

**MINUTES OF THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL TASK FORCE ON
SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT
9-11 JUNE 2008**

Executive Summary: Main Accomplishments and Conclusions

The Fourth International Task Force Meeting on Sustainable Tourism Development (ITF-STD) was held on 9-11 June, 2008 in San Jose and Arenal, Costa Rica. The meeting was organized by the Costa Rica Ministry of Tourism; the French Ministry for Ecology, Sustainable Development and Town and Country Planning; the French Ministry of European and Foreign Affairs; the French Ministry in charge of Tourism and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) with the financial support of the Norwegian and French Governments.

Approximately 130 participants attended the opening of the meeting, including representatives from 14 countries 8 international organizations, and 6 NGOs and professional associations.

The meeting was hosted by Mr. Carlos Benavides, Costa Rica Minister of Tourism, who chaired the opening and closing sessions, and co- chaired and facilitated by Mr. Christian Brodhag. The objectives of the meeting were :

- To review the current challenges related to the financing of sustainable tourism development, to explore opportunities and to strengthen partnerships with multi-lateral and bilateral financing institutions and donors;
- To present case studies, lessons learned and recommendations focusing on the thematic priority areas of the Task Force;
- To experience sustainable tourism on the field with Costa Rica example of implementations.
- To identify a first list of policy recommendations that could be submitted under the 10-years framework of programmes (10YFP) for Sustainable Consumption and Production that will be negotiated at the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development in 2010/2011.

The main themes of the meeting's plenary sessions and workshop were the following:

- Impacts of tourism in climate change (follow-up on the Davos Process by United Nations World Tourism Organization-UNWTO) and biodiversity (follow-up on the Convention on Biological Diversity-CBD initiative "Guidelines on biodiversity and tourism development"),
- Identification of objective criteria for sustainable investments in the tourism sector,
- Harmonization and census between programmes of sustainable tourism certification,

The main accomplishments include:

The milestone of the meeting was the drafting of the first set of recommendations on sustainable tourism. After a consultation process, the final recommendations are to be presented at the CSD in 2010/2011. The recommendations are structured around a simplified life-cycle of tourism products and services and are oriented towards the:

1. integration of sustainable tourism development into regional and national policy planning and policies for sustainable development;
2. harmonization of sustainability criteria for investment and financing of tourism projects ("Costa Rica Principles");
3. use of appropriate technologies and methods in tourism projects;
4. promotion of destinations and tourism products in terms of their sustainability performance,
5. Awareness of consumers;
6. implementation of processes for the monitoring and evaluation of sustainable tourism indicators.
7. mainstreaming of sustainability into new projects of tourism development as well as into tourism rehabilitation projects.

In terms of future meetings of the Task Force the following decision have been made:

- To organise a meeting of the Task Force's executive committee during the 3rd International Forum on Solidarity Based Tourism in Bamako, Mali, 20-22 October 2008

- Kingdom of Morocco formally announced their offer to host the Fifth International Task Force Meeting on Sustainable Tourism Development.

Specific accomplishments include the following:

- The plenary session on investments and financing served as an opportunity to gain further support from the participating financial institutions and organizations. In this respect, the fourth meeting attracted new participants such as the Inter-American Development Bank/ Multi-lateral investment Fund (IADB/MIF) ; the World Bank Group continued its participation to the Task force meetings and agreed to host the meeting for the launching of the SIFT Network at the World Bank's headquarters (November 2008).

- Observers attended the meeting in order to strengthen regional cooperation (Argentina, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico)

- The parallel workshop on education and capacity building included presentations on the tools that have been implemented under the ITF-STD's programme of work and case studies to highlight sustainable tourism practices. This session highlighted the following:
 - The need to continue responding to the challenges of certification in the tourism sector;
 - The need to move beyond the development of tools towards the development of partnerships for their implementation,
 - The need to incorporate sustainability within the business as usual scenario,
 - The need to translate sustainability criteria in terms of 'direct profitability' when communicated to businesses,
 - The need for government and other key players to support voluntary initiatives to provide market exposure,
 - The Task Force was recognized as an opportunity to act as a forum to exchange lessons learned and to consolidate alliances and request funding for the implementation of the ongoing projects.

- The parallel workshop on labels, standards and certification processes for sustainable tourism presented global and local initiatives. The Global Baseline Criteria (GBC) presentation focused on giving an update from the last task force meeting held in Paris where the initiative was introduced and where feedback was requested from participants for the consultation process. The presenter recalled that the criteria were born out of the need of many stakeholders in the tourism sector to identify what sustainable tourism means and how to mainstream sustainability. To this end, a partnership was created with the active participation of 16 organizations to coordinate these efforts. The GBC aims at creating a common set of criteria that can be used to facilitate the harmonization and accreditation of certification schemes, codes of conducts and sets of best practices around the globe to allow an understanding and to determine what hotels and tour-operators have as sustainable tourism practices. The pilot projects presented as local initiatives are using the GBC as a basis for their advancement and the CST (Certification for Sustainable Tourism) was presented as an example of a national certification which is highly accredited. The main conclusions were presented and include:
 - There are outstanding examples to promote sustainable tourism both on the supply and demand side,
 - Diversified financing sources are available,
 - This is the right time for this topic, an increased interest by consumers, industry and

- governments to address sustainability,
 - The global baseline criteria represents an important effort to creating a common language about sustainable tourism,
 - Challenges are still many: lack of understanding, ~~lack of~~ education, demand, availability, technology,
 - The task force presents an important forum to address these issues
- The third day session presented the evolution of the task forces and a preliminary draft outline of policy recommendations to be presented at the CSD in 2010/2011. The scope of the document addresses “mass” tourism and different “niche” tourism markets that can grow to be a significant share of the market and major form of tourism for some countries (ecotourism, rural tourism etc.) A major achievement of the Task Force during the session was the consensus made amongst participants to:
 - Support the working document presented on the policy recommendations,
 - Open a consultation process for the review of the recommendations until the first quarter of 2009, and
 - Finalize the policy recommendations during the Fifth Task Force Meeting.
 - Kingdom of Morocco formally announced their offer to host the Fifth International Task Force Meeting on Sustainable Tourism Development.
 - The United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) also expressed its interest to run a regional consultation on the policy recommendations.

Recommendations/Actions to be taken:

1. For the Task Force members to open a consultation process on the recommendations until the first quarter of 2009, and
2. To agree on and finalize the policy recommendations outlined in the draft document by the Fifth Task Force Meeting.
3. To further explore opportunities and strengthen partnerships with multi-lateral and bilateral financing institutions and donors;
4. To find partnerships for the dissemination and replication of the Task Force projects in different countries at a local and regional level.
5. To organise a meeting of the Task Force’s executive committee during the 3rd International Forum on Solidarity Based Tourism in Bamako, Mali, 20-22 October 2008
6. To coordinate efforts with the Kingdom of Morocco for the organization of the next Task Force Meeting

▪ *Opening of the Task Force Meeting at Hotel Radisson, San Jose*

The meeting was opened by a panel of speakers represented by Mr. Luigi Cabrini, Director of UNWTO's Sustainable Tourism Development Department, Mr. Stefanos Fotiou, Tourism and Environment Programme Officer at UNEP; Mr. Jean Paul Monchau, Ambassador of France in Costa Rica and Mr. Carlos Ricardo Benavides, Minister of Tourism in Costa Rica. Ms. Michelle Gallardo de Gutierrez, Vice Minister of Tourism for El Salvador, was invited as a special guest of honor.

Mr. Cabrini (UNWTO) expressed his gratitude to the Ministry of Tourism in Costa Rica for hosting the event and to the co-organizers for their support. He explained that the year 2007 has exceeded expectations for international tourism with arrivals reaching more than 800 million. He also pointed that this growth is expected to increase by 2% to 3% in the year 2008. Nevertheless, he expressed that international tourism may be affected by the increased volatility in economies worldwide, in particular in the USA, alongside with global imbalances related to high oil prices and food shortages. He noted however, that the sector has proven its resilience based on past experiences. He reminded the importance of tourism growth as a strategy for reducing poverty and as an instrument for development. He stressed that integrating sustainability in tourism development is listed as UNWTO's second strategic objective. In this sense, he considers that the Marrakech Process has been used as an opportunity to meet these objectives with the assistance of the work of the ITF-STD. He also noted the work that UNWTO has recently completed linked to the complex socio-economic and environmental challenges facing tourism such as the fight against climate change. He stressed the importance of the Fourth International Meeting to further discuss the areas of priority including the role of certification schemes in sustainable tourism development; tourism and biodiversity and climate change and tourism. In this respect, he highlighted that Costa Rica represents a pioneering country practicing sustainable tourism development that can provide the meeting added value.

Mr. Fotiou (UNEP/DTIE) explained the context of the Marrakech Process and the 10YFP in which the ITF-STD's role is to contribute to its delivery with the aim of supporting regional and national initiatives to accelerate the shift towards SCP and to support its implementation beyond 2011. He recalled the major achievements of the task force during the year 2007 which included the organization of a back to back workshop with the third meeting which focused on sustainable investment and financing in the tourism sector; the organization of the first international capacity building seminar on tourism and climate change where a publication on climate change mitigation and adaptation in the tourism sector was jointly published with UNWTO, UNWMO and the Oxford University's Centre for Environment (OUCE) and used as the main reading. In addition, he mentioned the work that the ITF-STD has achieved on developing sustainable tourism baseline criteria with the leaders of the United Nations Foundation (UNF). Furthermore, he mentioned that the achievements of the ITF-STD have created a very good momentum to provide recommendations at the UN CSD meeting taking place in 2010/2011. With this said, he encouraged the need for country members to prioritize sustainable tourism development in their agendas - He also welcomed the participation of financing agencies and donors to this meeting and believes that the progress made will continue to grow in the coming two years.

Mr. Monchau welcomed all participants with a special mention to the French delegation including Mr. Christian Brodhag, for their commitment in leading the ITF-STD. He provided background on the Marrakech Process and recalled the role and the objectives of the ITF-STD under this framework. He noted that the work of the ITF-STD has proven to contribute to projects that started

within the Task Force's programme of work and implemented by various partners making reference to the launching of the Green Passport Campaign on Responsible Holidays which has received international interest. He also mentioned that the previous meetings have gained the participation of strategic stakeholders including the World Bank, GTZ, Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and other financial institutions as well as that of country members that have provided a strong regional dimension to the initiative.

He congratulated the Costa Rican government for representing a pioneering country on environmental conservation linked to sustainable tourism development. He stressed that the country's reforestation policy to fight against climate change has proven to be a great achievement. He equally highlighted the engagement of France with the implementation of the "Grenelle of the Environment". He said that France shares the concern of Costa Rica and its determination of being a key role player in the necessary changes that must be embraced by the international community and the European community to achieve sustainable development. He also shared with the task force members that the involvement of the French technical assistance in Central America is providing towards efforts to promote sustainable tourism development noting the project on the 'Promotion of Natural and Cultural Heritage as Assets for Sustainable Tourism Development'.

Mr. Benavides said that it is an honor for Costa Rica to host such an important international gathering. He recalled the agreements made by UNEP's Governing Council at the 2002 Johannesburg Summit which called for action to promote sustainable consumption and production patterns and on the launching of the Marrakech Process in 2003 where France announced its willingness and commitment to lead the task force. He also highlighted the results of the first ITF-STD meeting held in Paris of 2006 and gave special mention to the participating members for their involvement. He also noted that Costa Rica has been at the forefront of sustainable tourism practices and has been ahead of its time in environmental protection policies and norms. These set of norms and initiatives were first implemented in the 1970s through the establishment of National Parks and Conservation systems, and are now a key pillar of its strategy towards achieving sustainable development. With respect to tourism policies, he believes they should be aimed towards achieving a fair distribution of the resources among the population. He also announced that Costa Rica is working to become the first carbon neutral country in the world by the year 2021. He welcomed all participants to Costa Rica and highlighted that all hotels and tour operators hosting the meeting were selected for sustainability efforts; specifically for having the Certification for Sustainable Tourism (CST). He explained that the CST program, created in 1999 by the Costa Rica Tourist Board (ICT), was designed to differentiate businesses in the tourism sector based on the degree to which they approach a model of sustainability and it focuses on the management and impact of the natural, cultural and social resources of the country. The certificate reflects the level in which a company complies with the sustainability parameters established: the employment of local people, respect for local culture, contribution to the economic and social well-being of the community, and preservation of natural resources.

