



## INTERNATIONAL TOURISM UP BY 5.5% TO 808 MILLION ARRIVALS IN 2005

In 2005 international tourism sustained the sharp upturn that began in 2004 in spite of the various tragic events it had to contend. According to preliminary results presented today by the United Nations specialized agency, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) the number of international tourist arrivals recorded worldwide grew by 5.5% and exceeded 800 million for the first time ever.

Although 2005 was certainly a tumultuous year, international tourism has fared amazingly well. Despite various terrorist attacks and natural disasters, such as the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami and an extraordinarily long and strong hurricane season, the recovery, which started in 2004, continued firmly through 2005. Even though the disruptions experienced definitely left traces locally in the short-term, they did not substantially alter the global or regional traffic flows. Based on detailed results for a large number of destinations included in the January issue of the UNWTO World Tourism Barometer the number of international tourist arrivals in 2005 is estimated at 808 million, up from 766 million in 2004. This corresponds not only to an increase of 5.5%, but also means a consolidation of the bumper growth achieved in 2004 (+10%). Although growth was more moderate, it still almost 1.5 percentage points above the long-term average annual growth rate of 4.1%.

UNWTO Secretary-General, Francesco Frangialli commented "The tourism sector has gained substantially in resilience over the past years. In spite of the turbulent environment we live in nowadays, destinations worldwide added some 100 million international arrivals between 2002 and 2005."

### Results by region

Africa led the way in 2005, with growth estimated at 10%. Growth was stronger in Sub-Saharan Africa (+13%) with particularly remarkable results for Kenya (+26% between January and October compared with the same period of the previous year) following an already buoyant 2004, and Mozambique (+37% Jan-Sep). South Africa (+11% Jan-Aug) as well as the island destinations of Seychelles (+7%) and Mauritius (+6%), all improved on their 2004 results. In North Africa growth continued, but at a more moderate pace, with Tunisia recording an increase of 8% between January and November and Morocco 5% for the full year.

Growth in Asia and the Pacific averaged 7%, following the exceptional post-SARS rebound in 2004 (+27%). North-East Asia (+10%) emerged as the most dynamic subregion with the strongest performers being Taiwan (pr. of China) (+15% Jan-Oct), China (+13% Jan-Nov) and Japan (+9% Jan-Nov). In South-East Asia (+4%), Oceania (+4%) and South Asia (+4%), results overall were more modest and above all rather mixed. Cambodia (+35% Jan-Nov), Lao PDR (+27% Jan-Sep), Vietnam (+18%), the Philippines (+14% Jan-Oct) and India (+13%) nevertheless managed to report remarkable growth. Among the countries affected by the December 2004 tsunami tragedy, the Maldives reported a 39% decrease up to November although the rate of decline has eased in the last months. Arrivals to Indonesia were down by nearly 9%, as the country suffered also from the October Bali bombing. Sri Lanka reported only a slight 0.4% drop, although this result may in part be attributed to the large number of Sri Lankan expatriates who visited the country in the aftermath of the tsunami and to the flow of aid workers. As for Thailand, although overall data up to June shows a 6% decline, arrivals at the Bangkok airport registered 4% growth in the period through October.

In the Americas, growth reached 6% with North America (+4%) and the Caribbean (+5%) slightly below the regional average. Of the major destinations, the United States continued the recovery started in 2004 (+8% Jan-Sep), while Mexico (+8% Jan-Nov) and Cuba (+13% Jan-Nov) still showed above-average increases, even after having suffered the impact of last year's devastating hurricanes. Destinations in Central America (+14%) and South America (+13%), on the other hand, can look back on a very positive year. The strongest growth was reported by Venezuela (+23%) and Colombia (+22%), while Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Peru, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua all recorded, or were on their way to record, growth rates of between 10 -20%.

Following the very strong performance over the past couple of years, the Middle East seems to have entered a more moderate phase of growth, with the increase for 2005 estimated at 7%. Egypt (+6%), Dubai ( United Arab Emirates ) (+7% Jan-Sep) and Jordan (+5%) are all close to the regional average, while Bahrain (+11% Jan-Sep), Saudi Arabia (+21% Jan-Jun) and Palestine (+45% Jan-Sep, albeit from a small base) are on their way to exceeding it. Available data, however, is rather limited and the picture could certainly still change.

Europe recorded relatively modest growth of 4%, which is still one percentage point above the long-term trend of the region. This result can be considered very encouraging given the rather weak economy in some of its major intra-regional source markets. Moreover, due to Europe 's already very large base of over 400 million arrivals, in absolute terms it recorded the largest increase corresponding to some 18 million arrivals. Growth was strongest in Northern Europe (+7%), boosted by the United Kingdom (+10% Jan-Nov), which was seemingly not notably affected by the London bomb attacks. International tourist arrivals in Southern and Mediterranean Europe increased by 6%. Turkey was the star performer in this subregion with an increase of 20%, adding 3.4 million arrivals and passing the 20-million mark. Furthermore, Spain (+6%), Croatia (+7% Jan-Nov), Israel (+26% Jan-Oct) and Serbia and Montenegro (+27% Jan-Oct) also recorded respectable results. Western Europe and Central and Eastern Europe grew by 2% and 4% respectively. In Central and Eastern Europe, the Baltic states, Latvia (+20%), Lithuania (+15% Jan-Sep) and Estonia (+7% Jan-Nov) stood out, while, in Western Europe, the best results came from Germany (+6% Jan-Nov) and Switzerland (+6% Jan-Nov).

