



**UN NEWS CENTRE**

With breaking stories and  
newswire products from



## **UN tourism forum opens with call to capitalize on potential of industry**



Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro

9 October 2011 –

Calling on governments, donors and international financial institutions to "unlock the potential of tourism," Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro today hailed the industry's ability to create jobs, stimulate economies and overcome poverty.

In an address to the 19th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), taking place in Gyeongju, Republic of Korea, Ms. Migiro said tourism has become one of the world's most important economic sectors.

In one third of developing countries, tourism is the principal export sector, and the industry has remained resilient in the face of the global economic crisis, she noted.

"There is little doubt that responsible tourism has tremendous capacity to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals ([MDGs](#))," she said, referring to the series of globally agreed targets, such as halving poverty, halting environmental degradation, improving maternal health and ensuring universal education, all by 2015.

Ms. Migiro, who is Tanzanian, said she had seen for herself the benefits that tourism can provide ever since she grew up in a village on the slopes of the renowned Mount Kilimanjaro, close to the Serengeti plains and the Ngorongoro Crater.

"Over the years I have seen how tourism has helped to change the face of this majestic landscape. Luxury lodges, paved roads and, yes, jobs. People from around the world have seen the wonders of my country -- indeed the larger African continent -- as well as its rich and diverse array of traditions and cultures. We have built bridges of understanding and appreciation. This is the great power of tourism."

The Deputy Secretary-General said that, despite the economic power of tourism, international donors and development finance institutions had not yet made the industry a priority area for either funding or engagement.

"Nor is it high on the agenda of our sustainability policies. Let us work to change this so we can unlock the potential of tourism? I urge you to advocate on behalf of tourism's potential to create jobs, attract foreign exchange, investment and know-how and stimulate local economies."

She stressed that tourism will only continue to prosper if it conforms to values such as freedom, equality, tolerance, respect for nature and respect for human dignity.

News Tracker: past stories on this issue

[Tourism an important force to reduce poverty and foster global solidarity – UN](#)