In 2005, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), recognized by the UN General Assembly in resolution 58/232 [YUN 2003, p. 1475] as a specialized agency, continued to play a central role in promoting responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism, with particular attention to the interests of developing countries. In its second year as a UN agency, UNWTO assisted in rebuilding the tourism sector in destination countries affected by the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami [YUN 2004, p. 952] and confirmed its role in fighting poverty around the world.

The UNWTO General Assembly, its governing body, held its sixteenth session (Dakar, Senegal, 3-6 December). The UNWTO Executive Council, which met between Assembly sessions, held its seventy-fifth session (Nessebar, Bulgaria, 13-14 June). Other meetings of UNWTO organs convened in 2005 included the first emergency session of the UNWTO Executive Council (Phuket, Thailand, 1 February); a conference on Harnessing Tourism for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) [YUN 2000, p. 51] (New York, 13 September); a World Tourism Forum for Peace and Sustainable Development (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 23-24 October); and meetings of the UNWTO Commissions for Africa (Gaborone, Botswana, April), Europe (Coimbra, Portugal, May), the Americas (Santiago, Chile, May), East Asia and the Pacific (Otsu, Japan, June) and the Middle East (Amman, Jordan, September).

World Tourism Day was commemorated on 27 September, under the theme “Travel and transport: from the imaginary of Jules Verne to twenty-first century reality”.

As at 31 December, UNWTO comprised 150 member States, seven associate members, two observers and over 300 affiliate members, representing the private sector, educational institutions and destination management organizations. During the year, six States—the Bahamas, Belarus, Latvia, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste and the United Kingdom—became members of the Organization.

Activities

During 2005, UNWTO continued its work to develop sustainable tourism as a force for eliminating poverty, as part of its commitment to contribute to the implementation of the MDGs, in particular through its programme known as Sustainable Tourism—Eliminating Poverty (ST-EP) initiative, which was operated jointly with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

The UNWTO General Assembly (see above), considered, as one of its principle themes, tourism’s contribution to the sustainable development of poorer countries and the elimination of poverty. During the session, the UNWTO Secretary-General highlighted the need for greater awareness of tourism in and to Africa.

The first emergency session of the UNWTO Executive Council, convened in February (see above), adopted the Phuket Action Plan (see p. 1026) to assist countries affected by the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami [YUN 2004, p. 952] in the recovery of their tourism sectors.

The World Committee on Tourism Ethics, established by the UNWTO General Assembly in 2003 as an independent body to assist in implementing and monitoring the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, at its third meeting (Tunis, Tunisia, 16-17 May), examined four disputes reported by individual applicants. Three of the four cases received did not qualify in terms of the Committee’s criteria for the consideration of such cases. In the fourth case, the Committee was expected to make its recommendation towards the end of the year, after consulting all the parties concerned. The Committee agreed on a short and user-friendly extract of the Code entitled “The Responsible Tourist and Traveller”, with the intention of creating awareness among ordinary travelers of their responsibilities.

During the year, UNWTO launched its UNWTO TedProm initiative, which encompassed all activities aimed at disseminating information about quality tourism through education, training and research programmes. The organization recognized and promoted those programmes and activities carried out by UNWTO Tourism Education Quality (TedQual) certified institutions, which were selected by means of a quality audit. UNWTO released the first edition of *TedQual: The World’s Leading Tourism Programmes*, a publication aimed at promoting the academic programmes offered by TedQual certified institutions and helping to guide students in the tourism programme selection process.
Other UNWTO activities addressed cooperation for development; sustainable tourism development; statistics; market intelligence; support for tourism microbusiness; and other issues.

Regional activities to strengthen and support national tourism were undertaken by UNWTO in Africa, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific, the Middle East and Europe.

On 30 November, Francesco Frangialli (France) was re-elected for a third four-year term as Secretary-General of UNWTO, effective 1 January 2006.

Secretariat

As at 31 December 2005, UNWTO staff numbered 91, of whom 37 were in the Professional or higher categories and 54 were in the General Service category.

Budget

The UNWTO budget for 2005 amounted to 11,438,000 euros.