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## Outcomes of the 2005 World Summit

### What role can tourism play in tackling the global issues of poverty, environment and development?

The largest ever gathering of international leaders at the United Nations (UN) headquarters, the 2005 World Summit, took place in New York, September 14-16. Designed to mark the 60th anniversary of the UN, the Summit highlighted a number of global issues of direct relevance to travel and tourism.

The following is a brief overview of some of the decisions, actions plans and reports, as circulated by the UN Department of Public Information. Further information on each of these key outcomes is available at [www.un.org/summit2005](http://www.un.org/summit2005).

#### MITIGATE EXTREME WEATHER

With extreme weather such as severe flooding, drought and heat waves becoming increasingly common, the UN World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and its regional members are drawing up an action plan to mitigate the worst effects.

WMO Secretary-General Mr Michel Jarraud said at his organisation's 14th session: "A long-term operational system is required, with the capability of providing the comprehensive observations needed for monitoring and attributing climate change, for assessing the impacts of climate variability and for supporting research toward improved understanding, modelling and prediction."

Human well-being, agriculture and industries such as tourism depend on the production of rapid, accurate meteorological and hydrological information. Mr Jarraud said WMO's scientific and technical programmes can contribute significantly towards making national meteorological and hydrological services more efficient and cost effective as well as helping them work together successfully.

Extreme weather has blighted parts of the world in recent years, including severe flooding in Central and Eastern Europe, drought on the Iberian Peninsula in 2005 and a heat wave in 2003, sparking growing regional and international concern over the threat of climate change and its influence on such events.

Mr Jarraud called on members to become more involved in environmental concerns, including air and water quality, marine pollution and public health-related issues. He stressed that WMO, its international partners and national meteorological and hydrological services needed to intensify cooperation in the field of environmental quality.

#### ACT TO CURB CLIMATE CHANGE

Leaders of a number of countries called for action against global warming, urging all concerned to ratify international treaties designed to stem the problem.

Slovenia's President Dr Janez Drnovšek said: "There would appear to be an emerging consensus among scientists that each year we are witnessing increasing numbers of catastrophic events linked to global warming: hurricanes, floods and droughts." He added that this was a prime example of the interdependence of all people. "Under the aegis of the UN, we must therefore work together in the world to find more effective solutions and to contribute to raising the general awareness of people, and especially politicians," Dr Drnovšek said.

Prince Albert II of Monaco said Monaco had started the process of acceding to the Kyoto Protocol, which contains binding targets for curbing greenhouse gas emissions. He also called for implementing global plans to prevent and reduce the risks of natural disasters.

Marshall Islands President Mr Kessai Note said: "Global warming and sea level rise continue to threaten us." He called on all countries that have not yet done so to ratify the Kyoto Protocol. "Without such global actions to mitigate climate change and arrest sea level rise, our national efforts and sustainable development will be rendered meaningless, and my people will become environmental refugees," he said.

## SECURE ANTARCTICA

Substantial increases in illegal fishing, tourism, bio-prospecting, climate change and depletion of the ozone layer continue to pose major challenges to the Antarctic, and governments should continue to make major efforts to secure the area as a natural reserve, according to UN Secretary-General Mr Kofi Annan.

In a report detailing the progress of the Antarctic Treaty, Mr Annan said: "Efforts should be continued to ensure that commercial activities will not impact on the successes of the Antarctic Treaty system, in particular in securing Antarctica as a natural reserve, devoted to peace and science."

He noted that "illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing for toothfish in the Southern Ocean still exceeds reported catches despite major efforts to address such activities". Other major areas of concern are the increase in tourism over the last 10 years and the emerging threat of bio-prospecting.

There has been a huge increase of 308% in tourists to the Antarctic Peninsula since 1993. In 1992-1993 there were 6,704 tourists; in 2004-2005 that number jumped to 27,325. An increase in adventure tourism has also wrought havoc on the region, creating the need for new search and rescue missions and country liability assessments.

"Global changes, in particular climate change and the depletion of the ozone layer, remain major threats," the report says. Several glaciers have retreated by several metres over the last three years, providing evidence of continued glacial melting. A ripple effect has impacted animals in the area.