PLENARY SESSIONS AT HOTEL COSTA RICA

Mr. Christian Brodhag, President of the International Taskforce on Sustainable Tourism Development chaired the plenary sessions. He welcomed observers from Latin America and noted that their participation will be an opportunity to identify potential new working groups in this region. He also reminded the need to move towards policy recommendations with the objective of contributing to the Marrakech process. He stressed that the fourth meeting aims at developing a draft proposal of policy recommendations that will be presented at the CSD in 2010/2011 as well as to other institutional frameworks. In this sense, he encouraged the participants to highlight the key objectives and recommendations to be considered and to participate in the validation of these during

the workshops at the meeting and in the upcoming consultation phases. He underlined the need for continuous follow-up on this process before the policy recommendations are submitted.

▪ ***Presentation on the Green Passport Global Campaign and the Pilot Project in Brazil***

Mr. Thibault Devanlay, Focal Point of the Task Force and Advisor for International Cooperation at the French Ministry of Ecology, Energy, Sustainable Development and Spatial Planning (MEEDDAT) gave a presentation on the development of the Green Passport (GP) Campaign being implemented by UNEP in cooperation with the Brazilian Ministries of Tourism and Environment and with the support of key tourism organizations. Mr. Devanlay recalled the project's main objective to create a global campaign to raise tourist's awareness through the development of communication material (websites, postcards, leaflets, etc.) and to adapt the communication tool to a local destination.

He said that to date the campaign was launched at the ITB Trade Show in Berlin in March 2008 by UNEP's Executive Director and UN Under-Secretary General, Mr. Achim Steiner. Concerning the actions that have been taken, he noted that at the local level, the Brazilian implementing partners (**Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Environment**) have highlighted the importance of raising tourist's awareness to mainstream more sustainable consumption and production patterns in the tourism industry. To this end, the pilot project in Paraty has also developed structuring actions to improve the sustainability of the destination (Paraty, Rio de Janeiro State); these are being implemented with the participation of a committee that was created to contribute to the mobilization of a real and substantive demand for sustainable sound tourism products. This multi-stakeholder approach has allowed the government in partnership with community leaders' representatives to develop a work plan to support the implementation of structural actions in Paraty.

In this sense, Mr. Devanlay underlined that the action plan for sustainable holidays projects aims at:

- Strengthening the implementation of local agenda 21,
- Providing environmental education as a process to promote the city of Paraty as a Sustainable Educating Municipality
- Implementing a Green Room- an interactive place for research, learning and other activities on environmental concerns,
- Providing capacity building on environmental education as a continuous process of training for students, teachers and public managers,
- Developing a program of Capacity Building for environmental sustainability of tourism (Environmental monitor, environmental management for tourism sector, capacity building in the productive chain of the tourism sector)
- Developing a project to fostering community based ecotourism – support to strengthen and creation of community cooperatives
- Planning community based ecotourism initiatives (collecting data, diagnostics, guidelines and capacity building...)

On the basis of the international recognition that the campaign has received following its launching in Berlin and on the request of various partners, the following next steps will be taken:

- A hard copy of the GP will be developed,
- It is expected that the website will be translated in German is that sure ?, Spanish, and Greek and possibly in Arabic,
- For the dissemination of GP; France is in the process of adapting the Green passport to its national situation; and the development of partnerships with interested governments or institutions are under way (2 countries interested so far South Africa and ?+ Mediterranean region initiative with Plan Bleu)

He presented the campaign website that is currently available in English and French and encouraged all participants to visit the link: [http:// www.unep.fr/greenpassport](http://www.unep.fr/greenpassport)
He also noted that the content of the website is being translated in Portuguese and being adapted to the local context. Moreover, information material has been developed targeting national and international tourists. Postcards, posters and book markers will be disseminated in the International Literary Fair that takes place in Paraty in July 2008 and is expected to receive around 15.000 visitors every year. He explained that this event was chosen to showcase the green passport due to its importance in the media coverage nationally and internationally.

To conclude, he called on all participants' to provide suggestions on how to improve the campaign or develop the campaign at local levels in other countries.

The presentation raised the interest of the representative from the National Council of Protected Areas in Guatemala, who has requested assistance in forming partnerships with UNEP for the adaptation of the GP in Guatemala.

▪ ***First Plenary Session- Tourism and Biodiversity***

First Presentation-Linking Tourism and Conservation: Marine Protected Areas'

Mr. Peter Prokosch, Managing Director at UNEP-GRID-ARENDAL gave a presentation on 'Linking Tourism and Conservation (LT&C): Marine Protected Areas'. Mr. Prokosch gave an overview of UNEP-GRID-ARENDAL recalling their vision that aspires to being a polar centre of excellence for the UN and a leading centre for marine environment issues and global environmental information. He explained that the centre's work addresses themes in line with UNEP's strategic priorities which include ecosystem management and resource efficiency in terms of sustainable consumption and production. Within this context, as UNEP's Key Polar Centre, they are involved with projects and numerous initiatives in the Polar Regions, and increasingly, they are broadening their focus on sustainable development of the oceans and coasts elsewhere in the world. He noted that the centre's work is undertaken from their understanding and experience of a variety of key issues that cut across their 3 programmes (polar programme, marine programme and regional field programmes), namely: assessments, capacity building, outreach and facilitation.

Aware of the importance of protected areas as a critical component of biodiversity and a key tourism attraction, the centre has created an initiative called 'Linking Tourism and Conservation (LT&C): A Finance Initiative for Protected Areas'. Mr. Prokosch highlighted key figures on tourism and protected areas stating that tourism turnover worldwide represents 6 trillion US\$ and is forecasted to increase to 10 trillion US\$. The annual management costs for a complete global network of protected areas (Convention on Biological Diversity CBD) is equivalent to 30 billion US\$ which is greater than 0,5% of tourism turnover. Within this context, the project's vision aims at initiating a process, which increasingly and sustainable channels money (ideally 0,5% of the worldwide tourism turnover) from the tourism sector into the management of the worldwide protected area network.

The following key questions were raised during the initiative's launching in 2007 in Arendal:

1. What are the fund-raising mechanisms from tourism for protected area management?;
2. What protected areas can be identified for funding and the criteria of selection?;
3. What best practices, models and opportunities exist?; and
4. Structuring and connecting to the Convention on Biodiversity - who should be involved?

With regards to fund-raising mechanisms from tourism for protected area management he noted that the following were suggested:

- Entrance/User Fees – (eg. Nepal, Costa Rica)
- Tourism Companies in combination with Foundations – (eg. PAN Parks, Basecamp)

- Investment Funds – Verde Ventures/CI, PWC
- Visitor Donations/ Travelers Philanthropy/ Sponsorship/ "Auctions"
- Travel Industry Surcharges –(eg. transportation fees, hotel surcharges)
- Adult Continuing Education Programs – USA
- Biodiversity offsets - Nature Air
- "Sister Parks"– sharing knowledge, experience as well as money

In terms of what protected areas can be identified for funding and on the criteria to be used for the selection; the participants at the launching responded that the areas should be selected on the basis of their:

- Commercial viability– (eg. business plans, audits, governance)
- Lack of no receipt of support by others (e.g. governments)
- Uniqueness / representative and critical nature as a hot spot of biodiversity
- Status - Under threat and in need of financial support for survival
- Participation of locals and local acceptance and support
- Representation as a good showcase or best practice

He highlighted some functioning examples of existing models which included Lapa Rios in Costa Rica, Basecamp Masai Mara in Kenya and the work of the Niagara Parks Commission.

In response to the last question related to the structures and frameworks that should be developed for the initiative he listed the following:

- For a global framework there is a need to develop a branding of LT&C initiative, linked to CBD, IUCN-WCPA, UNWTO & UNEP-DTIE "Sustainable Tourism Task Force" and TOI,
- To develop a web portal with "Wikipedia"-tool , regional best practice information and to use "destinet" as a platform to enable linkage between projects and funding sources,
- To create a UNEP/WCMC – UN World List/database on protected areas to include data on LT&C,
- To develop a mentorship network to link information between destinations in developed and developing countries,
- To develop training programmes for guides and government agencies

To achieve the above the Secretariat for the Convention on Biodiversity Diversity (SCBD) has proposed that the following actors be involved:

- SCBD: for the development of the framework and to provide technical assistance,
- National governments: for the matching of contributions through PA POW,
- IUCN WCPA, UNWTO, tourism trade associations in independent committee: guidelines, endorsement,
- NGOs, IUCN, UN Agencies, operators (mostly outbound): to act as "executing agencies",
- UNEP/GRID, WCMC, others: for the development of the database, monitoring, information management.

To conclude he requested the support and involvement of the ITF-STD members for the creation and compilation of the 25 best examples of marine LT&C projects in 2009.

Second Presentation- International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI)

Mr. Diego Acosta representing the US Embassy in Costa Rica gave a presentation on the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) where USA and Mexico act as the initiative's co-secretariat.

He explained that ICRI aims at mobilizing governments and different actors to (1) raise awareness about the value and importance of coral reefs and threats to their survival and to (2) motivate people to take action to protect coral reefs.

With the objectives noted above in mind and the difficulties that still persist in protecting the world's coral reef, Mr. Acosta announced that ICRI has designated the year 2008 as the International Year for ICRI. He outlined the main objectives of IYOR 2008 as follows:

- To raise awareness on the ecological, economic, social, and cultural value provided by coral reefs to ecosystems,
- To improve the availability of information on the threats faced by coral reefs and to generate practical and innovative solutions to reduce these, and
- To encourage that urgent actions be taken at all levels for the development and implementation of strategies for the conservation and sustainable use of these ecosystems.

He encouraged that all participants visit www.IYOR.org to view the events and activities, which have been organized. He made special reference to the work IYOR has developed to involve the tourism sector including: the development of capacity building tools and guides, and through their leadership of tourism alliances such as the Mesoamerican Coral Reef Alliance.

Through these efforts, the following concrete lessons in the tourism sector have been identified:

- The majority of tourists use 'word of mouth' to describe their travel experiences therefore it is important to preserve coral reefs and their natural beauty,
- The majority of diving operators are aware of the need to protect the coral reefs which represent an important source of income,
- The majority of hotels are conscience that poor waste management can be a risk to their business.
- The majority of developers have raised their awareness on the impacts of run off effects of construction to coastal habitats.
- The involvement of partners has been important for the sharing of good practices, the good use and exchange of limited resources

The following recommendations were noted:

- The need to involve the Ministry's of Environment, the heads of State and the Ministry's of Tourism to maintain their commitment to the protection of coral reefs,
- The need for the commitment and involvement of tour operators, diving operators, hotel and restaurant operators, and
- The need to communicate and raise awareness

Third Presentation- WWF and Tourism Related Coastal Development

Ms. Lilian Márquez representing the WWF Tourism Core Group in Central America gave a presentation on WWF's tourism strategy related to coastal development and how the initiative is carried out in the Mesoamerican reef. WWF is focusing on poorly planned tourism-related coastal development in order to effectively address one of the most significant threats to most marine ecoregions located in the priority regions where WWF works. In this respect WWF's goal for tourism related coastal development aims to not harm the state of biological targets they focus on, and to continue improving their state, while also enhancing the livelihoods of the local populations most affected by tourism and coastal development and who partner with WWF in the conservation of biological targets.

With this said they decided to focus their efforts in the following four strategies:

- The effective and adequate National Policy Frameworks, and

- The effective Local Land-Use Plans in the places they work in, and
- The use of adequate Coastal Development Financial Models, and
- The engaged and Responsible Business and Industry – and, consumers at the Global level.

Ms. Márquez explained that the objective of the first is that participating nations have a coherent public policy framework and the ability to apply it to support sustainable tourism-related coastal development. The objective of the second is the democratization and implementation of the land-use process in a way that effectively accounts for the true social and environmental costs and benefits from tourism-related coastal development. In regards to the global strategies, WWF envisions that innovative financial models could be developed by the same actors who currently influence the investment and development decision-making process. The ultimate outcome of a new model is imagined as increased return on investment for all actors over longer time periods, which would be the goal to achieve a more sustainable form of tourism development in these coastal areas.

There are four proposed sub-strategies through which WWF will seek to engage and/or influence the tourism/costal development industry. She presented four action lines that are envisioned within this last strategy.

- A Dialogue for innovation/leadership in sustainable Coastal Development involving key stakeholders highlighting innovative leadership, enhancing sustainable tourism practices, influencing the industry and consolidating ongoing relationships with industry leaders,
- Informing the public on the sustainability of sites visited,
- WWF will consider working closely with existing certification systems in order to strengthen consumer awareness and industry interest in adopting enhanced sustainability practices, and
- A scorecard approach by which consumers can make informed decisions thereby directly impacting the tourism industry.

She explained that WWF's action plan focuses on six eco-regions and she provided an outlook on the work that has been done the Mesoamerican Reef.

She noted that these efforts have been accompanied with the support of many donors and stakeholders including the French Fund for the Global Environment. In addition, WWF has joined in alliance with the Tour Operators Initiative (TOI) and the Mesoamerican Reef Tourism Initiative to collectively work towards assuring that the region maintains its biological richness, as well as, its attractive touristic destinations. WWF has joined other initiatives such as the USAID critical Central American Watersheds. These consider tourism as viable strategy to enhance conservation and reduce threats to protected areas.

