



Joint Press Release

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UNWTO and partners to promote accessible tourism for all

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the ONCE Foundation for Cooperation and Social Inclusion of People with Disabilities and the European Network for Accessible Tourism (ENAT) have signed a Cooperation Agreement aimed at developing ever more accessible tourism for persons with disabilities (Madrid, Spain, 16 September).

“The facilitation of tourist travel for persons with disabilities is a central part of responsible and sustainable tourism,” said UNWTO Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai. “Over 600 million people worldwide suffer from some form of disability and it is the duty of every one of us to help ensure that they enjoy equal access to travel and tourism”.

The Executive Vice President of the ONCE Foundation, Mr. Alberto Duran López, stressed the importance of counting on the support of UNWTO. “We are happy to work with UNWTO and ENAT and trust this partnership will significantly advance equal opportunities and rights for persons with disabilities,” he said.

The President of ENAT, Ms. Lilian Müller, expressed the hope to “bring a greater awareness of ‘Accessible Tourism for All’ among UNWTO members and to provide them with new tools and resources so that they can make effective progress in this growing field of tourism”.

Aimed at enabling universal access to tourism facilities and services, the Agreement entails a series of initiatives, including awareness-raising, technical support, indicators and training in the field of accessibility to National Tourism Administrations and tourism enterprises. The trilateral accord also involves the promotion of traineeships for young persons with disabilities, with a view towards their integration in the labour market. It further encompasses the funding of pilot projects in destinations, involving the application of new technologies, to facilitate the participation of persons with disabilities in tourism and leisure-related activities.

Signed in Madrid by Mr. Rifai, Mr. López, and Ms. Müller, the Cooperation Agreement builds on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (30 March 2007), and the UNWTO Resolution on Accessible Tourism for All, adopted by the UNWTO General Assembly in 2005 and prepared in collaboration with the ONCE Foundation.

Relevant links:

Photos of the signing: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/unwto/sets/72157627581468573/>

UNWTO Ethics and Social Dimensions of Tourism Programme: <http://ethics.unwto.org/en>

ONCE Foundation: <http://www.fundaciononce.es/EN/Pages/Portada.aspx>

ENAT: <http://www.accessibletourism.org>

Contacts:

UNWTO Principal Media Officer: **Marcelo Risi**

Tel: (+34) 91 567 81 60

mrisi@UNWTO.org

UNWTO Communications Programme

Tel: +34 91-567-8100

Fax: +34 91-567-8218

comm@UNWTO.org

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO: www.UNWTO.org), a United Nations specialized agency, is the leading international organization with the decisive and central role in promoting the development of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism. It serves as a global forum for tourism policy issues and a practical source of tourism know-how. Its membership includes 154 countries, 7 territories, 2 permanent observers and over 400 Affiliate Members.