## PRIORITISE THE ENVIRONMENT

Declaring that "the environment is not a luxury, not a Gucci

accessory bag or a fancy silk tie affordable only when all other issues have been resolved," the head of the UN ecological agency called on the World Summit to give the environment its due priority as the key to human development.

UN Environment Programme (UNEP) executive director Dr Klaus Toepfer said: "Heads of state need to put 'natural or nature's capital' right up there with human and financial capital. Anything less will undermine our attempts to defeat poverty and deliver sustainable development and will shortchange current and future generations."

He stressed that significant, targeted investments in the environment will go a long way towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which seek to slash a host of socio-economic ills, such as extreme poverty, hunger and preventable diseases by 2015.

The environment "is the oxygen breathing life into all the Goals," he said. "It is the red ribbon running around our common aspirations for a healthier, more stable and just world. It is also critical to the economies of countries and regions, a fact that governments have yet to fully take on board but which they ignore at their economic peril." Dr Toepfer cited a long list of supporting evidence, putting actual monetary value to the gains earned from properly managing nature and the losses entailed by its degradation.

In one example, the New York City Council, faced with supplying safer drinking water for its 9 million customers, saved US\$3-5 billion by investing US\$1 billion to better manage river banks, forests, agriculture and other ecosystems to reduce pollution into the Catskill/Delaware river system, instead of sinking up to US\$6 billion into filtration machinery.

In another example, the recently published Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and its spin-off reports show that intact tropical mangroves – coastal ecosystems that are nurseries for fish, natural pollution filters and coastal defences – are worth around US\$1,000 a hectare. However, when cleared for shrimp farms, their value falls to around US\$200 a hectare.

In a third case, studies show that the value of the timber and fuel-wood from a forest is worth less than a third of the value of the services the trees provide, such as watershed protection and absorption of pollutants like greenhouse gases.

Studies in the Amazon by researchers from Johns Hopkins University in the United States have concluded that for every 1% increase in deforestation, there is an 8% increase in the number of

diseases and obesity, more than making up for their cost with reductions in sick days and accidents.

"Healthy food (and protection from unsafe and unhealthy food and eating arrangements) is as essential as protection from chemicals or noise at the workplace," the report said. Further, food at work is "an indispensable element of social protection of workers," while the "rights to safe drinking water and to freedom from hunger are basic human rights." The availability of clean drinking water and basic sanitation remain one of the most serious challenges to the achievement of the MDGs, the report said.

The first study to examine workplace eating habits worldwide said that the world is facing a "food-gap" of staggering proportions, with one out of six, or one billion people in the world undernourished, and an equal proportion obese. Wealthy and poor nations manifested poor nutrition in disparate ways. Malnutrition-related productivity losses cost US\$10 billion in India or about 3-9% of its gross domestic product (GDP).

In the United States, however, two thirds of the population is overweight, reflecting a loss of 39.2 million work days, and costing approximately US\$51.6 billion per year. The annual economic cost of obesity alone was estimated at US\$12.7 billion. Using 2001 figures, the study said that diet-related diseases accounted for 46% of all worldwide diseases, a number expected to climb to 57% by 2020. It also said that diet-related issues accounted for 60% of all deaths worldwide.

## PROMOTE WORKPLACE SAFETY

Some 2.2 million people die of work-related accidents and diseases each year, and this number may be vastly underestimated due to poor reporting in many developing countries, according to a new UN report which paints a grim picture for much of the global workforce. The study was released at the 17th World Congress on Safety and Health at Work in Orlando, United States.

"Decent work must be safe work, and we are a long way from achieving that goal," said ILO Director-General Mr Juan Somavía. "Occupational safety and health is vital to the dignity of work. Still, every day, on average, some 5,000 or more women and men around the world lose their lives because of work-related accidents and illness," he added.

While the number of work-related illnesses and deaths has lessened somewhat in the industrialised countries, the number of fatal accidents appears to be increasing in some Asian countries due to poor reporting, rapid development and the strong competitive pressures of globalisation, the report shows.