To conclude she highlighted the lessons learned and recommendations made by WWF:

- WWF recognizes poorly planned tourism related coastal development as a major threat to its marine conservation targets;
- WWF believes sustainable tourism is a strategic component of our efforts towards the conservation of priority ecoregions; and
- WWF promotes sustainable tourism development by partnering with local communities, non-governmental organizations, local and national governments, and local and international businesses.

The discussion after these presentations focused on the following key recommendations:

- There is a need to strengthen the link between the positive impacts of tourism with the conservation of biodiversity (ie. Marang biodiversity);

- There is a need to consider the Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) approach to respond to the challenges posed by coastal tourism development which can lead to the destruction of environmental assets;
- There is a need to develop inter-sectoral plans including the tourism sector, to define a strategy for the protection of biodiversity;
- There is a need to link tourism and biodiversity taking into account the local fishery activities;
- There is a need to create specialized tools to guide the development of shoreline activities; and
- There is a need to involve different stakeholders in the coastal zone planning process with the assistance of international cooperation.

▪ ***Second Plenary Session- Climate Change and Tourism***

First Presentation- An update on the Davos Process

Mr. Luigi Cabrini (UNWTO) gave a presentation on the progress that has been made on the Davos Process. Mr. Cabrini recalled the two way relationship between tourism and climate change underlining the climate change impacts at tourism destinations.

In this respect, he highlighted the main events that have been held on this topic starting in 2003 up to date. He particularly noted the results of the 2nd International Conference on Tourism and Climate Change that was held in Davos in 2007, which led to the adoption of the Davos Declaration. He explained that it calls on the adoption of urgent policies to encourage sustainable development including economic, social, and environmental and climate change responsiveness. With regards to the latter, he underlined the main mechanisms to respond to climate change as follows:

- Mitigation measures to tourism related emissions (transport and accommodation),
- Adaptation of businesses and destinations to changing climate conditions,
- The application of new technologies, and
- Providing help to poorer regions to implement adaptation.

More specifically, he outlined the Declaration's call for specific actions from government and international organizations, industry and destinations, consumers, research and communication to incorporate climate change adaptation and mitigation into all tourism development and planning strategies and tourism business strategies.

In this context, he said that the Davos Conference requested the following:

- That all stakeholders implement recommendations,
- That the use of UNWTO Climate Change and Tourism Information Exchange Service be encouraged,
- It stressed that UNWTO in collaboration with UNEP and WMO continue to lead the process,
- To consider a Third International Conference, and
- It urged action by the sector to face climate change as one of the most challenging factors to sustainable development and the Millenium development Goals

He also stated the main conclusions from the London and Cartagena meetings that further confirmed the relevance of climate change to tourism is not in some distant future, as the impacts are already affecting decision-making of tourism operators, investors and tourists alike. These meetings also highlighted the need to provide special consideration to Least Developed Countries and Small Islands Developing States by providing financial, technical and training support to respond to the challenges posed by climate change in the tourism sector.

In response, he explained that the following actions have been taken:

- The organization of the First International Seminar on Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation in the Tourism Sector organized and coordinated by UNEP, Oxford University Centre for Environment (OUCE), UNWTO and WMO;
- The joint publication of the seminar's associated publication: "Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation: Frameworks, Tools and Practices";
- The implementation of pilot projects on adaptation in the tourism sector of SIDS (Fiji, and Maldives);
- The development of a project on excellence in Energy for the Tourism Industry Accommodation Sector: SME Hotels; and
- The organization of other events (eg. the World Climate Conference 2009 – preparatory meeting (*February 2008*), a Seminar on Climate Change and Tourism (*Tarragona, Spain, 6 May 2008*), a National Consultation and Workshop for the GEF Project on CC Adaptation in the Tourism Sector of the Maldives (*Malé, Maldives, 16-22 May*), an event World Heritage, Tourism and CC (*Ibiza, 21-24 May*), and a Seminar on Innovation, Tourism and CC (*Balearic Islands, Spain, 22-24 October 2008*))

He also announced that the Report on "Climate Change and Tourism- Responding to Global Challenges" is expected to be launched at the World Environment Day (WED) 2008. This publication focuses on impacts and adaptations at tourism destinations; implications of climate change on tourism demand; the status and projections of emissions from tourism and the mitigation measures in tourism.

With regards to CO₂ emissions in the tourism sector he recalled that global tourism emissions in 2005 represented 5% and that this is projected to increase by 2.5 times under a business as usual scenario. In this sense, he made reference to tourism innovation for climate neutrality and ICAO's new air travel and carbon calculator. In recognizing the lack of transparency that exists with carbon offsetting schemes; he mentioned that UNWTO and UNEP have joined efforts to develop a methodological and operational framework for carbon offsetting in the tourism sector and to improve the standards of these schemes. To this end, an expert meeting gathering various stakeholders from the tourism sector will be organized.

Finally, he encouraged all participants to visit the information exchange network at www.climate.unwto.org and listed important upcoming events that include:

- World Environment Day (New Zealand, 5 June 2008)
- World Tourism Day (Peru, 27 September 2008)
- World Travel Market (UK 10 November 2008)
- Climate Solutions (Egypt, 24 November 2008)
- World Tourism Forum (Jordan, 15 February 2008)
- World Climate Conference-3 (Switzerland August-September 2009)
- UN Climate Change Conference (Denmark November-December 2009)

Second Presentation- The First International Seminar on Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation in the Tourism Sector

Ms. Catalina Etcheverry, Consultant at UNEP, provided a summary of the content, activities and outcomes of the First International Capacity Building Seminar on Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation in the Tourism Sector. Ms. Etcheverry explained that it was at the 2nd International Conference on Climate Change and Tourism, convened by the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in Davos, Switzerland in October 2007, where there was a request from numerous participants, many from developing countries, for assistance in building capacity for the management of issues relating to tourism developments and climate change impacts. Specific requests were made for training events focusing on adaptation and mitigation techniques, tools and

methods. It was to this end that UNEP, UNWTO and WMO joined together to highlight the need to mainstream efforts on climate change and tourism, building on the Davos Declaration (UNWTO 2007) and to respond to the requests from the Davos conference to provide assistance in building the capacity of tourist destinations and businesses to adapt to climate change and to mitigate the impacts of tourism on climate change. The 1st International Capacity Building Seminar on Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation in the Tourism Sector also builds on the Bali Strategic Plan (UNEP 2005). The seminar was organized by UNEP in cooperation with UNWTO, WMO and the Oxford University's Centre for the Environment (OUCE) at Balliol College, Oxford University during the week 7th-11th April, 2008. The publication '*Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation in the Tourism Sector: Frameworks, Tools and Practices*' was used as the seminar's main reading material. 31 delegates were invited to attend the seminar from the over 120 applicants expressing an interest. The criteria for selection were focused on ensuring that delegates from a range of countries and regions, and organizations and institutions were represented.

She provided an overview of the content that was presented during the seminar which identified frameworks, tools and practices to aid the response of the tourism sector to the challenges posed by climate change. The topics included:

- Climate Change and Tourism- The Current Issues related to climate science, the impacts of adaptation and mitigation to climate change on the destination; the use of modeling and forecasting and vulnerability indexes for the assessment of a destination's vulnerability level,
- The identification of tourism sector vulnerabilities to climate change and the identification of anticipated and ongoing adaptation strategies;
- The identification of mitigation measures to reduce emissions in the tourism sector;
- The assessment of what range of stakeholders should be involved in a Tourism Sector Adaptation Process (Government and Private sector involvement);
- The Scientist's Role and Actions; and
- The importance of communication in the climate change process and review of existing barriers.

Within these discussions, she highlighted the importance of the knowledge share workshops which proved to make the seminar highly interactive and rich with the contribution of regional perspectives on these issues.

To conclude, she noted that the seminar highlighted the high level of adaptation and mitigation activities already being carried out in many regions of the world, often without being specifically labelled as such. She underlined the following barriers and requests that were identified by the delegates through the knowledge sharing workshop with regards to the application of adaptation and mitigation measures at the destination level. These included the need for:

- The provision of data and information on climate change and climate change impacts, particularly at regional and local levels;
- Financial support and political will to take things forward
- Networks to enable dissemination of good practice and the sharing of knowledge and practical experience,
- Improvement of skills and strengthening of legal provision and enforcement to allow the development and implementation of adaptation policies;
- Identification of stakeholders and to include their involvement throughout the decision-making process in order to engage all those with an interest in the climate change and tourism arena;
- Support in building capacity to initiate change and to lobby for funding and other assistance; and
- Multidisciplinary and multi-sectoral work has to be encouraged in order to strengthen both the input into decision-making for adaptation and mitigation and the outcomes – the

umbrella term 'transdisciplinarity' was highlighted as a concept denoting a unity of knowledge beyond disciplines and sectors.

The results and evaluation of the seminar indicated a high level approval and satisfaction rate from the participants. As a result, the co-organizers are building partnerships at national and regional levels to develop a series of capacity building seminars to strengthen the capacity of professionals to understand and respond effectively to the challenges posed by climate change in tourism destination.

She also encouraged that all meeting participants download the associated seminar publications from UNEP Tourism Programme's website: <http://www.unep.fr/scp/tourism/> and the full seminar minutes with all presentations can be accessed from OUCE's website at <http://www.geog.ox.ac.uk/news/events/ccamts/>

Third Presentation- C-Neutral Declaration in Costa Rica

Mrs. Gina Guillen-Grillo, Senior Advisor to the Minister of Tourism at the Costa Rican Tourism Board gave a presentation on the national strategy on tourism and climate change that is being developed in Costa Rica.

Mrs. Guillen-Grillo noted that Costa Rica has always had leaders committed to environmental protection and who have been successful in making accurate decisions. As a result, concrete environmental frameworks have been developed and used as a basis for the development of the country's tourism strategy. She explained that based on meetings that took place in 2000 between the government, NGO's, the private sector and the tourism agency chambers it was decided that Costa Rica is to become a climate neutral destinations by the year 2021. Since, the private sector has become more conscious of the impacts of climate change on tourism and has committed to taking voluntary actions towards this effort. With this aim in mind, she highlighted that the country has a strong platform through its concrete environmental legislation to start developing the tourism and climate change strategy.

She stressed that Costa Rica is conscious of its natural wealth as an asset for tourism, and that the country receives 2 million tourists a year out of which 737 thousand practice ecotourism and 1.2 million visit tourism national parks. The country has undertaken a tourism survey to investigate which issues are of importance to visitors. On the basis of this survey, they discovered that 49% of visitors said that they are aware of climate change and global warming, 21% said they prefer to stay in environmentally friendly hotels, 19% are willing to pay more for environmentally friendly services. With these results in mind, Costa Rica has taken a social, environmental and responsible approach to the development of the strategy using global warming as an opportunity for its development. She also said that the country has the ability to increase capacity to respond to the challenges of climate change.

She outlined the goals of the Tourism and Climate Strategy which are for Costa Rica to:

- Become a carbon neutral destination by the year 2021,
- Strengthen sustainable development policies,
- Contribute to mitigation efforts of climate change in the tourism sector,
- Maximize the country's competitiveness and to minimize the risks to climate change, and
- Adapt to the climate change impacts adequately.

Within this context, the actions under the development phases of the strategy will focus on 5 main axes which include:

- The metrics axis- calculation of tourism related emissions
- The mitigation axis keeping in mind the need to go beyond compensation efforts and the need to reduce emissions,

- The vulnerability and adaptation axis,
- The capacity building axis, and
- The raising awareness and improving education axis.

Some main activities which are forecasted under each axis include:

- To calculate emissions from all tourism service providers,
- To control tourism capacity in the country using the tourism growth rate as a parameter,
- To promote the use of new technologies and energy saving techniques for the mitigation of climate change,
- To protect the forest areas in tourism areas, and
- To implement training and increase knowledge through education modules and partnerships with education centers,

To conclude, she said that the first stages for the development of the strategy will be financed by the government (50%), by the tourism sector (20%) and the remainder will be requested by donors.

Fourth Presentation- The Economic Importance of Tourism in Central America and the Impact of Climate Change

Mrs. Claudia Schatan, Chief of Industrial Development Unit at ECLAC gave a presentation on the economic importance of tourism in Central America and the impact of climate change. She noted that the route of the hurricanes in 2007 on the coast of the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific Coast invaded Central America. In effect, that makes this region highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

Recognizing that the tourism sector is difficult to study and perceive in quantitative indicators, ECLAC has developed analytical instruments which are useful for understanding climate change and tourism in Central America. These include:

- A joint project between UNWTO and ECLAC on the development of World Tourism Economic Indicators,
- A handbook that describes the methods required to assess the social, economic and environmental effects of disasters, breaking them down into direct damages and indirect losses and into overall and macroeconomic effects. It has been adopted worldwide for disaster impact evaluation.

