



UN NEWS CENTRE

With breaking stories and
newswire products from



Tourism an important force to reduce poverty and foster global solidarity – UN



This photograph, “East West Jubilation” by Rabin Chakrabarti, was a runner-up in UNWTO’s 2011 World Tourism Day photo contest

27 September 2011 –

Top United Nations officials stressed the importance of tourism in reducing poverty and linking countries through tolerance and solidarity as they marked World Tourism Day today.

“At a time of profound global economic uncertainty, tourism’s ability to generate socio-economic opportunities and help reduce the gap between rich and poor, is more important than ever,” Secretary Ban Ki-moon noted in his [message](#) for the Day.

“There is no better way to learn about a new culture than to experience it first-hand. Tourism offers a wonderful connecting thread between visitor and host community. It promotes dialogue and interaction. Such contact between people of different backgrounds is the very foundation for tolerance. In a world struggling for peaceful coexistence, tourism can build bridges and contribute to peace,” he said.

Mr. Ban called for the incorporation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, a set of principles adopted by the UN to guide tourism stakeholders into sustainable and responsible tourism development.

The UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Secretary General, Taleb Rifai, also stressed the importance of the code in his message saying that tourism growth brings serious responsibilities to minimize any potentially negative impacts on the cultural assets and heritage of mankind.

“With 940 million tourists crossing international borders in 2010, never have the world’s peoples and cultures been drawn together as now. Through tourism, millions of people are brought closer every day,” he [said](#), noting this year’s theme for the Day: “Tourism – linking cultures.”

“Experiencing different ways of life, discovering new food and customs and visiting cultural sites have become leading motivations for travel, and as a result, a crucial source of revenue and job creation, particularly for developing countries. Income from tourism is often redirected towards the safeguarding of these sites and even the revitalization of cultures,” he added.

Celebrated annually on 27 September, World Tourism Day serves to raise awareness among the international community of the importance of tourism and the contributions it can make in the economic, political and social sectors, and how it can help towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals ([MDGs](#)).

This year’s main celebrations are being held in Aswan, Egypt, with many other events taking place around the world. As part of the celebrations, industry leaders, academics and the media will take part in a think-tank discussion that will address the role of tourism in building understanding and tolerance worldwide.

UNWTO also launched a photo competition offering a trip to Egypt as its prize and its first-ever Twitter competition, asking people to tweet on how tourism can help link cultures.

News Tracker: past stories on this issue

[UN officials stress tourism’s role in safeguarding environment, reducing poverty](#)

