul>

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Contribution of tourism</b>
	(d) Tourism aggravates the spread of HIV/AIDS (negative effect).
7. Ensure environmental sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Tourism can generate financial resources for conservation of the natural environment;</li> <li>(b) Tourism raises awareness about environmental conservation and promotes waste management, recycling and biodiversity conservation;</li> <li>(c) Uncontrolled tourism may generate negative externalities as a result of pollution, congestion and depletion of natural resources (negative effect).</li> </ul>
8. Develop a global partnership for development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Tourism contributes to the socio-economic development of least developed countries, landlocked countries and island developing countries through foreign exchange earnings and the creation of job opportunities;</li> <li>(b) Tourism stimulates the development of the transport infrastructure, which facilitates access to and from the least developed countries, landlocked countries and island developing countries;</li> <li>(c) Tourism stimulates internal and external trade and strengthens supply chains;</li> <li>(d) Tourism promotes the integration of isolated economies with regional and global flows of trade and investment;</li> <li>(e) Tourism reduces the burden on the public exchequer through implementation of public-private initiatives;</li> <li>(f) Tourism creates decent and productive work for youth;</li> <li>(g) Tourism provides opportunities for bilateral, multilateral and subregional cooperation among countries;</li> <li>(h) Information technologies play an important role in integrating tourism enterprises into global tourism markets.</li> </ul>

## **VI. THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT**

31. Government intervention may be necessary to enhance the contribution of tourism to socio-economic development and poverty reduction. One of the principal roles of Governments is to set policy and legislative frameworks for tourism. For instance, several articles of the 2006 law on tourism of Viet Nam have been designed to facilitate pro-poor tourism.

32. Real progress can be facilitated by using a wide range of instruments. A number of these have been identified by the World Tourism Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme and are categorized into measurement instruments (sustainability indicators and monitoring; identification of limits), command and control instruments (legislation, regulation, rules and licensing; land-use planning and development control), economic instruments (pricing, charges and taxation; property rights and trading; financial incentives; and voluntary contributions), voluntary instruments (guidelines and codes of conduct, reporting and auditing, and voluntary certification), and supporting instruments (infrastructure provision and management, capacity-building, and marketing and information services). The precise mix of policies and instruments will vary depending on the situation, objectives and government structures.

### **A. Tourism ministries**

33. As tourism moves up the national agenda, the government departments dealing with tourism may be upgraded and strengthened. However, to manage tourism sustainably, ministry staff need the support of their colleagues in other ministries and in a range of subnational administrations. This arises because the administration and governance of tourism takes places in the localities where tourists and host communities interact, while regulations and incentives are applied within a framework laid down by the national Government.

### **B. Tourism plans**

34. Tourism master plans are useful tools for identifying areas with tourism potential, determining tourism strategy and structuring the provision of infrastructure, investment promotion and financial and other incentives. Governments need to ensure that master plans and tourism development strategies address local economic development, the distribution of tourism and poverty reduction.

### **C. Empowerment of poor communities, property rights and development control**

35. Government agencies can promote the empowerment of communities in planning and managing tourism assets by initiating partnership approaches that include poor people. Engaging the poor is particularly important in order to identify opportunities that fit their livelihood strategies and the barriers to employment and enterprise.

36. In Viet Nam, provincial and district-level governments have been allocated greater responsibility for tourism planning and development in line with the overall decentralization of

governance. Provincial and district governments have the statutory duty to consult and collaborate with other government agencies, as well as with other tourism stakeholders, such as businesses and local communities. Overall, this decentralized and more integrated approach to tourism planning is a significant step towards enhancing opportunities for incorporating poverty reduction and other local development priorities into tourism development.

#### **D. Legislation and regulations**

37. Several areas of legislation have an impact on the capacity of small-scale producers to develop tourism-related enterprises. These include access to credit, business licensing, employment legislation, environmental health, and health and safety regulations as well as the regulation of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. Governments need to ensure that people engaged in tourism are remunerated fairly and receive adequate social protection in areas such as the minimum wage, policies on equal opportunities, holiday entitlement and security of employment.

