Plenary session 3

Public-private partnerships to improve competitiveness

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(Summary)

The tourism sector's contribution to the growth of the economies of the majority of countries is recognized worldwide. Today, tourism is a source of economic growth, job creation, and foreign exchange income. Because of this, governments are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of this contribution in the national, regional, and local development plans of their countries.

On a different level, it must be acknowledged that nearly all the components of tourism that in the beginning of the last century were in the hands of the States in many countries are now in the private sector.

The tourism industry is a complex economic system that encompasses a multitude of partners, interests, and objectives. This is why it is essential to put in place a system for consultation and coordination and to establish close cooperation among its principal actors. It is imperative for decision-makers, both public and private, to work so as to strengthen the ties of partnership and solidarity between them.

Nevertheless, it should be recognized that over the past several years we have observed greater awareness on the part of the public sector regarding the need to involve the private sector in the implementation of development plans and strategies of the sector. The private sector for its part is increasingly receptive to the intention of governments to involve it at all decision-making levels and in the corresponding implementation actions.
**Public sector:** it comprises the government and, in particular, the ministers in charge of portfolios that to a lesser or greater degree affect the tourism sector, parliaments, local authorities as well as government agencies and national airlines.

One of the principal roles of a government is to lay down the legislative and orientative frameworks of tourism: laws and decrees, taxes and social contributions, strategic studies, master plans and planning of tourism zones, hotel classification standards, regulations and the granting of licenses and permits, land-use and financial incentives to encourage investments, product diversification, air transport facilitation and facilitation of access to the country, occupational training, marketing and promotion.

As tourism is an activity of a cross-cutting nature, it is strongly recommended that governments consider the creation of inter-ministerial committees whose purpose is to synchronize the actions of the State in favour of tourism.

It is also recommended to decentralize the management of tourism as much as possible and to entrust a bigger responsibility to local authorities.

**Private sector:** all private actors: hotel operators, travel agents, artisans, restaurateurs, private airlines, etc.

Their role consists in investing in accommodation and in other components of tourism, participating in the implementation of the different structures of occupational training, investing in quality, diversifying products and contributing to their promotion and commercialization.

The private sector should contribute to local socio-economic development by training and using local labour and favouring local procurement.

**Areas of public-private partnership:**
- Planning of the development of tourism.
- Monitoring and evaluation of performance.
- Promotion and commercialization of the destination and financing of advertising and public relations campaigns.
- Environment and preservation of cultural heritage.
- Implementation of a strategy in favour of the sustainability of tourism.
- Training and enhancement of human resources.
- Facilitation of access to the country: air transport and entry formalities.
- Establishment and application of quality standards.
- Establishment of a safety & security system.

We will come back to these in much greater detail.