She noted that ECLAC considers Central America to include Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama. With regards to climate change and tourism in Central America, Ms. Schatan explained that tourism plays an important role in this region. To demonstrate, she pointed to some key charts which provided evidence that:

- In 2005, tourism represented 19.3% of the GDP in the Caribbean community and 6.7% of the GDP in Central America (representing the highest figures compared to other regions worldwide);
- Tourist consumption as a % of GDP in 2004 is of importance in the Caribbean followed by Central America;
- Tourist consumption in Central America as a % of goods and services exports in 2005 exceeds that of the Caribbean;
- The share of travel expenditures expressed as a % of goods exported and % of GDP is high in the Dominican Republic; and
- The lodging capacity for tourism in the region varies, where Nicaragua has the lowest lodging capacity to receive visitors.

With this analysis, she expressed that the development of tourism activities in Central America varies from one country to another. In this sense, there is great opportunity for these countries to start incorporating a series of environmental criteria in their operations to fight against climate change.

In this context, she said that ECLAC has a special interest in evaluating the impact of climate change specifically on Central America. To this end, they have started a project with the UK Department for International Development (DFID) which focuses on the economic impact of climate change in Central America. The project has undergone phase I where a feasibility study was completed. She highlighted that although the Central American region only produces 0.5% of the planet's carbon emissions, it is still one of the most vulnerable areas of the world to climate change.

She stated that although the study will focus primarily on other sectors as requested by the region, it will dedicate a portion to tourism. To this end, the study aims at answering the following questions:

- How will climate change alter the Central American Region (problem assessment)
- How has the region progressed in terms of the development and enforcement of laws and standards that will assist the region to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

With this in mind, ECLAC hopes that the study will assist in the pursuit of useful policies at the regional level regarding climate change.

Following these presentations other organizations intervened to present the work that they have done on tourism and climate change and key recommendations that included:

- TIES work in producing (1) an advocacy campaign on traveling with climate in mind targeting the business travelers, (2) a publication on sustainable transportation guidelines for nature tour operators (on-going draft) and other publications available on www.ecotourism.org (3) The organization of an Ecotourism and Sustainable Tourism Conference with a North American Focus (Vancouver, October 27-29, 2008);
- SICA's announcement that the first Presidential Summit was convened in Central America and was dedicated to the topic of climate change; there the Cartagena declaration was submitted in an effort to have a common position on this matter;
- UNEP-GRID ARENDAL- encouragement for countries interested in becoming carbon neutral to visit the UNEP launched Carbon Neutral Network online and to make use of the knowledge platform; and
- The need to join efforts to gather data on the economic cost of climate change impacts on tourism and on the value that consumers give to sustainable tourism to present concrete proposals to funding institutions.

▪ *Third Plenary Session- Financing and Investing in Sustainable Tourism*

First Presentation- France on assessing the impact and cost implications of sustainable development in the accommodation sector

Mr. Jean Luc Michaud, President of the French National Committee on Tourism Sustainable Development, gave a presentation on the assessment of the impact and cost implications of sustainable development in the accommodation sector. This assessment is a second contribution of the French Committee to the Task Force following the publication on best practices on sustainable tourism development in France that was launched in the third meeting and is in accordance with the mandate given to the Committee by the President of the ITF-SD to review the conditions needed to make sustainable development an integral part of the tourism economy.

He underlined that various representatives from the accommodation sector expressed that they give importance to ensuring that sustainable development is considered at macro and micro- economic levels. However, they also consider the concerns to this inclusion as likely to generate added investment and costs for project implementation but realize the return on investment (ROI) can in certain cases be relatively rapid. With these findings in mind, Mr. Michaud noted that there is an emergence of a new business model for tourist enterprises. To this end, there is a need for decision-makers to make an additional effort to support global development strategies that can be replicated by businesses in this sector, and that can be taken on board at a regional level.

With regards to the integration of sustainable practices in the accommodation sector; the evidence collected by France from the testimonies of various operators highlighted that:

- the sector takes a fragmented approach, in which the economic aspect is often favored over the environmental and social aspects;
- the operating costs involved vary according to size, geographical location or legal status of the enterprise;
- the commitment to implement sustainable practices is usually assigned to a single person;
- the quality of the suppliers and equipment varies in quality and is not always available in new markets;
- the return on investment to implement for instance energy saving measures, is often longer than foreseen in the original project planning

In response to these findings; the French Committee for Sustainable Tourism Development has made 5 proposals which intend to facilitate the approach to the induced impact and costs of sustainable development for the accommodation sector. The recommendations include to:

- Generate support at the international, the national and the local level;
- Promote initiatives to facilitate the integration of sustainable tourism development factors in the operating cycle of the enterprises;
- Secure financial support for action;
- Share experiences at various levels (eg. On enterprises' strategies; specific types of equipment being used); and
- Disseminate information and to provide training

He said that the ITF-STD can be used as opportunity to pursue these objectives and to encourage joint tourism programmes specifically in the hotel and accommodation sector.

Second Presentation- An update on the Sustainable Investment and Financing in the Tourism Sector (SIFT) Network

Mr. Fotiou (UNEP/DTIE) gave an update on the SIFT network. He recalled that this knowledge and investment network is aimed for:

- The development and sharing of best practices including guidelines, benchmarking mechanisms and voluntary initiatives; with the purpose of
- Matching the demand for sustainable tourism products in developing country destinations with available financial resources.

He noted that the network was developed in recognition that:

- Investments in the tourism sector represent 10% of global investment,
- The sector is a first priority for Investment Promotion Agencies in developing countries,
- Information gaps and asymmetries exist, and
- There is interest from the financing and investment community for the network.

In terms of the network's operation, it plans to involve three main groups of stakeholders including:

- Private investors, financing corporations and other donors;

- Destinations from developing countries;
- International Organizations, IGOs, National and Regional Development Agencies;
- Methodologies, Guidelines, Voluntary Initiatives, Regional Investment Forums; and
- SIFT network members to decide on the structure and management.

Mr. Fotiou announced that currently, seven organizations are working together as a coordinating group to facilitate the establishment of the SIFT network. These are: **UNEP, UN Foundation, the World Bank Group, GEF, UNWTO, the Global Sustainable Tourism Alliance and the French Ministry of Ecology, Energy, Sustainable Development and Town and Country Planning** (as the Chair of the Marrakech Task Force on Sustainable Tourism Development).

By bringing together the expectations of private investors, the leveraged strength of the financing and donor community, and the needs of developing destinations, he underlined that SIFT will hopefully lead to better and more sustainable tourism development. To this end, the programme of work for the establishment of the SIFT network is now working towards:

- Developing a concept document,
- Creating a group of potential SIFT members;
- Organizing a launching meeting for the network;
- Creating a business plan and secretariat;
- Identifying the stakeholders to be invited taking into consideration as criteria their level of effectiveness, representative profile, and commitment.

To move forward with this initiative he called on the support of the ITF-STD members to:

- Identify pilot destinations for the SIFT's implementation,
- Provide proposals for members to be invited (eg. Private sector and financing community),
- Provide ideas on priorities (eg. Regional issues), and
- Commit as supporters of the network.

With regards to the launching of the SIFT network, the World Bank has agreed to host the event in Washington, DC.

To conclude he mentioned that France and the UN Foundation have financially supported the establishment phase and that any interest with regards to SIFT can be directed to sift@unep.fr

- ***Presentations delivered by multilateral and bilateral institutions and donors on case examples of how projects on sustainable tourism are developed with country partners***

First Presentation- The Role of the WB Group in the Financing of Sustainable Tourism Projects

Ms. Christianna Johnnides, Cultural Heritage Thematic Group of the World Bank Group (WB) provided background information on the role of the WB Group including the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) for the financing of Sustainable Tourism Projects. She outlined the criteria used by the WB to evaluate project proposals. Within this cycle, she noted that the WB develops lending and technical assistance projects under the framework of the country assistance development strategy which is prepared with the governments and stakeholders.

She said that the WB acknowledges cultural heritage and sustainable tourism as an area of priority for investment due to its capacity to build revenue generating assets that in turn support economic development and poverty alleviation. These two components are imbedded in multi-sectoral projects and activities. She explained that the WB portfolio has shifted towards investments that facilitate tourism development and that the approach taken reflects that the improvement of physical planning can achieve positive economic conditions.

She showcased an example of a project which is being undertaken in Macchu Picchu which aims to protect this World Heritage Site from overexploitation and mismanagement of its natural resources. Within the framework of such sustainable tourism projects; she presented the role of the agencies that are part the WB Group. These included:

- The role of the IFC in providing investments and advisory services to build the private sector in developing countries (eg. Investment in hotels),
- The role of MIGA in promoting sustainable foreign direct investment to reduce poverty and promote growth,
- The role of the WB group in hosting a number of Global Facilities including one on Cultural Heritage and Education Partnerships (CHEP)

She mentioned some of the emerging trends and lessons learned from the project portfolios. These included:

- The demand from client countries to boost incomes and create employment,
- The finding that cultural heritage is often linked with tourism,
- The positive and stronger synergies created by using an integrated approach,
- The identification of institutional development as a critical risk factor,
- The promotion of public communication and awareness adds to sustainability.
- The need to avoid a single sector emphasis on project development, and
- The need to avoid a centralized top down approach to project development.

She also mentioned that assistance is requested to the WB from other agencies and donors; in this respect working with the WB provides:

- The convening of capacity with other donors, agencies,
- The representation of Country offices with Country Management Units, Directors, Executive Directors, etc.
- Analytical and lending support, by helping with project implementation and improving execution while attracting the interest of other stakeholders.

With this in mind, she underlined that infrastructures, also known to be the more successful projects, are most likely to gain the support of the WB.

Second Presentation- The IADB/MIF Tourism Cluster Projects

Ms. Betsy Murray, representing the Multilateral Investment Fund (MIF) from the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) gave a presentation on the sustainable tourism cluster projects within the MIF. She explained that the IADB includes the public sector and two private sector arms being the MIF and the International Finance Corporation (IFC). The latter two provide technical cooperation instruments, investment and debt instruments with a focus on SMEs.

She said that the bulk of the sustainable tourism cluster projects focused on providers of tourism services at destinations (SMEs) followed by incoming operators and domestic wholesalers. at the destinations. Following an evaluation of the project portfolio to see where focus was geared towards and what lessons have been learned in terms of markets, products, innovation, access to financing tools, commercialization capacity, brands/differentiation and communication/ promotion of products in the value chain; they discovered that the project partners had a limited understanding of the tourism value chain including:

- A restricted vision of the local supply side,
- Limited knowledge of market trends, and they found that
- Individualized micro-offers were competing amongst themselves at poorly defined destinations.

In response to these findings, the MIF has decided to develop a second generation of projects which follow a different approach. These approaches include:

- Focusing on a few selected projects with overarching objectives which have a multi-country approach; when dealing with country based or smaller projects there will be
- Calls for proposals with a thematic orientation based on gaps identified and a selection based on criteria matrix,
- Projects must assure compatibility with sustainable tourism guidelines,
- Proposals that show greater reliance on partnerships to leverage funding and that show scalability; and in terms of instruments there is existence of
- Technical assistance grants, potential financing instruments from MIF, IIC and partners.

The MIF has also decided to collect information from the projects for the purpose of knowledge sharing flow from the cluster to the beneficiaries and as a mechanism to scale up the results.

In conclusion, she encouraged that all participants visit some important links for more information about funds-capital, quasi-capital and debt funds that are available for sustainable tourism projects within Central America. The most relevant included.

- Emerge- Aureos Capital Ltd. (www.fondo-emerge.com)-
- CASEIF -Lafise www.caseif.com

Inter-American Investment Corporation – IIC (<http://www.iic.int>)

Third Presentation- GEF and the Financing of Sustainable Tourism Projects

Ms. Nicole Glineur, Program Manager for Biodiversity and Private Sector, The Global Environment Fund (GEF) gave a presentation on GEF and the financing of sustainable tourism projects. Ms. Glineur mentioned that GEF provides grants for the incremental costs of achieving Global Environmental Benefits in support of sustainable development in 6 focal areas: biological diversity, climate change, international waters, land degradation, ozone layer depletion and persistent organic pollutants (POPs).

Ms. Glineur listed the operational principles applied by GEF and noted other principles used by the implementing agencies. She also mentioned that monitoring and evaluation is achieved by GEF and the implementing agencies through the enforcement of regulations.

