



PRESS RELEASE

TOURISM & TRAVEL IN THE GREEN ECONOMY

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In anticipation of the UN Climate Change Conference to be held in Copenhagen, 7-18 December, UNWTO has been working with the European Travel Commission (ETC) and VisitSweden to provide a comprehensive overview of how tourism can play a leading role in the development of a sustainable global economy. The joint Symposium on **Tourism and Travel in the Green Economy** (14-15 September, Gothenburg, Sweden), has been convened as part of UNWTO's Davos Process to address how carbon neutrality and the development of sustainable consumption and production relates to the tourism sector. As such, the Gothenburg Symposium will make an important contribution both in support of 'sealing the deal' in Copenhagen and the longer road to a Green Economy.

The *United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)*, the *European Union Presidency* and the *European Commission*, alongside symposium convenors and national governments and industry have all underlined the importance of this Symposium and the issues it addresses. Maud Olofsson, Deputy Prime Minister of Sweden, will open the Symposium with UNWTO Secretary-General ad interim Taleb Rifai, Jean Claude Baumgarten from WTTC and ETC President Arthur Oberascher, followed by an impressive group of high-level and experienced sustainable tourism experts. Participants will be clarifying how their respective institutions and projects are greening the sector in order to make the necessary changes imposed by the climate change agenda and by the global economic crisis.

UNWTO Secretary-General a.i. Taleb Rifai underscored that the recent UN inter-agency statement '*The Green Economy: a Transformation to Address Multiple Crises*' (www.unep.org/pdf/pressreleases/Green_Economy_Joint_Statement.pdf) sets the right framework to discuss the tourism sector's response to the economic crisis while pursuing a sustainability agenda.

Franco Ianniello, Head of the Tourism Unit, Directorate General Enterprise and Industry at the European Commission, will provide a lunchtime address acknowledging the importance of the sustainable growth of tourism both in Europe and globally. He will also highlight some of the measures undertaken at the European level with a view to supporting a sustainable and competitive tourism development.

Rob Franklin, ETC's Executive Director, will ensure that National Tourism Organisations (NTOs) are fully informed of the prevailing problems and opportunities. He said that "Climate change is a driver of sustainable development, and NTOs need to pay attention to global and European-level policies and programmes that will help them maintain and improve their market share."

The Gothenburg Symposium will also launch ETC's own climate change and sustainable tourism knowledge networking strategy for NTOs. Gordon Sillence - the conference coordinator commissioned by ETC to develop the NTO knowledge network and Symposium content - praised the Gothenburg process for bringing together excellent information from the various presenters in order to start a common NTO knowledge base on climate change and sustainable tourism (see the DestiNet Sustainable Tourism Portal <http://destinet.ew.eea.europa.eu>).

"It is encouraging to see business and industry having agendas in common with governments in order to shift 'business-as-usual' into a greener gear. Participants will get to hear first-hand about the new methodologies, technologies and opportunities that now exist to make travel and tourism supply chain activities and tourism destinations more sustainable - and hence more competitive - in today's fast-changing global market economy."

For further information see the Symposium homepage on:

<http://www.etc-corporate.org/modules.php?name=Content&pa=showpage&pid=218&ac=12>

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