#### **E. Training, capacity-building and certification**

38. The needs and existing capacity of local people have to be assessed to ascertain where training interventions will be most useful. There is a need to strengthen informal learning methods and in place on-the-job training. The certification of guides has been used in several places to control quality and supply, and to ensure minimum standards of service and knowledge. In Viet Nam, a new category of “narrator guide” has been introduced, which enables people without a formal education to work as local guides, and at Keoladeo National Park, in India, local rickshaw drivers are registered with the park to take tourists around the site.

#### **F. Taxes and levies**

39. Taxes on goods, services and transactions, which provide funds for local or national governments can be used specifically to support either poor communities or the environments that provide their livelihood. For instance, Bhutan levies a high daily royalty on tourists, which is used to fund education and health programmes in remote rural areas.

#### **G. Microfinancing and facilitating market access and linkages**

40. The poor have limited access to the tourism market for several reasons, including lack of business skills, low educational levels, demanding regulations, incapacity to exit deep poverty, poor health and social exclusion. Governments can reduce the bureaucracy that small enterprises face, and create advisory services on business development, provide seed-funding for entrepreneurs, develop business linkages with established operators, assist micro, small and medium-sized enterprises to form production or marketing cooperatives and provide educational, technical and professional training programmes to improve quality and business standards. The cluster mechanisms outlined below can assist in these respects.

### **Box 3. Creating microenterprise opportunities for the poor: two examples from Nepal**

#### **The Explore Nepal Group**

The Explore Nepal Group spent approximately US\$ 57,000 on constructing and furnishing the Koshi Tapu Wildlife Camp. All materials except the toilet were sourced from local entrepreneurs of the Koshi Tapu area. For Bhojan Griha Restaurant in Kathmandu, another business of the Explore Nepal Group, each year the group expends approximately US\$ 5,700 in renovating or replacing the “soft furniture” of the restaurant, items such as candles, arts and crafts, tables and mats. This furniture is acquired only from women’s handicraft associations such as Dhukuti and Sano Hastakala.

#### **The Tiger Mountain Group**

In order to support local entrepreneurs while minimizing distortions in the local market, such as price rises that would have an adverse impact on local people, the Temple Tiger Jungle Lodges and Wildlife Camp in Pokhara buys its supplies from local markets but at established retail prices. Buying locally has the added benefit of significantly reducing the company’s transport costs.

Ensuring that the sources of supply are diverse and the benefits within the community widespread also proved to be a challenge because of the tendency of lodge employees to favour local businesses with connections to their relatives. To overcome this tendency, the lodge identifies the services and supplies that it needs in an open, accountable and transparent manner. It develops clear criteria for the supplies and services sought and ensures that the criteria are widely disseminated among community members.

*Source:* The Netherlands Development Organization (SNV) Nepal, 2006.

## **H. Marketing**

41. Destination marketing is increasingly the remit of the private sector, private-public sector partnerships or clusters (see below). This means that micro, small and medium-sized enterprises and poorer producers may be excluded from the formal marketing processes and distribution channels. To address this problem, Governments can encourage discussions between national and regional tourist boards and the institutions involved in local economic development and resource conservation. They can also encourage the organization of marketing campaigns to promote responsible tourism practices and suppliers, and give preferential marketing terms to suppliers that adopt sustainable, responsible, poverty alleviation practices.

42. Much can be done through careful marketing to alleviate the uneven geographic distribution of tourists and to spread the benefits of the industry. For instance, the Nepal Tourism Board has given particular promotional emphasis to areas of the country that traditionally receive fewer visitors, such as the Chitwan hills. Promotion builds on extensive product development, which has improved facilities

and enhanced the visitors' experience, and has succeeded in extending the range of tourism products and the tourism season in Nepal.

#### **Box 4. Nomadic tourism**

##### **Nomadic community-based tourism in Mongolia**

Since 2005, Mongolia has adopted a new approach to community-based tourism, the “*ger-to-ger* bottom-up approach”.<sup>a</sup> The country focuses particularly on promoting appropriate socio-economic linkages between the rural nomadic groups in Mongolia, their local communities and the public and private sectors.

