

## **Visa facilitation and air connectivity priorities for the UNWTO says Executive Council**

*Ministers of tourism and officials meeting at the 94th session of the UNWTO Executive Council defined advancing visa facilitation and promoting increased air connectivity as priorities for UNWTO (Campeche, Mexico, 24-25 October).*

“Mexico has made significant advancements in visa facilitation and this has translated into very positive impacts in terms of increased traffic to our country. We are here to share our experience with other nations as we believe the growth of all is beneficial to each and every one of our countries” said the Minister of Tourism of Mexico, Gloria Guevara, opening the 94<sup>th</sup> session of the UNWTO Executive Council.

UNWTO Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai recalled that having the G20 Leaders committing to work on travel facilitation initiatives during their last meeting in Los Cabos was a seminal achievement while underscoring that visa processes are still an important obstacle to the growth of the tourism sector. “Thanks to our joint efforts, the issue of visa facilitation has been placed firmly on the table. But much remains to be done to make our goal of removing unnecessary barriers to travel a reality”, he said.

The 94<sup>th</sup> session of the Council included a special debate on visa facilitation which concluded with Council Members mandating UNWTO to advance the visa facilitation agenda, as part of its work on travel facilitation, particularly on two key areas - advocacy at the highest political level and identification and dissemination of case studies.

Council Members agreed that air connectivity is also a central hindrance to a stronger tourism growth and called upon UNWTO to strengthen ties with public and private sector players in the transport industry.

Other issues on the agenda included the protection of consumers and travel organizers as well as the work plan for the implementation of the outcome of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in the area of tourism.

The Council further expressed its support to the Larrakia Declaration on Indigenous Tourism

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and the San Diego Declaration on Youth, Student and Education Travel.

Serbia was elected to hold the 95th session of the UNWTO Executive Council (28-29 May 2013).

### Note to editors:

The Executive Council is UNWTO's governing board, responsible for ensuring that the Organization carries out its work and adheres to its budget. The Council meets at least twice a year and is composed by Members elected by the General Assembly in a ratio of one for every five Full Members.

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