



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM  
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**UNWTO's tourism for development facility set to grow tourism in developing countries**

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A United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) working group chaired by Tourism Minister Derek Hanekom has led to the United Nations (UN) establishing a new facility to grow tourism in developing countries.

The working group met at the 21st General Assembly of the UNWTO taking place in Medellin, Colombia, this week. The theme of the General Assembly centres around how tourism can promote inclusive development and social transformation.

More than 900 delegates from 120 countries - including over 70 Ministers of Tourism and Secretaries of State - are attending the General Assembly, which was opened by Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos Calderon on Monday.

The working group was established by the UNWTO Executive Council in 2013, and chaired by South Africa. It includes representatives from Egypt, Flanders, France, Jamaica, Kenya, Mauritania, Mexico, the Republic of Korea and Spain.

"The working group has now agreed on the terms of reference of the Tourism for Development Facility," said Minister Hanekom.

"The facility will support projects and activities that reduce poverty and promote responsible and sustainable development.

"Tourism is a powerful catalyst for economic and social development. More than one billion tourists travel to destinations around the world every year. The economic activity they generate supports jobs, reduces poverty and creates mutual understanding among people from different cultures," he said.

A variety of separate mechanisms are currently in place to receive and disburse funds for the development of tourism. The Tourism for Development Facility (TDF) will be a single mechanism that oversees funds received by the UNWTO from donors and distributes them to member states that are listed as Official Development Aid recipients.

UNWTO Secretary-General Dr Taleb Rifai praised South Africa for its leadership in bringing the new facility to life.

Dr Rifai said the TDF will help to raise awareness and address the gross underfunding of tourism development.

The working group will continue to oversee the implementation of the TDF. It will develop guidelines and policy recommendations for governments to establish mechanisms to provide loans and loan guarantees to support the tourism sector.

The TDF aims to strengthen the developmental role of the UNWTO and mobilize contributions from donors to address the challenges faced by developing countries through sustainable, responsible and accessible development related to tourism.

Contributions to the TDF can be made by UNWTO member states, other members of the United Nations, non-government organisations, developmental financial institutions and private sources.

The TDF will be administered by the UNWTO Secretariat and will become operational in January 2016.

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