This initiative has led to the establishment of 12 community routes over 3 regional provinces and 5 community-based ticketing/information centres. Rural nomadic groups and their communities are gaining valuable knowledge and skills that lead to greater local ownership and management. Instead of competing with tour operators, communities are learning how to cooperate and benefit from mobilizing “ethical” partnerships within the private and public sectors, while maintaining their independence.

Such a regional development concept contributes to the empowerment of local communities and their nomadic herders. Apart from the training they receive, the partnerships also help in the development of economically viable travel routes. For example, along the “Dundgovi travel route” the tourist is invited to share the harmonic melodies and natural wonders of the Nobel Rock Palace or Fortress with nomadic herders, while travelling by horseback, in a horse-drawn cart, riding a camel or trekking and staying at one of the community’s *ger*. Of the revenues from tickets (trail passes), 55 per cent goes directly to families and 10 per cent to their community environmental fund.

##### **Nomadic tourism development in Islamic Republic of Iran**

In 2006 the Iranian Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization entered into a memorandum of understanding with the Nomads’ Issues Organization to establish the Nomadic Cooperative Association, which was entrusted with the task of attracting foreign tourists to nomadic regions of the country.

Persian society was formerly a nomadic one. Thus, nomads are considered to be a cultural treasure which needs to be preserved. The Department of Tourism Development in Nomadic Regions was thus established to provide economic development for the nomads by carrying out technical and infrastructural studies. Along with the Department, the Nomadic Tourism Institute undertakes measures in marketing, advertising and attracting foreign tourists by organizing tours in nomadic areas, providing posters, catalogues, pictures and other advertising instruments.

In addition, a special centre will be established in Tehran to provide an outlet for the sale of nomadic products.

The authorities hope that devising appropriate tourism programmes for nomadic regions will lead to an increase in the incomes of the nomadic tribes, which would, in turn, raise their standard of living

without harming their social systems and traditional lifestyles.

Source: <[www.gertoger.com/index.html](http://www.gertoger.com/index.html), [http://www.asianews.ir/en/main1.asp?a\\_id=1394](http://www.asianews.ir/en/main1.asp?a_id=1394)>.

<sup>a</sup> *Ger*, a traditional Mongolian dwelling, is commonly known in English as a “yurt”. The *ger* is made of a wooden framework covered by large pieces of felt, easily assembled and disassembled.

## VII. THE ROLE OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR

43. A climate characterized by increasing levels of corporate social responsibility has resulted in awareness that economic instruments can be manipulated for altruistic ends as well as commercial gain, and that the private sector can contribute to local economic development and poverty reduction by changing the way that it does business and through philanthropic activity.

44. There are strong commercial motivations for private sector engagement in local economic development and poverty reduction, principally the creation of an enhanced product range, which adds market advantage, and of a better business environment, which fosters favourable staff attitudes and morale. These factors will, in turn, help to enhance the tourist’s experience.

45. Particular areas where the private sector can foster local socio-economic development are in recruiting and training local people, procuring goods and services locally and shaping local infrastructure development to include benefits for the poor. The private sector can also encourage tourists to purchase products that are complementary to the core holiday, such as handicrafts, art and local food and beverages, and services such as guide services, music and dance. These add to the holiday experience and provide economic opportunities for local providers. Complementary products often draw on local culture, including the way that the people’s way of life has evolved in relation to their history and environment.

### Box 5. The “Thai Village” at the Rose Garden

A visit to the Polynesian Cultural Center in Hawaii, United States, inspired the owner of the Rose Garden in Thailand to create a similar cultural centre called the “Thai Village” in the town of Samphran, 32 km west of Bangkok.

Instead of hiring professional performers, the Rose Garden created its own cultural troupe for the Thai Village. With the help of the Department of Fine Arts, Ministry of Education, workers at the Rose Garden were trained as dancers and performers. It took them almost a year to learn the intricacies of Thai dancing. Over time, the troupe became so professionally skilled that it was called upon when Thai Airways International Public Co., Ltd., and the Tourism Authority of Thailand needed dancers to promote Thai culture abroad.