She highlighted that the bulk of GEF's funding of tourism projects to countries through agencies is achieved through the biodiversity focal area with the strategic objectives of:

- Catalyzing sustainability of protected area systems as a component; and
- Mainstreaming biodiversity in production land/ sea scape and sectors in a full-scale project.

The other focal areas of international waters and climate change are representative of a smaller portion of the projects and are achieved through their respective strategic objectives.

In this respect, participants were encouraged to submit proposals with a focus on biodiversity to obtain support from the GEF.

Fourth Presentation-The Experience of UNF in Financing and Investing in Sustainable Tourism

Ms. Erika Harms, Executive Director of Sustainable Development at the United Nations Foundation (UNF) gave a presentation on the experience of UNF in Financing and Investing in Sustainable Tourism. She noted that the UNF, in comparison to the financing institutions and donors, is and advocate and convener to connect people, ideas and capital to support UN causes. To this end, they build partnerships, grow constituencies, mobilize resources and advocate policy changes in support of the UN's work.

She highlighted the work of UNF focuses on the preservation of World Heritage sites and promotes sustainable livelihoods for the communities that depend on them by working with the UN. This is achieved through the UNF's Sustainable Development Priorities that include:

- Educating and engaging the tourism industry, travelers and local communities,
- Fostering start-up enterprises that demonstrate sustainable opportunities for communities around World Heritage sites and other protected areas, and
- Creating market access to improve sustainable livelihoods for communities around World Heritage sites and other protected areas

With these principles in mind, the UNF represents the largest private supporter of World Heritage and provides core funds as a strategy to bring other partners to provide support with financial means and action. Within their project portfolio they lead key campaigns and initiatives including:

- World Heritage Alliance for Sustainable Tourism,
- Friends of World Heritage which focuses on educating tourists,
- Global Baseline Criteria & Sustainable Tourism Stewardship Council,
- Sustainable Investment and Finance for Tourism (SIFT)

Missing : a sentence as in GEF's para on what can be submitted to UNF in order to be financed

The lessons learned resulting from these initiatives show that:

- The application of good strategies can mitigate negative impacts of tourism and provide innovative financing streams for site conservation,
- The tourism value chain can be leveraged to support community economic development beyond tourism services, and the challenges of these initiatives point to the
- Need to address bottlenecks that impede mainstreaming sustainable tourism,
- The importance of the private sector involvement from the beginning is key, and
- There is a need to the value of the United Nations and the joint initiatives.

Fifth Presentation- GTZ and Sustainable Tourism

Mr. Martin Tampe, Senior Expert in Tourism and Environment and Natural Resource Management representing the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) presented the activities undertaken by Germany to develop sustainable tourism. He mentioned the instruments that GTZ uses to provide development assistance. He noted that the German government has recently agreed to fund a proposal for an instrument for the establishment of certificates for the reduction of CO2 emissions. He highlighted that this is a project that can serve as a tool for the adaptation to climate change and to the reduction of gases through its implementation in different sectors. Currently there are proposals for the development of this project in the tourism sector that is under study. GTZ together with other stakeholders would be implementing this proposal. He also announced the implementation of two pilot projects that use the GBC as a basis. These were presented in more details during the parallel workshops.

Sixth Presentation- The Experience of AFD in Sustainable Tourism

Mr. Herve Gallepe, Responsible for providing support to the Private Sector (PS) at the French Agency for Development (AFD), presented the experience of the AFD in Sustainable Tourism.

He presented the AFD tourism development project portfolio that includes:

- The intervention of AFD in the tourism sector through the financing of sectoral projects that are cross cutting with tourism;
- The financing of economic operators in the tourism supply chain (i.e. Hotels);
- Local capacity building to support ecotourism development, hotel operations and energy efficiency projects in hotels; and
- The promotion of tourism in foreign tourism markets through the reinforcement of the image and competitiveness of a destination, achieved through consultation with international

- experts, providing technical support and institutional support to governments to handle their own priorities.
- The projects assist local authorities in the development of sustainable tourism

He stressed that experience has shown that the project's success depends on the effectiveness of the public policy at the local level. In this respect, he stated the importance of:

- Providing institutional support,
- Providing subsidies to strengthen the general capacities linked to sustainable tourism development, and
- Integrating social and environmental responsibility criteria through project beneficiaries and implementing agencies.

To conclude, he invited all partners to visit the existing AFD agencies to see how actions for collaboration that constitute a part of AFD's global strategy can be identified.

He also announced that AFD is developing a working paper on AFD's approach to financing sustainable tourism development projects.

UNEP's Conclusion

Following these presentation, Mr. Fotiou (UNEP/DTIE) invited the TF members to find synergies with the development agencies to establish cooperation for the development of sustainable tourism projects. In this respect, he pointed that:

- The TF country members should contact the World Bank and IADB's National Offices as the entry point for the identification of projects; he recalled that
- The conservation of biodiversity, one of the main assets of tourism development, is a primary focus of GEF' tourism projects and investment; that
- The IADB and UNF are examples of institutions that have made strategic decisions for sustainable tourism development by changing business as usual practices through innovative experiences, and that
- The GTZ and AFD are examples of National Agencies that have showed growing commitment to the development of sustainable tourism projects.

- Fourth Plenary Session- Methodologies for developing national and regional strategies on sustainable tourism

First Presentation- Methodologies on how to develop a National Strategy on Sustainable Tourism

Mr. Brodhag gave a presentation on how to develop a national strategy on sustainable tourism. He recalled the CSD's recommendation for the need to fully integrate sectoral strategies in major national level policy frameworks such as the national sustainable development strategies (NSDS) including poverty reduction strategies.

He gave an overview of key principles and common elements of a NSDS process and noted that there is not one type of approach and no single formula to which a sustainable tourism sector strategy can be integrated within the process. He pointed to the process as an ongoing cycle that integrates the sustainable development principles and requires continuous evaluation and monitoring. Within the context of this process he highlighted the following recommendations:

- The need to integrate policies of local and regional governance (local Agenda 21) with the national strategies known as vertical integration;
- The need to coordinate key processes (eg. NSDS, poverty reduction strategy, National programme on sustainable consumption and production) with the thematic strategies that are cross cutting the tourism sector (eg. Climate change, water resource management,

national biodiversity strategy, CSR)

Taking the above into consideration, he reinforced the need to integrate national programmes on SCP with existing national level strategies. He underlined that this integration offers an opportunity to strengthen the sustainability elements of existing national strategies and has the potential to develop synergy among them. He also explained that this process demonstrates the cross sectoral nature of SCP and ability to address multiple problems in a coordinated manner.

Within this context, he highlighted how ecosystem services are linked to the tourism value chain. He suggested it could be explored as a mechanism to achieve coordination for such an approach considering its ability to:

- Provide a set of production and protection practices within a political, legal and economic framework, and
- Provide rewards of production for those actors involved in the value chain

He noted the need to synergize tourism policies with these global approaches by strengthening coherence between the sustainable tourism strategies and other overarching strategies on global issues, such as poverty alleviation, targeted in strategies at national, regional, and local level. To this effect, there is a need for inter-ministerial cooperation together with the private sector, tourism associations and other stakeholders which respond to the cross cutting thematic areas in the tourism sector.

He noted that all of the above combined contribute to achieving an integrated approach to sustainable consumption and production in the tourism sector. In this sense, he pointed to the following:

- SCP is known as an overarching policy goal supported by a range of dedicated tools and instruments; and
- The policy level requires a general SCP policy framework, the tourism sector strategy and specific approaches.

He also underlined some key questions that can be addressed within the strategy concerning:

- The combination of tourism finance and investments on assets (biodiversity, culture) and its repartition between different sectors; and
- The inter-linkages of policies at national and local level (Integrated coastal management, integrated ecosystem management (mountain for example)..)

To finalize, he highlighted that every country needs to determine, for itself, how best to approach the development, implementation and monitoring of its SCP Programme considering the existing political, cultural, economic and ecological conditions of their country.

Second Presentation- The Sustainable Development of Tourism in Croatia

Ms. Blanka Belošević, from the Ministry of Tourism in Croatia gave a presentation on the Sustainable Development of Tourism in Croatia. She highlighted that tourism has demonstrated steady growth in the country and that the coastal area accounts for 95% of all visitation. She noted that due to its high contribution to the GDP, tourism is considered a strategic industry in Croatia's economy.

In this respect, the Croatian Ministry of Tourism has developed a tourism development strategy for a period up to the year 2010 which aims to promote sustained growth while creating a favorable investment climate. She outlined the main strategic goals that include:

- High quality tourism based on the principles of sustainable development
- Maximum level of protection and rational use of space
- Preservation and protection of all types of tourist resources and environment

- Controlled development of new accommodation facilities and additional tourist offer
- Modernisation and upgrading of existing facilities
- Development of new competitive products (golf, spa, wellness and health tourism, tangible and intangible heritage routes)

To meet these goals she noted that there was a need for the Ministry to undertake the following activities:

- The protection of physical space through the implementation of measure to regulate physical planning and construction along the coasts,
- The construction of a safe and efficient public transport infrastructure,
- The incorporation of elements of sustainability as obligatory standards for certification of accommodation facilities,
- The provision of state subsidized incentive programmes for SMEs achieved through concepts and programmes of revitalization,
- The development of promotional, preservation, and regeneration programmes including cultural and natural tourism under developed tourist areas, and rural tourism
- The continual co-financing of the educational and training programmes of the Croatian professional associations

She pointed to the good examples that have emerged from these activities including the development of a Croatian Centre for Cleaner Production at a national level; the development of carrying capacity studies for two destinations and coordination between the public and private sector.

She also noted that in January 2008 the Ministry of Tourism underwent changes with the development of new/ restructured divisions within the Ministry and new elected committee to prepare and monitor the tourist year. She outlined the key points under the 2008-2011 Government Programme for Tourism that focuses on:

- The development of a new term strategy and master plans for tourism development,
- In depth analysis' to define Croatia's tourism's competitiveness,
- The extension of Green fields and brown field projects,
- The creation of laws and new incentives for destination management companies,
- Continued programmes for SMEs, rural tourism, education and social, and youth tourism programmes
- A new marketing plan that will fit in line with the tourism master plan.

Mr. Michau briefly noted France's experience in developing a sustainable development strategy. Some key recommendation included:

- The need for indicators to improve and correct the strategy,
- The need for inter-ministerial and stakeholder cooperation (Eg. Ministry of sustainable development, Ministry in charge of Tourism, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Civil Society),
- The need to exchange experiences with the TF members from a methodological perspective

Conclusion

Mr. Brodhag closed the session recalling that the conservation of biodiversity, one of the main assets of tourism development, should be fruitfully approached through "ecosystem services" approaches.. He stressed the need to synergize tourism policies with the global approach to sustainable tourism development. In this respect, he emphasized the need to strengthen coherence between the sustainable tourism strategies and other overarching strategies on global issues, such as poverty alleviation, targeted in strategies at national, regional, and local level. He proposed a cooperation between countries on the implementation scheme for national sustainable strategies for tourism as a contribution for 2010 CSD.

▪ ***Visit to Villa Blanca Hotel- A case study on sustainable tourism best practices***

The participant's visited Villa Blanca Hotel, selected as a case study on sustainable tourism best practices, for its recognition as a leading member of the Certification for Sustainable Tourism Program (CST) with their top ranking of five green leaves. Green Hotels focus on maintaining a harmonious workplace with consistent hotel training programs to create positive experiences for both the hotel guests and for both the hotel staff. They are members of the CST , a conservation program created by the Costa Rican Tourism Board (ICT) for a qualified group of Costa Rican Hotels.

In this respect, Villa Blanca Hotel property has proven to incorporate several of CST policies to support the goals of diminishing the environmental impacts of operations by reducing their carbon footprint and by helping protect the natural resources of the area, including promoting the local culture surrounding its area..

The participant's were given a tour of and presentation on the hotel's best practices. Some key sustainable practices were highlighted as follows:

- The hotel staff is comprised of over 95% local residents of the local area and which are designated the management of these practices,
- In terms of reducing their carbon footprint, the hotel recycles hotel waste, produces its own compost, organic pesticides, enhances native orchids, and native plant landscaping programs, and operates its own organic vegetable,
- The hotel receives its water from two wells fed by natural springs that are regularly tested for their quality;
- In terms of chemical management, the hotel uses biodegradable chemical products and avoid the use of chlorine and other harsh chemicals whenever possible, and
- For energy savings, the hotel uses light fixtures that are low wattage fluorescents and the entire hotel was converted from electric water heaters to propane.

(Some limits were also highlighted. The hotel after 3 years is not profitable yet, but they remain very optimistic and balance the costs of sustainability with the savings they do on energy and resources...). The return on investment is planed to be only one year more that business as usual investment.

