

Tourism has been identified as a priority development sector in the majority of LDCs. Due to its capacity for creation of employment, poverty reduction, human development and environmental sustainability, tourism can benefit these countries in a number of ways offering an opportunity for all-inclusive growth. Worldwide, tourism revenues represent a significant share of national incomes, encompassing a 6% to 7% of the world's employment, and US\$ 1.1 trillion a year in export earnings. Development opportunities through tourism are on the rise in LDCs and represent an important factor for the overall national growth. In spite of its proven contribution to global economic growth and development, the sector still lacks political and economic recognition and support.

With the objective of engaging in an efficient manner towards a new decade of international support for sustainable tourism development for LDCs (2011-2020), the UN Steering Committee on Tourism for Development (SCTD) is organizing a Tourism Special Event at LDC-IV Conference to share strategic insights on major challenges and devise the way forward for tourism in LDCs. The SCTD aims at advancing the role of tourism for development by providing integrated technical assistance to LDCs through existing and forthcoming financial mechanisms, building on the strengths and experiences of each agency. UNESCO is a member of the SCTD.

The side event will set the scene for a new framework for development through tourism to support Least Developed Countries, providing the opportunity to LDCs, UN agencies and key players of donor countries and other institutions to initiate an open dialogue for a more effective assistance. A concrete deliverable will be presented in the format of a consolidated technical Portfolio of Services "Tourism for Development" aimed in particular at assisting LDCs, as well as other countries, to develop a tourism sector committed to national growth and local benefits that generates income and decent employment for communities while preserving the environment and culture of the destination. The Tourism Special Event will be structured in the form of short forwarding-thinking presentations by the UN agencies followed by an interactive roundtable discussion to address tourism's potential for development in LDCs and the range of technical assistance services available.