To encourage the workers’ children and local boys and girls to spend their leisure time constructively, the Rose Garden also started a Sunday school which taught the youngsters Thai folk dancing, music, martial arts, vegetable and fruit-carving, and handicraft-making. Today the Rose Garden’s 150-strong cultural troupe comprises many of the original performers, their children and

grandchildren.

## **VIII. ALLIANCES AND PARTNERSHIPS**

### **A. Regional and subregional marketing alliances**

46. Subregional touristic cooperation at the government level is now being pursued between countries in several subregions. The ASEAN Tourism Agreement (concluded in Phnom Penh on 4 November 2002) committed the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to work together to facilitate travel into and within ASEAN countries, to undertake joint marketing and promotion, to liberalize trade in travel and tourism, to enhance cooperation in raising the quality and sustainability of tourism in the region and to ensure tourist safety and security and human resources development. In the Pacific subregion, the South Pacific Tourism Organisation is charged with facilitating the sustainable development of tourism, strengthening regional capacity, and planning, marketing and managing the tourism sector on a sustainable basis. In January 2007 Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia and Malaysia agreed to conserve areas of high biodiversity along common frontiers on the island of Borneo; that tripartite agreement has a focus on ecotourism. Other economic groupings actively engaged in cooperative tourism development include the Working Group on the Greater Mekong Subregion Tourism Sector, the Ayeyarwady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy, the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multisectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and the South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation. Subregional cooperation can achieve efficiencies in marketing, information-sharing, destination access, human resources development and capacity-building, and synergistic product development.

### **B. Networks, clusters and ICT**

*The “story” of globalization is essentially one of technological change coupled with the development and organization of interacting physical and non-physical networks designed to take advantage of the change.<sup>3</sup>*

47. Networks clusters and ICT provide mechanisms by which the role of tourism in socio-economic development can be enhanced.

The interrelationship between tourism networks and technology [ICT] is not a recent phenomenon. ... Computerised Reservation Systems (CRS), developed and operated by airline companies in the 1960s to manage their increasing volume of passengers and related logistics, were among the first integrated global information technology networks. In due course, proprietary CRS were made accessible to travel agents and subsequently expanded to include hotels and car rental companies.... In the 1980s, CRS

<sup>3</sup> ESCAP and Asian Institute of Transport Development, *Towards an Asian Integrated Transport Network* (ST/ESCAP/2399), accessed from <[www.unescap.org/ttdw/PubsDetail.asp?IDNO=182](http://www.unescap.org/ttdw/PubsDetail.asp?IDNO=182)>, on 28 February 2007.

started to integrate with other technology networks to form Global Distribution Systems (GDS), examples of which are Amadeus, Galileo, Sabre, Worldspan and the Australian ETAS system.<sup>4</sup>

48. Advances in information technology are giving micro, small and medium-sized enterprises unprecedented access to markets, and the Internet is being used to facilitate information exchange and the booking process. An example is Worldhotel-linkcom Limited, an e-marketplace which acts as the interface between accommodation providers in several Asian countries (initially Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Viet Nam) and independent travellers.

49. A cluster, as popularized by Michael Porter,<sup>5</sup> is broadly defined as a geographic concentration of competing and cooperating companies; suppliers; service providers; government, education and training institutions; and other associated organizations. One of the central propositions underlying the formation of clusters is that, while a sound macroeconomic, political, legal and social environment creates the conditions for increased competitiveness, competitiveness itself ultimately depends on improving the microeconomic capability of the economy and the sophistication of local companies and local competition.