### Prospects for 2006

For 2006 the current pattern of gradually slowing growth is expected to continue. In cooperation with the Fundación Premio Arce of the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid a short-term forecast has been elaborated according to which international tourist arrivals worldwide are expected to grow between 4 - 5% in 2006. Growth is projected to be around one percentage point lower than in 2005 but still somewhat above the forecast long-term annual growth rate of 4.1%. This outlook is supported by the continued good shape of the world economy in most parts of the world and the improved prospects for the eurozone economies, in particular its most important source market Germany .

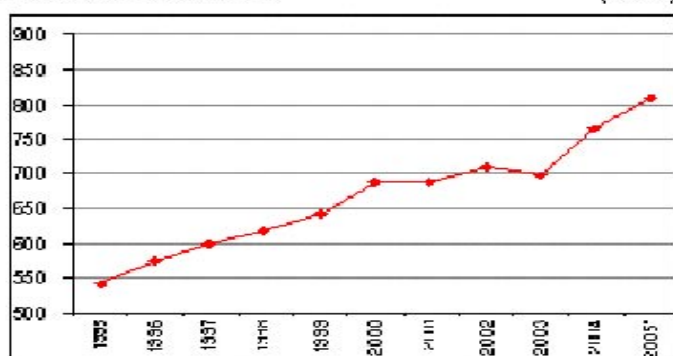
Three major uncertainties remain for 2006. First, it is likely that terrorism will continue to be present. However, experience shows that its impact lately has been rather limited and short-lived. Travellers overall have assumed the risk and have been undeterred by external threats. Secondly, rising energy prices, inflation and interest rates might finally change the economic scenario. This has not been much of a problem until now, as the price hike has mostly been an expression of the strong economic growth and the corresponding demand for energy. Should this situation continue and affect economic growth in Asia , the tourism industry could start feeling the impact.



Finally, the further spread of avian flu could be a serious threat for the tourism sector. Avian flu has been present in the world for several years now and it is currently limited to birds and isolated cases of people living in very close contact with infected animals. As yet no transmission of the virus between humans has been detected and it is hard to say whether, when and where such a mutation will occur. For the moment there is no reason to change travel plans as long as recommendations issued by national and local health and veterinary authorities are respected.

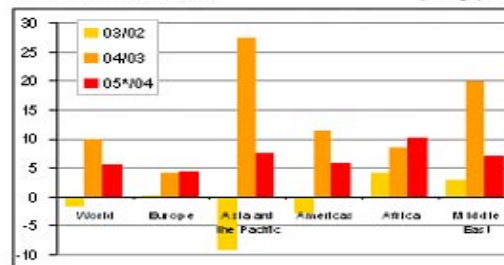
“Panic is always a bad advisor”, says Mr. Frangialli. “What we can do is to monitor the situation closely and prepare for it, should it happen. In spite of the current uncertainties I am confident that world tourism and all its stakeholders will weather the storm - if it does come - in the best way possible.”

World: Inbound Tourism  
International Tourist Arrivals (million)



Source: World Tourism Organization (WTO) ©

World and regions: Inbound tourism  
International Tourist Arrivals (change, %)