- ***Parallel Workshops***

- ***Education and capacity building: case studies from NGOs and the private sector, Moderated by Ronald Sanabria, Director of Sustainable Tourism, RA and presentation delivered by:***

First Presentation- 'Sowing the Seeds of Change: An environmental and sustainable tourism teaching pack for the hospitality industry'.

Ms. Etcheverry (UNEP), gave an overview of the progress made for the development and completion of 'Sowing the Seeds of Change: An environmental and sustainable tourism teaching pack for the hospitality industry'.

She said that the revised version has undergone two peer reviews; the teaching pack is complemented by a range of tools and related material to support hospitality teachers with the integration of the topic in their education curricula and hospitality professionals with the knowledge and the practical tools to implement sustainable tourism and resource management in hotel operations. It is available in English and French and is available online at UNEP tourism programme's website. weblink ?

In terms of the dissemination strategy; she outlined the following partnerships that have been established or are underway.

- Partnership has been established with EUHOFA (an association of hotel schools, represented by presidents, vice presidents and deans from hospitality schools, colleges and universities in the world) with 150 school members in 50 countries in all 5 continents,
- Partnership has been established with AMFORHT (Association Mondiale pour la Formation en Hôtellerie et Tourisme) that focuses more on business training and members include not only educational institutions but hotels, professional associations and international organizations
- Further partnership is foreseen with RA to disseminate the teaching pack throughout its network of tourism businesses,
- Partnership has been established with IH&RA (International Hotels and Restaurant Association)- estimated to comprise 300,000 hotels and 8 million restaurants and members are located in some 100 countries worldwide

The planned dissemination activities include:

- The Launching at the 4th meeting of the Tourism Task Force in Costa Rica
- AMFORHT international conference (October 2008 in Portugal)
- EUHOFA international conference (November 2008 in Mexico)
- Distribution to approximately 200 schools worldwide (1 or 2 copies by school).
- Follow-up and monitoring

Some key suggestions for the teaching pack's dissemination included:

- Using the GP initiative and others as a vehicle to disseminate the tool and create a multiplier effect;
- The need for partnerships to translate the teaching pack in other languages.

Second Presentation- The Methodological Manual for Sustainable Coastal Tourism Development: the ICZM approach

Mrs. Genevieve Verbrugge, Consultant at UNEP presented the methodological manual for sustainable coastal tourism development: the ICZM approach that was developed in partnership with UNEP and PAP/RAC under the ITF-STD programme of work.

She recalled that a large portion of tourism development takes place in coastal areas and the need to incorporate the ICZM approach, which has been widely accepted in Europe, to improve destination management in these areas. She noted that the manual will be available in English and French.

She gave an overview of the structure of the manual which aims to apply the theory of the approach in practice with an emphasis on how to develop tourism within coastal areas and the challenges posed in re-orienting a developed tourism destination to consider sustainability criteria in their development.

She highlighted that the manual was implemented in the pilot destination of Baška Voda near Split (Croatia). The pilot project involved the local authorities as well as all other major stakeholders, including the general public. The piloting started with an analysis of the beach users opinion and an assessment of the beach's carrying capacity taking into account the physical, ecological and social indicators.

Following the analysis, a vision for the management of the coastal zone development was established focusing on the need for:

- environmental quality,
- visitor's satisfaction,

- the establishment of a brand,
- economic sustainability, and
- local prosperity

She explained that as a result of this analysis and vision, a best scenario was established on which basis an action plan was decided on. The action plan has the objective to initiate sustainable beach management by creating the agency for beach management. The agency is expected to be established before 2009 and will be funded by the Municipality with co-financing from international funds.

To conclude, she called on the request for partnerships to further translate and adapt the manual into different languages.

Third Presentation- Rainforest Alliance's experience in implementing sustainable tourism programmes in Latin American and the lessons learned.

Mr. Ronald Sanabria, Director of Sustainable Tourism at Rainforest Alliance (RA) gave a presentation on RA's experience in implementing sustainable tourism programmes in Latin American and the lessons learned.

Mr. Sanabria noted that RA focuses on engaging tourism businesses in conservation efforts in support of sustainable livelihoods and community development. In this respect, he said that RA invests resources and time in 3 main areas including:

- Helping the tourism industry protect the environment and sustainable livelihoods by providing direct training and technical assistance to business;
- Helping build travelers' demand for sustainable tourism products and enabling them to travel responsibly by engaging in market activities, and
- Facilitating development of regional and global sustainable tourism standards

He explained that the work of RA is structured geographically at three different levels: at a local level, regional level and international level. RA's mission is routed at the local level where technical and training assistance is provided to small micro and medium enterprises. He underlined however the importance of building bridges to respond to the challenges that are normally faced in other LA countries. To this end, he pointed to RA's efforts in linking the local work at a regional level noting the work achieved on the sustainable tourism certification network. He also pointed to the linkages made at the international level by influencing the commercialization chain.

He gave an overview of the outreach seminars RA is organizing to build awareness throughout Latin America highlighting the step-by-step approach that is being taken. This approach includes:

- Organizing awareness raising seminars and in depth workshops for the development of sustainable tourism business plan adapted to the business's needs;
- Offering diagnostic visits by a team of specialists to review environmental, economic, social practices;
- Encouraging businesses to get certified if such a scheme is set in place in their country;
- Supporting the businesses with marketing efforts to promote their commitment to sustainability;
- Creating and providing tools and training manuals for the implementation of sustainable practices.
- Building partnerships with inbound tour operators which in turn communicate which suppliers practice sustainable tourism to the clients and international alliance for a multiplier effect of the use of the tools;
- Producing case studies to demonstrate sustainable tourism practices from a business perspective,

- Organizing familiarization trips for outbound operators to see and then communicate the good practices in the hotel properties behind the scenes, and
- Gaining the support of the media by accepting interviews from local, regional and international newspapers, tv shows or radio shows.

On the basis of this experience he shared the lessons learned. These have shown that:

- Entrepreneurs demonstrate enthusiasm when sustainability is communicated to them in a practical manner therefore the tools must be practical;
- The tools must be adapted to the categorizations of the business in terms of their size and needs;
- Best management practices have shown to be a useful platform to prepare businesses for certification schemes and to qualify for the contractual demands;
- Businesses are convinced of sustainability needs if expressed as an investment for cost savings,
- Business skill training of entrepreneurs is needed before introducing sustainable practices,
- Creating direct market incentives provides businesses practicing sustainability immediate recognition.

To conclude, Mr. Sanabria pointed to the task force as a useful platform to leverage the sustainability agenda and an opportunity to join efforts to overcome its challenges.

Fourth Presentation- Presentations of Sustainable Practices, the Lessons Learned and Challenges Faced

Mr. Glen Jampol, owner of Finca Rosa Blanca a Green Leaf Hotel member, gave a presentation on behalf of Finca Rosa Blanca, Lapa Rios and Horizontes Nature Tours on their sustainable practices, the lessons learned and challenges faced.

These three are members of the CST; and he recalled that the conservation program focuses on integrating sustainability through:

- the biological component from within the hotel's operations,
- the architectural component taking into consideration the sitting, design and maintenance of the hotel property;
- the social responsibility component assuring the well being and education of the community; and through
- the education and training of employees and clients

With this in mind he pointed to some sustainable practices implemented taking these component into consideration by the participating Green Leaf members. In terms of responding to the biological component some practices included:

- Lapa Rios' efforts in producing biogas for cooking fuel by feeding the restaurant's waste to the pig farm;
- Rosa Blanca uses compost, and organic waste to produce organic produce and the use an ionization system which has shown considerable cost savings to clean the pool; and
- Horizontes is the first Costa Rican business to have implemented good practices in their office operations.

In terms of responding to the social component these practices were mentioned:

- All operations at Lapa Rios are done in symbiosis with the environment and community;
- Rosa Blanca has involvement with local schools and provides funds for education through the building of a recycling programme, a new library, and a reforestation program;
- Horizontes involves its staff in reforestation projects;

- Its efforts in bringing students from other countries to learn about conservation programs to offer a hands on learning experience with local community; and
- All members enhance the tourist's enthusiasm to the historical and cultural attributes of the destination by providing an interpretation of the Costa Rican experience

In terms of educating and training the employees and clients:

- Rosa Blanca offers guests' the opportunity to go bird watching with a guide as a way of advocating conservation while on vacation and hopefully when the guest returns home,

He noted that the success of these sustainable tourism businesses can also be attributed to the private sector's involvement in marketing sustainability as added-value which has influenced the growth in sustainable entrepreneurship. He also highlighted that Costa Rica's legislative bodies have played an important role in fomenting sustainability.

The key lessons learned were outlined:

- The need for alliances between two types of tourism business entities is important rather than competition to enable a support system,
- The need to educate and train staff on sustainability,
- The need for sustainability to be woven into the operations and to be incorporated as a way of doing business,
- The need to work on marketability independently and with the local government,
- The need to communicate sustainability as good business to convince businesses of its need.

The challenges were linked to the following:

- Providing consumer education and awareness raising to obtain their commitment to sustainability,
- Joining efforts with wholesalers and operators as well as suppliers,
- The need to ingrain sustainability in the tourism experience with subtle eloquence, and
- The need to overcome the stringent certification scheme demands and selecting from the various schemes that exist.

Fifth Presentation- The Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children against Commercial Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism (CSEC) in Costa Rica

Ms. Milena Grillo R. Executive Director of Fundacion Panamior gave a presentation on the implementation of code of conduct for the protection of children against commercial sexual exploitation in travel and tourism (CSEC) in Costa Rica.

She explained that the initiative was sponsored by UNWTO and ECPAT International and its implementation in Costa Rica was inspired because of the destination's

- Notion of sustainability is mainly associated only to its historically recognized dimension: environment preservation and related issues, where
- The tourism industry is the most appreciated source of national income, and where
- The hidden cultural factors undermine the national capacity to recognize and face problems that question its idiosyncrasy and its intended model of development.

She noted that this initiative follows the Rights of the Child Approach and the Sustainable and Responsible Tourism Approach. In light of these, she said that these are both consistent with the definition of sustainable tourism assumed by the ITF-STD.

She provided background on the project noting that it is being implemented with national outreach in four major tourism destinations of Costa Rica. It is being developed as a project of the national tourism industry and is promoted as a self-regulating mechanism within the industry that searches for political good will but is not regulated by it.

She outlined the signatory process the companies must undertake and highlighted the main achievements of the initiative to date:

- The subscription by 100% of the national chambers and association including the National Chamber of Tourism,
- The code's accreditation as a good CSR Practice,
- Its formally backed up by the competent political institutions,
- Over 6,000 employees have been trained in more than 250 companies

Some key factors that have attributed to the success of this initiative include:

- The establishment of participatory process and methodology for implementation from day 1,
- Obtaining multi-stakeholder convergence around the premises surrounding the initiative, and
- Taking on a country approach

She concluded with the follow up actions scheduled for 2008-2009.

Sixth Presentation- Environmental Responsibility in the Hotel Industry

Mrs. Monica Borobia, Director of Environment of Roteiros de Charme Hotel Association in Brazil gave a presentation on environmental responsibility in the hotel industry. She gave a background of the Association and mentioned that as of 2008, the association unites 42 small and medium charming hotels, inns and ecological refuges represented in 12 Brazilian States including in some destinations where biodiversity is tourism's greatest asset.

She noted that the profile of the member hotels is selected almost each year on the basis of a number of criteria. These include:

- Criteria for hospitality services, environmental and social responsibility,
- Hotels comprise between 10 and 60 apartments,
- Compliance with labour, building and environmental codes and legislations,
- Involvement of owners in administration and operations,
- Operations must be under the same management for at least two years, and on the basis of
- Quality of services compatible with the characteristics of individual hotels

She highlighted that the Association's environmental programme was initiated in 1999 following the association's implementation of the Voluntary Code of Ethics and Environmental conduct developed in cooperation with UNEP's Tourism Programme. She noted that this milestone set a new path for their work on sustainability. This programme includes the annual monitoring of all member hotels by a group of independent experts.

In essence the programme is an environmental management system. In this regard, Roteiros has developed a process which follows a series of components. These include:

- Their commitment following principles and the Directives of the code of conduct,
- They do planning based on the preparation of diagnostics, and actions plans,
- They provide training to staff and facilitate communication and information flow between staff to generate multipliers,
- They undertake evaluations of the member hotels through monitoring using checklists and indicators,
- They provide and analysis of the results and provide feedback internally and to members for continuous improvement.

She also highlighted some tools they have developed that have proven to be successful within this process. She presented case studies from the member hotels which demonstrate the success of the programme's implementation which aims:

- To strengthen the awareness of biodiversity issues and capacity building for local community,

- To prevent the loss of fauna and flora and rehabilitation of habitats,
- To support conservation projects for endangered species,
- To reduce the generation of solid waste and inappropriate waste disposal,
- To support protected areas and biodiversity corridors such as the creation of private reserves (RPPN-Brazilian System of Protected Areas).