50. The cluster concept is being used widely in the tourism sector in both developed and developing countries. For example, in Sri Lanka, there are eight clusters in that country's "competitiveness programme" (ceramics, coir, ICT, jewellery, rubber, spices, tea and tourism), while in Thailand there are five clusters (automotive industry, fashion, food, tourism and software). An example of the work of a cluster is, in the jargon of the tourism industry, "destination marketing" whereby the various stakeholders in the cluster work together to generate a "total tourism experience". Subject to the consensus of the members of a cluster, special emphasis can be placed not only on supporting and promoting micro, small and medium-sized enterprises but also on the special needs of poorer sectors of the community in providing tourism services.

51. In addition to facilitating the marketing of the tourism product, ICT has an important role to play in capacity-building through distance learning, the sharing of experiences and virtual networking.

52. In drawing upon the lessons and experiences in other sectors, ICT may provide the opportunity for "scaling-up" or at least "replicating" (with modifications to reflect local circumstances) the successful elements of particular interventions or pilot projects. The principal area of difficulty in such "replication" relates to governance, standardization and the transfer of implicit and tacit knowledge. In this respect, ICT may offer a way forward. One example from a different sector is the Prime Minister's Rural Road Project in India. The project is a very large one that is aimed at providing all-weather access for villages of more than 1,000 people (500 people in some tribal areas) to the main road network. The

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<sup>4</sup> Patrice Braun, "Creating value to tourism products through tourism networks and clusters: Uncovering destination value chains", paper presented at the Conference on Global Tourism Growth: A Challenge for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, in Gwangju, Republic of Korea, 6-7 September 2005.

project is being financed from the proceeds of a federal tax on diesel sales and it is being implemented by individual states. ICT has played a major role in a number of aspects of the project: engineering, administration, monitoring of project implementation and other governance matters. One of the key elements in this application would appear to have been the ability to “standardize” many of the project’s activities.

53. Another concept that has close tourism connections is the “one village, one product” programme, which was started in Japan in 1979, and later introduced in other countries, for example the “1K1P” programme in Malaysia and the “one tambon (subdistrict), one product” (OTOP) programme in Thailand. The latter programme was started in 1999 to promote entrepreneurs at the village level through the manufacture of local specialty products based on the abundant native culture, tradition and nature.<sup>6</sup> The OTOP type of programme has considerable potential for developing the local economy and can also promote tourism. However, any successful large-scale replication and upscaling of local initiatives requires that the local entrepreneurs be assisted in product development, guidance and support (concept, design, prototype-making, finance, manufacturing and business operations); standardization (including branding, product rating and classification); and marketing.

54. ICT can be an appropriate tool for providing these support services to entrepreneurs and for the management of the programme, in a manner similar to that of the Prime Minister’s Rural Road project in India. Through the use of standardization and Internet technology, the government agencies concerned, with helping private organizations, can provide the services and manage the programme, thereby achieving the economies of scale enjoyed by larger organizations. An Internet site can be a resource and e-business centre for the local producers, and can also help in fostering local tourism by providing tourists with the necessary information. Currently, an Internet site <ThaiTambon.com> is helping in the marketing of OTOP products and the networking of entrepreneurs. It also provides information on local tourism. Such efforts could be further extended to include other services and could be used as a tool for management of the programme by the Government.

## **IX. IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING OF THE PLAN OF ACTION**

55. As requested by the Commission in paragraph 3 (c) of resolution 62/3 of 12 April 2006 on the implementation of the Plan of Action for Sustainable Tourism Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2006-2012) and the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Tourism Development, the secretariat has developed a common approach to monitoring their implementation.

56. The proposed analytical framework is based on a widely applied analytic hierarchy process that allows consideration of both qualitative and quantitative assessment of the extent to which an element of a plan is completed. In order to operationalize the monitoring system, some rearrangement and

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<sup>5</sup> Michael Porter, *The Competitive Advantages of Nations* (New York, Free Press, 1990).

<sup>6</sup> The programme has been recently renamed “local and community product”, but the OTOP brand name has been retained.

reformulation of the objectives and actions under each theme of the previously mentioned Plan of Action have been proposed. However, a direct correspondence between the items in the monitoring system and the Plan of Action has been fully retained. In addition, a fourth element labelled "activity" has been introduced into the monitoring system. Consequently, the proposed monitoring system has four hierarchical levels, namely the five *themes* of the Plan of Action; a number of *objectives* that contribute collectively to the overall objective of the theme; a set of *actions* that broadly correspond to the actions in the Plan of Action and contribute to the achievement of the objective; and a set of *activities* that are required to be carried out in order to complete the action.