The study, entitled *Decent Work – Safe Work*, also warns that work-related malaria and other communicable diseases, as well as cancers caused by hazardous substances are taking a huge

toll, mostly in the developing world. The majority of the global workforce lacks legal or preventive safety or health measures, accident or illness compensation and has no access to occupational health services.

"The sad truth is that in some parts of the world, many workers will probably die for lack of an adequate safety culture," ILO SafeWork Programme Director Dr Jukka Takala said. "This is a heavy price to pay for uncontrolled development. We must act swiftly to reverse these trends."

On reporting systems in developing countries, the study notes that India, for example, reports 222 fatal accidents while the Czech Republic, which has a working population of about 1% of India's, reports 231. The study estimates the true number of fatal accidents in India at 40,000. The ILO said action at international, regional, national and enterprise levels is a prerequisite to preventing or reducing work-related accidents and ill-health.

## RETHINK FOREIGN INVESTMENT

The persistent colonial legacy of relying on foreign direct investment (FDI) has distorted African economic development and locked in low value-added, limited reinvested earnings and volatile inflows, yet it is being seen as an answer to today's problems, the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) says in a new report.

"In the face of inadequate resources to finance long-term development in Africa, and with poverty reduction and other MDGs looking increasingly difficult to achieve by 2015, attracting foreign direct investment has assumed a prominent place in the strategies of economic renewal being advocated by policy makers at the national, regional and international levels," it says.

"The idea that Africa is a reluctant host to foreign capital is a myth," UNCTAD adds in *Economic Development in Africa: Rethinking the Role of Foreign Direct Investment 2005* by African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) Director Professor David Olusanya Ajakaiye. Despite a major policy effort, including the liberalisation, privatisation and deregulation recommended for attracting FDI, the continent has received only a very small portion of global FDI flows: an annual average of little more than 2% from 2000-2004, down from 4.4% in the 1970s.

African countries must look at the cost-benefit perspective, gauge the impact of FDI on local costs and profitability, the sizes of spillovers and linkages and the extent of import dependence and profit repatriation. In extractive industries, environmental and social costs also need to be fully factored in.

Meanwhile, incentives for foreign firms can amount to a kind of subsidy, displacing policies to nurture local firms and encourage domestic investment. The outflow of profits may be so high as to

ents are

## PROTECT CULTURAL HERITAGE

With 20 countries already ratifying a treaty to protect the world's oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, craftsmanship and knowledge of nature, the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage is on track to take effect in 2006.

Adopted by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) General Conference in 2003, the Convention will enter into force three months after the 30th State Party deposits its instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession.

"Few UNESCO conventions have been ratified by as many states in such a short time," said UNESCO Director-General Mr Koichiro Matsuura. "If this pace is kept up, we can expect the Convention to enter into force as early as next year. The interest shown by States for intangible cultural heritage is a source of joy and comfort for all who are concerned about its vulnerability."

The Convention aims to safeguard oral traditions and expressions, performing arts, social practices, rituals and festive events, traditional craftsmanship, as well as knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage.

The Convention provides for drawing up national inventories of cultural elements that must be protected, the creation of an intergovernmental committee comprising experts from future States Parties, and the creation of two lists: one covering the intangible heritage of humanity, and the other featuring parts of that heritage considered to be in urgent need of safeguarding.

## FIGHT CORRUPTION

The first international treaty against governmental corruption, a major obstacle to development in poor countries, has received ratification and will go into effect by the end of 2006. The Convention provides for international cooperation in the return of assets illicitly acquired by corrupt officials, as well as preventive measures to detect the plundering of national wealth as it occurs.

UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Executive Director Mr Antonio Maria Costa said: "The costs that corruption takes on development will now be confronted by the robust articles of the Convention." The Convention will affect private sector corruption to some extent, since a good amount of such crime involves the bribing of officials, Mr Costa said. Through provisions on banking

transparency and against money laundering, it will also help to fight organised crime.

## PROVIDE MORE HOUSING

With the world's urban population expected to almost double to more than 5 billion in the next 25 years, governments around the globe will need to build almost 100,000 new housing units a day, provide subsidies and support community loan programmes, or else compound the enormous slum conditions that exist now, according to a UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) report.