To conclude, she noted that the results of the programme have shown the member's commitment to sustainability through their hotel operations and have led to their involvement in environmental and social initiatives. On the basis of these experiences, she listed the lessons learned. These include:

- The importance of training and education of staff, families, decision-makers, to disseminate information and generate multipliers,
- The need for monitoring and evaluation, removing barriers, increasing knowledge and contributing to improved performance and standards,
- The need to build partnerships with local, national and international partners which share the philosophy of environmental and social responsibility and seek sustainability,

Seventh Presentation- the French Cooperation with SICA in the Tourism Sector.

Ms. Anne- Gaele Verdier, the Regional Technical Assistant in Tourism with the French Cooperation in Central America and Ms. Mrs. Mercedes de Mena, Director of Tourism for the General Secretariat for Central American Integration (SICA) gave a presentation on the French Cooperation with SICA in the Tourism Sector.

Ms. Verdier explained that the French cooperation provides technical assistance to SICA in tourism priority sectors including sustainable and community based tourism and through the enhancement of natural and cultural heritage as well as others. They have the objective of providing technical assistance to the design of sustainable tourism projects, to liaise with relevant stakeholders (mostly French and European), as well as fundraise through the French cooperation funds and multilateral donors.

She gave an overview of their involvement in a Central American Small Rural Lodging Network Project which aims at:

- Providing opportunities to micro and small lodging services in rural areas to be more competitive and to become part of a national and regional network,
- Contributing to poverty reduction in rural areas by developing better products and services that would generate employment, income, and better livelihoods, and
- Improving capacities and knowledge of small private sector in quality tourism management

Within this project their activities focus on providing capacity building and assistance in developing promotional marketing material.

Within the framework of the IT-STD they are collaborating with the project 'Natural and Cultural Heritage as a tool for Sustainable Tourism and Local Development'. Ms. De Mena provided background on the Central America World Heritage Sites Trail project that aims at:

- Promoting sustainable growth in the world heritage sites of the central American trail through cultural and environmental preservation. It also aims at generating income for the local population, and
- Contributing to regional tourism integration, through the promotion of the Central America World Heritage (WH) Trail as tourism product

She noted the importance of forming partnerships with the local stakeholders within this process.

Within this project their activities focus on:

- Providing capacity building in tourism management of WH sites,

- Enhancement and interpretation of WH sites (facilities and interpretive trails),
- Providing supporting programmes to local tourism private sector,
- Signage and promotion of the WH Trial, and
- Identifying self-funding mechanisms

In addition to this project, SICA in cooperation with UNEP have developed a project with the objective of sharing innovative experiences involving companies and capacity building for promoting the natural and cultural heritage as assets for sustainable tourism development. This project is under the task force's programme of work and involves the following activities.

- Identification of key stakeholders and innovative approaches and experiences in Central America, based on sustainable tourism in natural and cultural heritage sites;
- Evaluation of requirements, needs, and capacities of specific decision-makers to be trained for promoting cultural and natural heritage as an asset for sustainable tourism;
- Development of a training handbook to be used in "training of trainers" workshops
- Create a group of trained experts from the public and private sectors, and
- Establish a follow up strategy to further disseminate the training materials

- ***Labels, standards and certification processes for sustainable tourism, Moderated by Erika Harms, Executive Director of Sustainable Development at the United Nations Foundation (UNF), and presentation delivered by:***

First Presentation- The Global Baseline Criteria (GBC) Initiative

Mr. Stefanos Fotiou (UNEP), Mr. Luigi Cabrini (UNWTO) and Mr. Amos Bien, Senior Advisor for RA gave a presentation on the Global Baseline Criteria (GBC) Initiative for Sustainable Tourism.

They explained that this initiative is a global partnership to develop the Sustainable Tourism Criteria with the purpose of identifying common sustainable tourism requirements from initiatives across the world. It is coordinated by United Nations Foundation (UNF), United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Rainforest Alliance (RA), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS).

Furthermore, it responds to the request of tourism businesses, consumers and governmental agencies seeking for advice on identifying internationally recognized sustainable tourism criteria and the need for better coherence amongst these existing certification schemes. In this respect, the initiative has as its main objectives to:

- Understand and determine what hotels and tour operators have sustainable business practices; and
- To set up a common set of criteria that would facilitate the harmonization and accreditation of certification systems, codes of conduct, and sets of best practices around the globe.

They pointed to the process that has been undertaken noting the following steps that have been achieved:

- The creation of the initial partnership (coordinating group) which was endorsed by the organization's executive committees,
- The establishment of an initial list of Criteria,
- The organization of various consultations (various versions),
- The establishment of a Steering Committee (SC), and
- The launching of the Public Version by the SC

With regards to the establishment of the initial criteria; 4 versions were created where more than 500 criteria were compared and evaluated in the framework of 3 to 12 general objectives and performance indicators were developed for each criterion. These were reviewed on the basis of various consultations.

With regards to the establishment of the steering committee; the following members are involved: The coordinating Group plus, the International Hotels and Restaurants Association, Tourism Concern, The International Ecotourism Society (TIES), the Federation of Tour Operators, Conde Nast Traveler, Ecotrans, Conservation International (CI), Sabre holdings, Caribbean Alliance on Sustainable Tourism (CAST), Expedia Inc., Solimar International

The process is yet to complete the following steps:

- The implementation of pilot Projects and additional consultation: two projects will test the criteria including a project in Central America led by ASR-GTZ and one in Egypt led by AGE-GTZ;
- More technical consultations will be held with specific groups to resolve minor pending issues;
- The development of indicators for each criterion allowing flexibility to accommodate regional or local specificities;

- The organization of an industry Launching with the objective of briefing the world's leading tourism stakeholder's on the advancements of this effort and to discuss potential strategic collaboration around mainstreaming sustainability practices in the value chain;
- The organization of the global Launching at IUCN conference (5-14 October in Barcelona) with the organization of an 'alliances workshop' to build on a consensus for the design of a process to move forward; and
- The outreach and integration with other initiatives such as the sustainable stewardship council (STSC).

With regards to the STSC, the presenters outlined the developments of this initiative from its formal recognition in 2001. The STSC is an umbrella organization that that would set universal minimum standards for certification programs and accredit those that meet them. Some key considerations to acknowledge about its governance structure include:

- It will elect an international board and coordinator,
- It will have a Stake holder's council (4 chambers), and
- An independent (and non-voting) scientific and technical advisory council (UNWTO, UNEP, academia etc.).

A meeting was held in Paris to pave the way forward for the STSC initiative and the main outcomes were highlighted, including the following decisions:

- To register the STSC as a UN Type II Partnership,
- To create a Temporary Executive Board,
- To create a Sustainable Tourism Advisor Committee (STAC) with confirmed participation from UNWTO and UNEP,
- The United Nations Foundation will consider providing seed funding
- The UNEP offered assistance with managing the funds, and
- A sub-committee was created to link the Criteria with the STSC initiative

In terms of linking the GBC initiative with the STSC; it was recommended that:

- The GBC criteria be used as a major input for the STSC,
- The STSC Board use the Criteria as a technical basis for the STSC accreditation system, and that while
- There will be adjustments to the GBC, the overall concept, spirit and basic content of the criteria should be kept.

To conclude there was a call for the participants to reflect on the following considerations and needs:

- The Criteria should not be considered by any means as a dogmatic inflexible document and as a list written in stone,
- The criteria has been developed with the objective to have multiple uses,
- The value behind these criteria emanates mostly by the process that was followed to develop and peer-review them,
- The process was always trying to keep a balance, while taking into account the need
 - To create a list of criteria that should, at the same time, be comprehensive, have a practical meaning, be representative of the values of sustainable tourism
 - To reach consensus among the steering committee of the initiative.
- The "lessons to be learned" from the use of these criteria will determine their evolution and future amendment, and to consider that
- We need more partners, supporters and donors.

Second Presentation- Alliance of Independent Travel Traders in Germany (ASR)

Mr. Stephan Busch, President of Alliance of Independent Travel Traders in Germany (ASR), gave a presentation and overview of ASR. He said that ASR was formed in 1976 and is made up of 3000 members including associated members with a President and management board in Berlin. The main task of ASR is:

- To foster dialogue and representation of members interests at national policy level,
- To lobby for members in branch relevant disputes,
- To create competent consulting and innovative service offers, and
- To foster strategic co-operation with different organizations

He also gave a presentation of the pipeline of projects for the year 2008 and highlighted the sustainable tourism project on the Green Travel Bridge Program with GTZ, which focuses on marketing sustainable tourism products in Latin America among the German tourism supply chain (including SMES, Tours Operators up to the consumers).

The project follows a process by which a clear definition of sustainable tourism is provided for point of sale where the GBC is used as a basis; a database for sustainable products is created, qualifying providers are identified with the goal of integrating sustainable tourism products into mainstream.

He noted that the project's aim is that all stakeholders become qualified to sustainably market sustainable products in Latin America.

He requested the participation of members through the Rainforest Alliance as a local partner to help identify sustainable tourism suppliers (via the Sustainable Tourism Certification Network of the Americas and other partners) that consider sustainability & quality criteria as a priority.

Third Presentation- The Green Star Hotel Initiative in Egypt

Mr. Tampe (GTZ) gave a presentation on the Green Star Hotel Initiative in Egypt.

He noted that Egypt's rapid growth in tourism industry not only represents one of the economy's most vibrant sectors, but also poses grave risks to the environment. In this respect, GTZ has developed a pilot project in this destination, within their PPP programme, to improve standards by implementing an environmentally and economically sustainable management system in the hotel industry in Egypt. El Gouna was selected as the pilot destination.

The initiative focuses on improving the environmental performance by providing a practical tool kit to support the hotels in the pilot destination in introducing eco-labels and standards. In this respect the initiative has the opportunity and has based the criteria upon internationally recognized criteria (Standards of the VISIT Association and the baseline criteria developed by UNEP and Rainforest Alliance). In this sense, the GBC will have an opportunity to be tested. It will also consider the local characteristics of the destination.

The next steps to the pilot implementation include the organization of an **International Conference Dec. 17 – 20 2008** where:

- The pilot destination El Gouna will be presented
- There will be a discussion with international experts and organizations,
- There will be intent to gain the Commitment of the Egyptian Authorities for sustainable tourism development,
- Business contacts with international tourism industry will be made, and
- An Application for STSC certification will be submitted

Fourth Presentation- The Certification for Sustainable Tourism in Costa Rica

Ms. Rosaura Monge, representing the Certification for Sustainable Tourism in Costa Rica gave a presentation on the certification programme. She gave an overview of the development of the certification which was conceived in 1993 and underwent through a stakeholder consultation process until its implementation in 1998.

She explained that the CST is an interactive pyramid between tourism, society and the environment that aims at building a balanced interaction between three basic factors of the tourism industry:

- The appropriate use of our cultural and natural resources.
- Improvement of the quality of life of the local communities.
- Economic success that can contribute to other national development programs.

Moreover, it is a program that seeks to categorize and certify each tourism company according to the degree to which its operations comply to a model of sustainability. To this effect, four fundamental aspects are evaluated: physical-biological parameters, infrastructure and services, external clients, and socio-economic environment. She also presented case studies which implement sustainable practices following these parameters.

She gave an overview of the process that must be followed to obtain the CST from the entrance requirements through the evaluation until the preliminary scoring for its awarding. In this respect, she pointed to the sustainability levels that the businesses must fulfill to qualify. The National Commission of Accreditation made up of different bodies including IUCN, ICT, INCAE and others are responsible for granting the certification.

The strengths of the CST were identified, these included:

- CST Certification is a plan that is based on Consultation processes and the validation of the interested parties,
- It is carried out by the Governing Entity in Tourism through an independent Authority,
- It is a system sponsored by the Costa Rica nation,
- There is no cost to the tourism business person,
- It stimulates the tourism business person in terms of marketing material,
- It uses integral and holistic CST norms dealing with topics related with the environment, culture, social business responsibility, promoting systemization and efficient use of resources, including the economic ones,
- It operates with a panel of external experts who advise about the CST,
- It has synergies with other proposals of the Costa Rica nation,
- It is recognized at the international level for being one of the first Certification plans in tourism,
- It has influenced the creation of other certification programs at the National and International level,
- CST launched the first Certification for Tour Operators.
- The name Certificate for Sustainable Tourism has been converted into a standard, and
- It has been used as a reference in research studies, and as part of the certification study group to determine the Sustainable Tourism Criteria.

The Challenges and lessons learned include:

- The transformation in the business management has shown to require a change in attitude through education,
- The good practices that the CST Norms recommend imply using clean technology that still cannot be found in the national market and are expensive,
- Mobility of the personnel in the tourist business has affected the follow-up of the Program, and

- Economic and technical dependence on the Governing Entity has limited actions to some extent.