57. In assessing the extent to which the Plan of Action has been completed, the analyst is required only to assess either quantitatively or qualitatively the extent to which each of the activities is completed. A set of weights, reflecting the level of importance of the activity, action, objective and theme at the country level, are then applied to ascertain the degree (in percentage terms) to which the Plan of Action is completed at each of the hierarchical levels.

58. The monitoring system can be implemented with readily available spreadsheet software. Outputs include time-series graphs of planned versus actual completion for each of the activities, actions, objectives and themes as well as radar (or spider) diagrams for each action, objective and theme. Presentation of information in these forms enables policymakers to readily visualize the progress being made in implementing the Plan of Action.

59. In order to further support the monitoring of the Plan of Action, a separate reporting form has been developed for each action. A copy of the suggested form is contained in the annex to the present document.

## X. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### A. Summary and conclusions

60. The results of the foregoing study have clearly demonstrated that tourism is playing a major role in socio-economic development. Among other observations, it has shown that, for many countries of the region, the economic significance of tourism is very large when measured against GDP and exports. For many countries in general and the least developed countries in particular, tourism is a sector in which they have comparative, if not competitive, advantages for which they can efficiently convert domestic resources into foreign exchange. If appropriately used, such foreign exchange can purchase the investment goods necessary to support more broadly based economic development policies.

61. The study has demonstrated that the social significance of tourism, measured in terms of employment (especially unskilled labour), is very large. It has also illustrated that appropriate tourism-related interventions can play a role in raising the standard of living and in reducing poverty in local communities.

62. It is often necessary, however, to develop and implement policies that take advantage of the

potential benefits of tourism in socio-economic development. In some cases, this is simply a matter of increasing awareness so that the joint benefits to tourists and local communities can be “factored-in” at the planning stage. In other cases it may involve reducing leakages (or retaining tourist spending). In yet other cases “affirmative action” may need to be taken to capture the benefits.

63. In any event, there is a strong case for considering tourism as an important sector in socio-economic development. Towards this end, the following recommendations have been prepared for the consideration of the Commission.

## **B. Recommendations for consideration**

### *1. Planning*

64. National tourism master plans need to be prepared, with specific objectives to be integrated within a country’s overall economic and social development objectives. The plans need to include comprehensive strategies, implementation plans and priorities to enhance the role of tourism in socio-economic development and poverty reduction. In developing a master plan, countries may wish to consider incorporating the recommendations below as well as those contained in Commission resolution 62/3.

### *2. Information for decision-making*

65. Governments should consider stepping up their efforts to assess the socio-economic impact of tourism. The formulation of national tourism development policies is often hindered by a lack of data on the scope and extent of tourism’s economic impact. In the absence of such data, tourism has often been given an unduly low priority in the allocation of domestic resources and foreign assistance. Tourism satellite accounts and other quantitative and qualitative analytical techniques help to remedy this situation, enabling tourism to be compared with other economic activities measured in national accounts.

### *3. Coordination and monitoring*

66. Governments should consider establishing inter-ministerial committees that include representatives of the tourism industry in order to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the Plan of Action, including the development of tourism-related infrastructure and the facilitation of international travel, through improvements in procedures for visa issuance, border formalities and customs regulations. Governments may also wish to consider the common approach to the monitoring of the implementation of the Plan of Action, as outlined above.

### *4. Private sector participation*

#### *(a) Public-private partnerships*

67. Private sector participation and public-private partnerships should be strengthened in a number of areas: (a) tourism development planning, policy formulation and implementation, monitoring and

evaluation; (b) infrastructure development and investment for the tourism sector; (c) tourism promotion, marketing and product development; (d) environmental management of tourism and the preservation of the cultural heritage; (e) human resources development; (f) facilitation of travel; (g) risk management in tourism; (h) pro-poor tourism initiatives; and (i) awareness creation about the role of tourism in socio-economic development.