Source: World Tourism Organization (WTO) ©

International Tourist Arrivals by (Sub)region

|                               | Full year      |       |       |       |       |       | Average    |       |       | Share          |       |            |      |       |  |
|-------------------------------|----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------------|-------|-------|----------------|-------|------------|------|-------|--|
|                               | 2000           | 2001  | 2002  | 2003  | 2004  | 2005* | 03/02      | 04/03 | 05/04 | 03/04          | 05/06 | 2000-2005* | 2006 | 2005* |  |
|                               | abs. (million) |       |       |       |       |       | change (%) |       |       | abs. (million) |       | change (%) |      | (%)   |  |
| World                         | 800            | 888   | 709   | 807   | 788   | 808   | -1.7       | 10.0  | 5.5   | 42.3           | 119.2 | 3.2        | 100  | 100   |  |
| Europe                        | 388.2          | 385.8 | 407.4 | 408.8 | 425.8 | 443.8 | 0.5        | 4.2   | 4.3   | 18.3           | 47.7  | 2.3        | 57.5 | 54.8  |  |
| Northern Europe               | 44.6           | 42.3  | 43.8  | 44.5  | 48.4  | 51.8  | 1.8        | 8.6   | 7.1   | 3.4            | 7.2   | 3.0        | 6.5  | 6.4   |  |
| Western Europe                | 139.7          | 135.8 | 138.0 | 136.1 | 138.7 | 141.1 | -1.4       | 1.9   | 1.7   | 2.3            | 1.4   | 0.2        | 20.3 | 17.5  |  |
| Central/Eastern Europe        | 71.2           | 74.0  | 78.1  | 80.3  | 89.1  | 92.3  | 2.8        | 11.0  | 3.6   | 3.2            | 21.1  | 5.3        | 10.3 | 11.4  |  |
| Southern/Mediterranean Europe | 140.8          | 143.7 | 147.6 | 147.7 | 149.5 | 158.9 | 0.1        | 1.2   | 6.2   | 9.3            | 18.0  | 2.4        | 20.4 | 19.6  |  |
| Asia and the Pacific          | 111.4          | 118.8 | 128.1 | 114.2 | 145.4 | 159.2 | -0.4       | 27.3  | 7.4   | 10.8           | 44.3  | 7.0        | 18.2 | 18.3  |  |
| North-East Asia               | 58.3           | 61.0  | 63.2  | 61.7  | 79.4  | 87.5  | -9.6       | 26.6  | 16.2  | 8.1            | 29.2  | 8.5        | 8.5  | 10.9  |  |
| South-East Asia               | 37.8           | 40.7  | 42.9  | 37.0  | 40.3  | 50.2  | -13.6      | 30.3  | 4.1   | 2.0            | 12.5  | 5.9        | 5.5  | 6.2   |  |
| Oceania                       | 3.2            | 3.1   | 3.1   | 3.0   | 10.2  | 10.6  | -0.9       | 12.4  | 3.9   | 0.4            | 1.3   | 2.7        | 1.3  | 1.3   |  |
| South Asia                    | 6.1            | 5.8   | 5.8   | 6.4   | 7.6   | 7.9   | 10.2       | 18.1  | 4.5   | 0.3            | 1.8   | 5.4        | 0.9  | 1.0   |  |
| Americas                      | 128.2          | 122.2 | 118.7 | 113.1 | 125.8 | 133.1 | -3.1       | 11.2  | 5.9   | 7.3            | 4.9   | 0.8        | 18.8 | 18.5  |  |
| North America                 | 31.5           | 36.4  | 33.3  | 37.4  | 35.3  | 39.4  | -7.1       | 10.9  | 4.1   | 3.5            | -2.1  | -0.5       | 13.3 | 11.1  |  |
| Caribbean                     | 17.1           | 16.8  | 16.0  | 17.0  | 18.2  | 19.2  | 6.5        | 6.7   | 5.4   | 1.0            | 2.1   | 2.3        | 2.5  | 2.4   |  |
| Central America               | 4.3            | 4.4   | 4.7   | 4.9   | 5.8   | 6.6   | 4.2        | 17.8  | 13.6  | 0.6            | 2.2   | 0.6        | 0.6  | 0.3   |  |
| South America                 | 15.2           | 14.6  | 12.7  | 13.7  | 16.0  | 18.0  | 7.9        | 16.2  | 12.7  | 2.0            | 2.8   | 3.4        | 2.2  | 2.2   |  |
| Africa                        | 23.2           | 28.8  | 29.5  | 30.7  | 33.3  | 38.7  | 4.1        | 8.4   | 10.1  | 3.4            | 8.5   | 5.4        | 4.1  | 4.5   |  |
| North Africa                  | 10.2           | 10.7  | 10.4  | 11.1  | 12.8  | 13.6  | 6.6        | 15.5  | 6.1   | 0.6            | 3.4   | 5.9        | 1.5  | 1.7   |  |
| Subsaharan Africa             | 13.0           | 18.2  | 19.1  | 19.6  | 20.5  | 25.1  | 2.8        | 4.5   | 12.6  | 2.6            | 5.1   | 5.2        | 2.6  | 2.9   |  |
| Middle East                   | 25.2           | 25.0  | 28.2  | 30.0  | 35.8  | 38.4  | 2.8        | 18.8  | 8.8   | 2.5            | 13.2  | 8.8        | 3.7  | 4.3   |  |

Source: World Tourism Organization (WTO) ©

(Data as collected by WTO January 2006)

Note for editors:

Additional data and graphs are available in the excerpt of the current issue of the UN WTO World Tourism Barometer that can be downloaded from the Facts & Figures section of the UN WTO website at [www.world-tourism.org/facts/wtb.html](http://www.world-tourism.org/facts/wtb.html). A complimentary electronic copy of the full version of the January 2006 issue of the UN WTO World Tourism Barometer will be provided to media only upon request to [comm@world-tourism.org](mailto:comm@world-tourism.org). The UN WTO World Tourism Barometer is a periodical publication for UNWTO Members prepared by the Market Intelligence and Promotion Department of the World Tourism Organization. It is published three times a year (January, June and October) in electronic format and in hardcopy in English, French and Spanish.