UN-HABITAT Executive Director Ms Anna Tibaijuka said: "If adequate financial resources are not invested in the development of urban shelter and services, this additional population will be trapped in urban poverty, deplorable housing conditions, poor health, and lower productivity."

With 900 million of the worldwide 3 billion urban population considered "slum dwellers," much of the world is already undergoing a severe housing crisis and many more do not have the money to pay for better housing. In Indonesia, for example, 40% of the population lives in cities, but only 20-30% have access to formal financing. In urban areas of Zimbabwe, India and Malawi, large-scale evictions are leaving urban dwellers without shelter, and in Morocco, 93% of households do not have access to financing.

In addition, housing prices in the developed and developing countries have increased as much as 225% over the last seven years, leading to a widening gap between incomes and housing, according to the agency's report *Financing Urban Shelter: Global Report on Human Settlements 2005*. To meet the urgent needs of urban residents in developing countries, Ms Tibaijuka recommended that short-term micro-financing in amounts of US\$500 to US\$5,000 be provided for incremental housing additions in preference to the more traditional long-term mortgages often provided, which most households in developing countries cannot afford.

## IMPROVE WORKPLACE NUTRITION

Inadequate nourishment in the workplace is causing a 20% loss in productivity as well as poor morale, low safety standards and long-term health problems in many countries, according to the ILO.

With workers spending an average of one third of their lives or half their waking day at work, the study concluded that workplace meal programmes can prevent nutritional deficiencies, chronic

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malaria-carrying mosquitoes. This has implications for economic development as well as human health. It is calculated that Africa's gross national product (GNP) in 2000 could have been 25% or US\$100 billion higher if malaria had been eradicated 35 years ago.

In a related development, the heads of five UN-backed treaties said Summit participants must take action to conserve and use biological diversity sustainably, and distribute its benefits equitably if the world is to achieve the MDGs. "All of us rely on biodiversity, directly or indirectly for our health and welfare. We must ensure that biodiversity will be available for us and for all future generations," they said.

## **TACKLE MIGRATION ISSUES**

Migrants worldwide number more than 175 million – more than the population of any country except for the biggest four and more than double the number 40 years ago. The UN is proposing that member states open a dialogue ahead of the 2006 General Assembly debate to tackle related issues, from human trafficking to monetary remittances.

"The high-level dialogue on international migration and development will provide a unique opportunity for the international community to set the foundation for enhanced international cooperation in addressing the multifaceted issues raised by the international movement of people," according to a report to the General Assembly.

The report recommends that member states speak about the effects of migration on economic and social development, the migration of highly skilled persons, actions to improve the remittances on development, and international cooperation to combat the trafficking in persons. The report also calls for ministerial-level participation by member states, and for stakeholders to be present at the "highest" level in a discussion that will precede the 2006 General Assembly debate on migration.

According to the World Bank, migrant workers make up about 3% of the world population, and sent remittances home worth US\$110 billion in 2004, 52% more than in 2001. In 1960, only about 75 million, or 2.5% of the world's population, were international migrants.

## **CREATE MORE JOBS**

Leaders of the world's parliaments have zeroed in on jobs as the single most important global issue. UN Director-General of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Mr Juan Somavia said: "In

our reading of government, employers and workers, the constituents of the ILO, and seen from the people who elect the parliamentarians, the single most important issue is the question of jobs."

He added: "What people are asking worldwide is 'give me a fair chance at a decent job, and I will take care of my family, educate my children, live in the community where others work in peace'. That political demand is global." He said the overall consensus of the parliamentarians attending the Second World Conference of the Speakers of Parliament is that people want to know whether the international policies their governments are pursuing will actually help them live better lives. They also expect local leaders to represent their interests at the international level.

"Parliamentarians are elected locally, so they can bring the local reality, the national reality to the international scene," he added. But he said that despite the observer status that the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) has been able to reach with the UN, individual parliamentarians still need to have a more strategic relationship with the world body to be more effective.

