



Press Release

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World Tourism Day on “Tourism and Water”: greater efforts on water preservation needed

27th of September marks the United Nations’ calendar day highlighting tourism, a sector that is driving socioeconomic growth and development all over the world. On World Tourism Day 2013, dedicated to “Tourism and Water – Protecting Our Common Future” in line with the International Year of Water Cooperation, stakeholders called for greater global efforts in water preservation.

Opening the official celebrations of World Tourism Day (WTD) 2013, hosted this year by the Maldives, President Mohammed Waheed Hassan Manik said “Solutions to the Maldives’ water challenges are in the tourism sector. I hope that the industry will pay attention to the way the Maldives has been addressing the water challenge. The Maldives must become an example of what can be done.”

The call by the United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon on the responsibility of the tourism sector to safeguard and intelligently manage water was echoed by UNWTO Secretary-General Taleb Rifai: “As one of the world’s leading socio-economic activities, the tourism sector must take a leadership role and ensure companies and destinations invest in adequate water management throughout the value chain.”

The Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture of the Maldives, Ahmed Adeeb Abdul Gafoo, stressed how “tourism has become a powerful force for environmental preservation and protection. For our country, the tourism sector constitutes a priority because it is an important asset for the creation of wealth and employment.”

Tourism to lead in water preservation

As the highlight of WTD 2013, a high-level Think Tank on Tourism and Water gathered leading experts on water preservation, public and private sector tourism stakeholders and media experts to discuss key issues contributing to a more sustainable water future.

The following are the key insights of the Think Tank conclusions:

- The Maldives is a paradigm of well-managed and sustainable water use in developing island States, where the availability of fresh water and the level of water consumption for tourism have become a particular concern.
- With over one billion people traveling the world every year, the tourism sector can play an educational role as a water-conscious sector.
- Though tourism only uses 1% of global water consumption, challenges remain for water use at destinations, since the sector often competes with other sectors for water.
- There is significant room for increasing efficiency and reducing cost of water consumption in hotels (water accounts for 10% of utility bills in many hotels, most of which pay for the water they consume twice, first in buying fresh water and by disposing of it as wastewater).
- Investing in green technology is economically beneficial, with profits from water sanitation and wastewater treatment having a return on investment (ROI) of one to three years.
- Given tourism's size and reach, the sector is well-positioned to make a real contribution to preserving the world's precious water resources.

Note to editors:

World Tourism Day (WTD) is held annually on 27 September.

Its purpose is to foster awareness among the international community of the importance of tourism and its social, cultural, political and economic value. The event seeks to address global challenges outlined in the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to highlight the contribution the tourism sector can make in reaching these goals.

Useful links:

[World Tourism Day](#)

[UN International Year of Water Cooperation](#)

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