



COMMONWEALTH

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BARBADOS

BELIZE

BOTSWANA

BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

CAMEROON

CANADA

CYPRUS

DOMINICA

FIJI ISLANDS

THE GAMBIA

GHANA

GRENADA

GUYANA

INDIA

JAMAICA

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KIRIBATI

LESOTHO

MALAWI

MALAYSIA

MALDIVES

MALTA

MAURITIUS

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NAURU

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NIGERIA

PAKISTAN*

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

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ST LUCIA

ST VINCENT AND
THE GRENADINES

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SRI LANKA

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ZAMBIA

KUALA LUMPUR COMMONWEALTH TOURISM MINISTERS' COMMUNIQUÉ

1. Commonwealth Tourism Ministers held their first meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (19 to 21 March 2004). The meeting was chaired by the Hon Dato' Paduka Abdul Kadir Sheik Fadzir, Minister of Culture, Arts and Tourism. The Opening Address of the Hon. Dato' Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Prime Minister of Malaysia, was delivered on his behalf by the Hon. Tan Sri Dato' Khalil Yaakob, Minister of Information.

2. Ministers underscored the importance of tourism for poverty reduction, export generation, job creation, investment stimulation, promoting greater socio-cultural understanding and peace. In this connection, they also recalled the Millennium Declaration and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, agreed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and reiterated the vital role that tourism can play in reducing poverty and generating sustainable development.

3. They also welcomed the action taken by the United Nations to transform the World Tourism Organisation, to which virtually all Commonwealth states belong, into a Specialised Agency in December 2003.

4. Ministers emphasized the imperative of a successful Doha Trade Round. In this context, they stressed the growing impact of tourism in the global services economy and its importance as a leading export for Small States and Least Developing Countries (LDCs).

5. Ministers noted the significance of sustainable tourism for small and vulnerable states. They stressed the need for concrete actions to strengthen this sector to be agreed at the International Meeting to review the Barbados Programme of Action on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, to be held in Mauritius, in August 2004.

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6. Ministers supported the international community's fight against terrorism and other criminal activities affecting the tourism sector. They noted the impact of these actions on trans-border movement of people, transport and economic flows. They also recognized the problems that a number of countries were experiencing in complying with international standards of safety and security, and called upon donor agencies to respond to their special needs.

7. Ministers recognized that the Commonwealth Secretariat has put in place a multifaceted Plan of Action to combat Terrorism. They noted that Commonwealth Heads of Government at their Meeting in Abuja, Nigeria (December 2003), endorsed the recommendations of the Commonwealth Committee on Terrorism. Heads also called upon Member-States to increase co-operation and assistance, through consultation, information-sharing, training and capacity-building in counter-terrorism activities, and to implement measures to prevent the financing of terrorist acts, ranging from continuing efforts to strengthen financial systems and prevent abuse through money laundering and terrorist financing.

8. Recalling that the 53 Commonwealth States presently account for one seventh of international tourist activity and have strong links, which were conducive to promoting increased intra-Commonwealth tourism, Ministers:

- resolved to develop an improved framework of mutual collaboration within the Commonwealth to strengthen tourism flows between member states;
- pledged full cooperation with WTO to strengthen policy development and avoid duplication of effort, as well as to cooperate with the private sector, including the Commonwealth Business Council;
- agreed to explore increased promotion, marketing exchanges, best practice in market and product development and investment opportunities on an intra-Commonwealth basis, as well as to stimulate investment in the sector;
- endorsed the establishment of a Commonwealth Tourism Centre, as proposed by the Government of Malaysia, and established a Task Force to evaluate its potential role, benefits, logistics and financing;
- requested Commonwealth countries to:
 - incorporate tourism as a priority in development and poverty reduction strategies;

- support efforts to increase air services to developing countries, and especially least developed countries, for tourism growth;
 - reduce leakages of tourism revenue and to enhance local service capacity through education and training;
- urged member countries to exchange “good practices” in both security and travel facilitation;
 - urged member countries to consult in relation to Travel Advisories in order to promote informed decisions and mitigate their adverse economic impact;
 - encouraged Commonwealth countries to develop Tourism Satellite Accounts to delineate the economic scope of the sector for identification of economic linkages, development policy formulation and trade negotiations;
 - called on Commonwealth countries to conclude tourism service agreements for poverty reduction & sustainable development in the World Trade Organisation.

9. Ministers noted that Africa has found the path for the development of pro-poor tourism and the increase of local economic benefits through the development of a Tourism Action Plan. This Plan is considered crucial for an integrated development of tourism in Africa and for its utilization as a tool for poverty reduction.

10. Ministers welcomed the process underway and requested the Commonwealth to join the WTO Initiative in the organization of an international forum for investment in the tourism sector in Africa and to support in the mobilization of resources for the completion of the NEPAD Tourism Action Plan and its dissemination and implementation.

11. Ministers commended the Commonwealth Business Council for organizing the Tourism Business Forum in association with the Government of Malaysia and Tourism Malaysia and welcomed the dialogue with business leaders. They also received the report of the Forum and welcomed its recommendations. They welcomed the setting up of the Commonwealth Tourism Network of Agencies and Operators.

12. Ministers also endorsed the Kuala Lumpur Commonwealth Tourism Plan of Action for promoting Intra-Commonwealth Tourism.

13. Ministers thanked the Malaysian Government for the excellent arrangements made for their meeting and for the generous and warm hospitality extended to them.

14. Ministers accepted the generous offer of Nigeria to host their next meeting in 2005, the dates for which would be agreed in due course. They further agreed that the Task Force should make recommendations on the periodicity of future meetings thereafter.

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.