



# United Nations Environment Programme

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ПРОГРАММА ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ ОБЪЕДИНЕННЫХ НАЦИЙ ПО ОКРУЖАЮЩЕЙ СРЕДЕ

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## Sustainable Tourism Gets Boost With Launch of Global Partnership

**Manuel Antonio National Park, Costa Rica, 21 January 2011.** The push for sustainable tourism was given a boost this week with the establishment of the Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism that unites all stakeholders in the industry in influencing policies, developing projects and providing a global communication platform.

The new Partnership was established at the first annual General Meeting in Costa Rica, hosted by the Costa Rican Ministry of Tourism and supported by the French and Norwegian Governments, together with the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

During the meeting, France was elected President of the Partnership Steering Committee and Costa Rica as Vice-Chair. The Secretariat to this innovative Global Partnership will be housed with UNEP's Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (DTIE) in Paris, France and the emphasis will be to shift tourism onto a sustainable pathway worldwide.

*"The Partnership will be an up-to-date, dynamic forum where countries that are interested in tourism which is truly sustainable will be able to learn from the successful efforts of the other members and obtain technical assistance, and which will promote constant dialogue, the exchange of experiences, and seek solutions to the problems that are common to the tourism sector,"* said **Gina Guillen Grillo, Senior Advisor to the Minister of Tourism of Costa Rica.**

Tourism is one of the world's largest industries and for developing countries it can be a source of much needed income. However, if not managed well, tourism can also threaten a country's natural resources as a result of higher demands on water and energy consumption and waste generation and lead to environmental degradation and negatively impact local populations.

*"The tourism sector has been increasingly recognized as a key engine for economic growth, especially in developing and least developed countries. It is not only responsible for a significant share of world GDP (5%) and employment (6-7%), but is also an important source of foreign investment reaching as much as 30% of the world service's exports. The number of international tourist arrivals is expected to reach 1.6 billion by 2020,"* said **Luigi Cabrini, Director for Sustainable Development of Tourism in the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).**

Knowledge acquired through the Partnership in Africa could be applied in Latin America, Asia, Europe, or North America, or vice versa. Few, if any, other entities in tourism will so quickly be able to transfer experience and put it into action.

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The Partnership will also focus on seven thematic areas: 1) policy frameworks, 2) climate change, 3) environment and biodiversity, 4) poverty alleviation, 5) cultural and natural heritage, 6) sustainable tourism practices for the private sector and 7) finance and investments.

*“The broad geographic scope of the Partnership, as well as the depth of its members’ expertise, will enable it to adapt, replicate, and scale-up successful projects initiated by any partner in other regions; engaging the public and private sectors and consumers, identifying and setting-up project funding opportunities and informing on policy which will benefit the development and promotion of sustainability in tourism,”* **said Gérard Ruiz, Chairman of the Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism.**

To date, the Global Partnership is made up of 18 national governments, five UN organizations, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 17 international and business Organisations as well as 16 non-governmental organisations which will demonstrate their commitment in advancing sustainability in the tourism sector. Many of these organizations participated in an International Taskforce initiated five years ago by the French Government as part of the Marrakesh Process and worked successfully together on high impact sustainable tourism projects.

*“It is essential to shift the tourism sector towards more sustainable consumption and production patterns, which help to improve environmental and social conditions of a tourist destination. The Global Partnership therefore aims at facilitating a shift towards a ‘Green Economy’, which offers substantial contributions to the Millennium Development Goals, and the opportunity to increase the industry’s resilience to a rapidly changing global outlook,”* **said Arab Hoballah, Chief of UNEP’s Sustainable Consumption and Production Branch.**

UNEP and other UN agencies have been heavily involved in the Green Economy initiative and prior to the launch of the Global Partnership a workshop was held in San José, Costa Rica, highlighting the major contribution of sustainable tourism in the transition to the Green Economy. The tourism chapter for the Green Economy Report is being finalized by UNEP and UNWTO.

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