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Encouraging the Tourism and Travel Industry towards a Low Carbon Economy

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In anticipation of the UN climate conference COP 15, to be held in 6 months time, global business leaders came together at the World Business Summit on Climate Change in Copenhagen (May 24-26). At the event, the report ' Towards a Low Carbon Travel and Tourism Sector' was presented by the World Economic Forum (WEF). This study represents the fruit of a collaboration between UNWTO and several key organisations and is part of a longstanding action by the tourism and travel sector to respond to climate change. For UNWTO it is an important element of the Davos Declaration Process initiated in 2003 with the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

The study - a collaboration between the World Economic Forum, UNWTO, the International Civil Aviation Organization, UNEP, and Tourism and Travel business leaders issued by the WEF with Booz & Company as senior advisor and research partner - puts forward proposals for the mitigation of greenhouse gas emission in various sectors such as transport and accommodation.

It also considers market mechanisms and innovative methods of financing the transformation towards a green economy and encourages new public-private-partnerships.

" The study deals with perhaps the most fundamental planetary issue of our time – how to shift progressively towards a sustainable low carbon lifestyle" , said UNWTO Assistant Secretary-General, Geoffrey Lipman, " It is a means to draw attention to the potential key role of the industry with regards to climate change and reducing carbon emissions. It confirms that our sector generates 5% of CO2 and that we can and will progressively reduce our impacts in line with evolving global agreements."

" The study was developed over a one-year period as a multi-stakeholder process involving international organizations, governments, and industry associations to jointly conduct an analysis of the impact of the travel and tourism sector on CO2 emissions and develop a framework for emission reduction by the sector as a whole" , states Thea Chiesa, Head Aviation, Travel & Tourism Industries at the World Economic Forum.

' Towards a Low Carbon Travel and Tourism Sector' also supports global approaches regarding emission trading for aviation and calls for proceeds to be used to set up a " Green Fund for Travel and Tourism" to help finance the trillion dollar mitigation projects identified within the industry.

" The report also highlights that the expected global long-term growth of the sector (around 4% until 2035) may outperform the expected carbon emission savings without additional efforts" highlights Dr. Jürgen Ringbeck, SVP at Booz & Company and senior project advisor. " However, there is a major opportunity for closing this gap into a sustainable mobility future. The additional

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cross cluster and cross sector opportunities that have been identified in the report, must be addressed by public and private leaders jointly. Customers and tax payers will have to be economically incentivized to take on the financial burden of transforming the sector into a new area of sustainable mobility, green innovation, and more energy efficient behavioural changes.”

The study points out how governments, industry stakeholders and consumers can collectively improve the low carbon sustainability of travel, which will in turn enable the continued growth of the sector and the sustainable economic development of nations. It emphasizes the importance of tourism as a development driver for poorer nations and calls for the continued growth of sustainable air transport in these countries.

Finally it underscores the need to continue to address climate change and poverty alongside the economic crisis.

[Read: Towards a Low Carbon Travel and Tourism Sector.](#)

[Read From Davos to Bali: A Tourism Contribution to the Challenge of Climate Change.](#)

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