Day 3- Wednesday 11th June 2008

The participants were taken on a field visit to Arenal's sustainable tourism attractions with the aim of interacting with the tourism entrepreneurs on their sustainability efforts. The final plenary session had as objective to review the key conclusion delivered from the parallel workshops; to present the evolution of the task force and to present the first draft of policy recommendations.

▪ ***Short Presentations on the workshops from Day 2***

Mrs. Erika Harms highlighted the main conclusions from the global initiative and local initiatives that were presented in the **Labels, standards and certification processes for sustainable tourism** workshop. She noted that the GBC presentation focused on giving an update from the last task force meeting held in Paris where the initiative was introduced and where feedback was requested from participants for the consultation process. In this respect, she recalled that the criteria were born out of the need of many stakeholders in the tourism sector to identify what sustainable tourism means and how to mainstream sustainability. To this end, a partnership was created with the active participation of 16 organizations to coordinate these efforts. The GBC aims at creating a common set of criteria that can be used to facilitate the harmonization and accreditation of certification schemes, codes of conducts and sets of best practices around the globe to allow an understanding and to determine what hotels and TO have sustainable tourism practices. With regards to the process, she summarized what steps have been taken to date as follows:

- The initial list of criteria has undergone a series of consultation processes and a final version has been posted;
- The GBC steering committee has met regularly to understand the criteria to provide feedback to the response from the consultation process,
- The last version (4) has been launched as a public version and is now available for the last phase of consultation before its launching,
- The criteria will be launched at the IUCN meeting in Barcelona in October 2008 and indicators developed that go with the criteria
- As a first step after launch, the GBC will work with STSC to link processes.

With regards to this linkage, the STSC will represent the accreditation body for the certification using the GBC as a basis to create market value for the certification as well as credibility and exposure.

She also noted that the pilot projects presented as local initiatives are using the GBC as a basis for their advancement and that the CST is an example of a national certification which is highly accredited.

The main conclusions were presented. These include:

- There are outstanding examples to promote sustainable tourism both on the supply and demand side,
- There is a diverse source of resources,
- This is the right time for this topic, an increased interest by consumers, industry and governments to address sustainability,
- The global baseline criteria represents an important effort to creating a common language about sustainable tourism,
- Challenges are still many: lack of understanding, lack of education, demand, availability, technology, and
- The task force presents an important forum to address these issues

Mr. Sanabria (RA) highlighted the main recommendations from the workshop on education and capacity building as follows:

- The need to move beyond the development of tools towards the development of partnerships for their implementation through concrete partnerships,
- The need to incorporate sustainability as a part of doing business as usual,
- The need to translate sustainability into business profitability through measurable indicators
- The need to translate sustainability criteria in terms of ‘direct profitability’ when communicated to businesses,
- The need to consider that environmental sustainability goes hand in hand in providing service and that social factors are key to the success of the hospitality sector through staff motivation and social stability,
- The need for government and other key players to support voluntary initiatives to provide market exposure,
- The need for partners to translate the presented tools and for their implementation in different countries, and
- The Task Force was recognized as an opportunity to act as a Forum to exchange lessons learned and to consolidate alliances and request funding for the implementation of the ongoing projects.

▪ ***Evolution, Status and Prospects of the Task Force***

Mr. Fotiou (UNEP/DIIE) gave a presentation on the evolution, status and prospects of the ITF-STD from the time it was initiated in 2006 up to the Fourth Task Force meeting in June 2008.

He noted that the task force has gained a good momentum, built through a series of meetings starting Paris on September 2006, recognized not only by the task force members but also from external organizations, and has started to deliver concrete outputs towards the development of sustainable consumption and production patterns in the tourism value chain. He pointed to some outputs that include a collection of practical tools and good practices, a number of partnerships between Task Force members and a set of initiatives.

With these achievements in mind, he pointed to a long-term implementation plan and recalled that the role of the Marrakech Task Force on Sustainable Tourism development is to encourage participants in the Marrakech Process to implement actions that promote sustainable production and consumption patterns in tourism, such as providing support tools and presenting existing initiatives that may inspire pilot projects and good practices.

Recognizing that the realization of this goal will require an integrated open-ended process engaging governments at all levels, international organizations, businesses, NGOs and consumers, he stressed the need to use the ongoing initiatives as a platform for the implementation, extension and mainstreaming sustainability in the tourism sector. In particular he noted the use of the following initiatives: The Davos Process, the SIFT network, the STSC, a global campaign, regional networks and other emerging initiatives.

▪ ***Presentation of the draft outline of policy recommendations***

Mr. Brodhag distributed a preliminary draft outline of policy recommendations to be presented at the CSD in 2010/2011. He noted that the document is to be used as a working draft aiming to facilitate dialogue. He also called on the Task Force members to review the consequent versions and to provide their proposals. To this end, he suggested that the executive committee of the task force coordinate this process.

He explained that the scope of the document addresses both “classical” or “mass” tourism and different “niche” tourism markets that can grow to be a significant share of the market and major

form of tourism for some countries (ecotourism, rural tourism etc.). The policy recommendations are directed to the multi-stakeholders in the sector and are structured around a simplified life-cycle approach of tourism products and services.

He note also the possible output of the discussion should be the redaction under the auspice of the SIFT network of sustainable development principles for investments in tourism. Taking advantage of Equator principle they could be named Costa-Rica principle, and take into account sustainable development principles of UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Davos declaration, and Global Baseline Criteria (GBC) as basis criteria.

▪ ***Closing Remarks***

Mr. Fotiou (UNEP/DTIE) thanked Costa Rica and Minister Benavides and pointed out the very good coordination with Mrs. Gina Guillen Grillo and her team and Mr. Ronlad Sanabira for having hosted the meeting. He said that the Costa Rican experience should be used as a model for the organization of future meetings. In this respect, he underlined how Costa Rica provided an invaluable experience of 'best practices' which provided a strong basis for open discussions. He also thanked Norway for their contribution in support of the sponsorship for the participation of developing country task force members and NGOs. He highlighted the very effective steering that the French delegation provides to the Task Force and thanked the members of the French team for their invaluable work. He also thanked the TIES for their crucial logistic support regarding the facilitation of participants travel. He finally stressed out that the success of the Task Force is due to the collective efforts of all the Task Force members and thanked them for their active support in this initiative.

Mr. Cabrini (UNWTO) gave a special thanks to Costa Rica and UNEP for allowing UNWTO to contribute to the Marrakech Process. He highlighted the task force's success in having catalyzed a set of initiatives and the importance of delivering a first draft of policy recommendation as a first step in incorporating sustainable tourism in the UN Commission and in sustainable development. He also mentioned the importance of further developing indicators to measure the advances towards sustainable tourism development. With this said, he noted that the context of the meeting allowed for the exchange of good practices and to experience them in practice through the field visits.

Mr. Brodhag thanked Costa Rica for hosting the Fourth Task Force meeting. He also thanked the French delegation for their support in leading the process. He announced that his position as the inter-ministerial delegate for the French Ministry has come to completion but reaffirmed that he wished to continue providing support through his new international endeavors. With regards to the achievements made, he highlighted that the ITF-STD has been recognized as one of the more successful task forces within the Marrakech Process. He said that the task force is moving forward and that during the session there has been a common understanding amongst TF members and participants for the need to:

- Endorse the working document presented on the policy recommendations,
- To open a consultation process for the review of the recommendations until the first quarter of 2009, and to
- Finalize the policy recommendations during the Fifth Task Force Meeting.

In this sense, he recommended the need to implement the tools and practices on the field through global partnerships and regional coordination

Mr. Benavides thanked all members for their participation in the task force meeting and he expressed that it was an honor to have hosted such an important international gathering in Costa Rica. He thanked the French delegation for their leadership within this process and underlined the importance of sustainable tourism as the only option for tourism development in the country. He expressed his appreciation in having been able to share Costa Rica's experiences, challenges, goals and their best

practices with the ITF-STD members. He also noted Costa Rica's engagement in solidifying their commitment to a sustainable model. He said that the task force has been a useful platform which has facilitated the exchange of knowledge creating a multiplier effect. He also reminded all members that sustainable tourism development should contribute to the community's well-being and promote change in their behaviour and increase their economic impacts. He also stressed the importance of sustainable tourism for poverty alleviation. In this sense, he said that sustainability must include the economic dimension. In addition, he noted the need for financing and called on the participating financial institutions to provide support to continue the work of the task force beyond 2010.

An open discussion followed the closing remarks and participant's confirmed their willingness to contribute to the task force as follows:

- New Zealand expressed their interest to become active partners in the process;
- Roteiros do Charme recommended creating synergies with the association to implement the work of the task force and to create a multiplier effect;
- Croatia agreed to contribute to the review of the draft recommendations and will distribute the draft for comments to the Croatian Ministry of Tourism's touring working group;
- Mali endorsed the task force's recommendations and suggested the Bamako FITS meeting in October as an opportunity for the TF steering committee to meet;
- Gille Beville from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs suggested revitalizing/utilizing the network of cooperation agencies created with GTZ as a mechanism to start implementing pilot projects;
- Tourism Concern called on participants to contribute to TC's ethical tourism guide with their own community based tourism experiences;
- On behalf of Norway, Peter Prokosh, expressed Norway's interest to continue supporting future meetings;
- AFD offered to provide support in assisting country members to identify the best ways on how to disseminate the work of the task force;
- ECLAC expressed their great interest in holding a regional consultation to review the draft outline of policy recommendations and in contributing to the work on climate change;

Ms. Gina Guillen Grillo closed the session expressing her gratitude to all task force members. She noted that the meeting had compensated its emissions through The National Forestry Financing Fund (FONAFIFO) offsetting schemes to support the protection of the Corcovado National Park. She distributed a certification to each participant confirming their participation to a C-Neutral Meeting.

The main accomplishments of the meeting include:

- The session on day 1 served as an opportunity to gain further support from the participating financial institutions and organizations and to their participation in the task force. In this respect, the fourth meeting attracted the participation of new donors including the Inter-American development Bank/ Multi-lateral investment Fund (IADB/MIF) that joined the task force for first time and the World Bank returned as a member and agreed to host the meeting for the launching of the SIFT Network at the Bank's headquarters.
- Three new countries participated (Argentina, Nicaragua, El Salvador) and at least another 10 countries and/or organizations have expressed an interest to participate in the task force.
- The parallel workshop on education and capacity building included presentations on the tools that have been implemented under the ITF-STD's programme of work and case studies to highlight sustainable tourism practices. This session highlighted the following recommendations:
 - The need to continue responding to the challenges of certification in the tourism sector;

- The need to move beyond the development of tools towards the development of partnerships for their implementation,
 - The need to incorporate sustainability within the business as usual scenario,
 - The need to translate sustainability criteria in terms of 'direct profitability' when communicated to businesses,
 - The need for government and other key players to support voluntary initiatives to provide market exposure, and
 - The Task Force was recognized as an opportunity to act as a Forum to exchange lessons learned and to consolidate alliances and request funding for the implementation of the ongoing projects.
- The parallel workshop on labels, standards and certification processes for sustainable tourism presented global initiatives and local initiatives pointed to the following conclusions:
- There are outstanding examples to promote sustainable tourism both on the supply and demand side,
 - There is a diverse source of resources,
 - This is the right time for this topic, an increased interest by consumers, industry and governments to address sustainability,
 - The global baseline criteria represents an important effort to creating a common language about sustainable tourism,
 - Challenges are still many: lack of understanding, lack of education, demand, availability, technology, and
 - The task force presents an important forum to address these issues
- The third day session presented the evolution of the task forces and a preliminary draft outline of policy recommendations to be presented at the CSD in 2010/2011. A major achievement of the Task Force during the session was the consensus made amongst TF members and participants to:
- Endorse the working document presented on the policy recommendations,
 - To open a consultation process for the review of the recommendations until the first quarter of 2009, and to
 - Finalize the policy recommendations during the Fifth Task Force Meeting.
- Morocco formally announced their willingness to host the Fifth International Task Force Meeting on Sustainable Tourism Development.
- The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean also expressed their interest to run a regional consultation for the review of the policy recommendations.

Recommendations/Actions to be taken:

1. For the Task Force members to open a consultation process for the review of the recommendations until the first quarter of 2009, and
2. To agree and finalize on the policy recommendations outlined in the draft document by the Fifth Task Force Meeting.
3. To further explore opportunities and strengthen partnerships with multi-lateral and bilateral financing institutions and donors;
4. To find partnerships for the dissemination and replications of the Task Force outputs in different countries at a local and regional level.
5. To coordinate efforts with Morocco for the organization of the next Task Force Meeting.