(b) *Development of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises and employment generation*

68. Special efforts should be made to foster micro, small and medium-sized enterprises to ensure locally based opportunities for engagement in tourism.

(c) *Mainstream tourism and corporate social responsibility*

69. The contribution of mainstream tourism to local economic development needs to be better understood and its role further expanded. There is also a need to foster a climate characterized by corporate social responsibility in the tourism industry.

*5. Networking, clusters and ICT*

70. Governments should consider fostering tourism networks and clusters as part of a bottom-up, business-oriented approach to developing the sector.

71. Advances in information technologies can contribute significantly to the expansion of tourism. The public and private sectors should build up ICT infrastructure and services as well as strengthen capabilities to utilize ICT in tourism.

*6. Improving living standards and poverty reduction*

72. The role of tourism in socio-economic development and in achieving the Millennium Development Goals should be clearly identified. To increase the positive impact on local economic development and poverty reduction, linkages to poor communities need to be strengthened through, among others, the above-mentioned initiatives.

*7. Domestic tourism*

73. Governments should consider making special efforts to promote domestic tourism in view of its potential size, spatial density, cultural affinity, language commonality or similarity, and role in a risk-management strategy.

*8. Environmental and sociocultural considerations*

74. Environmental and sociocultural considerations should be integrated into policies and plans for tourism development. Collaborative approaches that include the public sector, the private sector and stakeholders can internalize some of the external costs of tourism, thereby preserving the cultural heritage and protecting the environment.

*9. Human resources development*

75. Countries should consider undertaking surveys to assess workforce requirements by required skill level and current and future training requirements in the tourism sector, and develop a national tourism training plan. Governments may also wish to consider establishing national tourism-training committees, consisting of representatives of the Government, training institutions and the tourism industry. At the regional level, the Network of Asia-Pacific Education and Training Institutes in Tourism provides a useful mechanism for cooperation in tourism education and training.

*10. Regional economic cooperation*

76. Bilateral, multilateral and subregional cooperation in tourism development should be further strengthened. In particular, countries in Central Asia and South-West Asia should step up their efforts to strengthen subregional cooperation in tourism. Overland travel has great potential for expanding in the region and can contribute to local economic development. Countries linked by the Asian Highway and the Trans-Asian Railway share a wealth of historical and cultural heritage as well as unspoiled natural beauty. These countries could jointly promote tourism along the Asian Highway and the Trans-Asian Railway.

*Annex*

**SUGGESTED REPORTING FORMAT**

Theme 1. Enhancing the role of tourism in socio-economic development and poverty reduction

Objective: (1) To enhance the understanding needed to give priority to tourism development in national development strategies, policies, regulations, plans and the allocation of resources

Action: (a) Improve national tourism statistics and indicators, including indicators of the socio-economic, cultural and environmental impacts
1. Activities to be implemented <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(i) Collect currently available statistics and indicators</li><li>(ii) Examine their suitability for the desired objective</li><li>(iii) Identify the deficiencies and gaps</li><li>(iv) Organize a seminar to consider additional data needs and the mechanism for collecting them</li><li>(v) Introduce the new data-capturing mechanism and reporting system</li></ul>
2. Organizations involved in implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(i) Lead organization</li><li>(ii) Cooperating organizations</li></ul>
3. Time frame Starting date _____ Completion date _____
4. Monitoring indicators <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(i) A list of currently available statistics and indicators to be prepared by (date)</li><li>(ii) A document describing the suitability of currently available statistics and indicators to be prepared by (date)</li><li>(iii) A document identifying the deficiencies and gaps to be prepared by (date)</li><li>(iv) Recommendations of the seminar concerning additional data needs and their collection mechanism, to be made available by (date)</li><li>(v) Preparation of a national tourism statistics report based on the recommendations of the seminar, to be made available by (date)</li></ul>
5. Current status of implementation
6. Results achieved
7. Evaluation of accomplishments