## **RAISE LITERACY RATES**

With an estimated 800 million adults still illiterate, two thirds of them women, and more than 100 million children out of school, the UN marked International Literacy Day and the start of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) with warnings about the challenges.

UN Secretary-General Mr Annan said: "As the foundation of learning throughout life, literacy is at the heart of sustainable development. It is clear that support for literacy continues to fall well short of need. On this International Literacy Day, let us recall that literacy for all is an integral part of education for all, and that both are critical for achieving truly sustainable development for all."

Perhaps typical of the challenges faced by UN agencies in the field was the assessment of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). UNAMA spokesman Mr Adrian Edwards said: "In Afghanistan, the situation is especially alarming. According to statistics from the recently published *National Human Development Report*, only 28% of adults aged 15 and above can read and write. Experience and research show that literacy can be an important tool for eradicating poverty, enlarging employment opportunities, advancing gender equality, improving family health, protecting the environment and promoting democratic participation."

make FDI a substantial cost. Production by foreign firms is less of a benefit if it displaces local firms, while extra exports may require a considerable increase in imports, with uncertain outcomes for the country's balance of payments, the report says.

The high profits on FDI in Africa that are often touted reflect its concentration in the capital-intensive extractive sectors, it says. Domestic capital accumulation, including in the public sector, must be revived and certain thresholds of industrial capacity, skill levels and infrastructure development have to be crossed before FDI begins to work harder for development, the report says.

### PARTNER WITH NGOS

At a forum entitled "Our Challenge: Voices for Peace, Partnership and Renewal", the UN hailed non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as essential partners in the effort to promote a culture of peace, create change in world societies and hold governments accountable for achieving their commitments. The forum was attended by more than 2,000 civil society groups and activists.

"Governments can do a lot in fighting drugs, crime or terrorism, and they should do more. But they can't do everything," said UNODC Executive Director Mr Antonio Maria Costa at a special UN forum to bring together private entities with governments. "We need and require the commitment of society at large, whether it is society understood as the education system, or the places of faith, or places of sport," he added. NGOs are "essential partners" in the process of "curbing the threats to security."

Former Lt Gen Daniel Opande of the UN Mission in Liberia, representing the military point of view, said: "My conviction is that civil society has played a leading role exploring the ills that bring conflict." One NGO representative, International Crisis Group President Mr Gareth Evans said that on "all key principles", such as peace building, government use of force, human rights council, arms control, and policy on terrorism, there was very little agreement among UN Members prior to the Summit. "If nothing else, I hope [the results of the forum] can be a wake-up call, a cry of pain from civil society."

UN Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States Mr Anwarul K Chowdhury encouraged the NGOs to be more engaged in the development process with the international community. "Your role is to monitor international agreements and commitments, share your findings and create a database detailing the performance of countries. You must participate in the inter-governmental process and help governments achieve their commitments," he said.

UN Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information Mr Shashi Tharoor called for civil organisations to help

deliver greater freedom to people everywhere and achieve better standards of life by working closely with their governments and the UN. "In no small way, you are the guardians of reform of the international system," he said.

### ENCOURAGE YOUTHFUL VOICES

Young people must do active community service, participate in social change, contribute to policy and take the initiative to make governments listen to their ideas on all the issues, said speakers at a UN-sponsored forum in Bangkok. Under the theme "Young Voices for Change", the 2005 UN Youth Forum saw 300 local and international young people from schools, universities and NGOs of Thailand gather at the UN Conference Centre.

"Young people in Thailand have a hard time because children are taught they must obey and do what adults say, even if it is against our rights or dignity," said one youth presenter. The topics covered by the Forum included the full range of issues discussed at the World Summit, including Mr Kofi Annan's *In Larger Freedom* report, and the areas of development, security and human rights.

During the day's proceedings, the Thai pop star known as Lydia, Ms Sarunrat Visutthithada, urged young people to take part in decision-making. "Our voices are so important," she said. "We can get active and lobby our communities to fight poverty, hunger and disease. We can lead by example, showing the world that inequality and discrimination are not acceptable. Our voices have the capability to influence decisions and create change."



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