



Hospitable Climates named as key contributor to UK tourism industry's environmental achievements at UNWTO minister's summit on tourism and climate change

In a speech made to the UNWTO¹ ministers' summit on tourism and climate change² on 13 November, the Minister of Culture, Creative Industries and Tourism, Margaret Hodge, praised the UK tourism industry for its efforts in driving sustainable innovation and named Hospitable Climates as a key contributor.

Addressing an audience of over 100 government ministers at the United Nations-organised event, Hodge emphasised that although the tourism industry *"is often at the sharp end of bad publicity about the effects that flying, for example, has on the climate... for every negative news story, there should be a positive one too because a lot of work is being done by the tourism industry to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions and industry's carbon footprint."*

The Hospitable Climates programme was identified as a key contributor to the industry's efforts:

"Programmes such as Hospitable Climates gives advice to the hospitality industry on energy efficiency and we encourage businesses to join accreditation schemes such as the Green Tourism Business Scheme. Together, these schemes have led to savings of over 300,000 tonnes of carbon."

¹ United Nations World Tourism Organisation

² This was the first tourism ministers' summit on tourism and climate change.

The Minister did recognise, however, that ***“we need to do more”*** as ***“the sooner we take action the greater the chance we will have of succeeding in tackling climate change and the cheaper it will be.”*** Referring to the Stern Report on the Economics of Climate Change published last year, she argued ***“the costs in tackling climate change today are lower than the long term costs and effect on our economies and our societies if we fail to act today.”***

Encouragingly, such comments reflect opinion in the tourism industry, and, in response, it is intended that Hospitable Climates will evolve into an enhanced programme for which funding is being sought currently.

The new programme, which is anticipated to launch in April 2008, will provide information on waste and water management, renewable energy technologies, sustainable food procurement and sustainable design in addition to an energy advisory service.

As Institute of Hospitality Chief Executive, Philippe Rossiter observes, ***“Rarely does a day pass without global warming and sustainable best practice making national headline news. It is clear that the programme must respond to the changing, and increasingly sophisticated, environmental information needs of its members and consumers.”***

The tourism and climate change summit ended with participants endorsing the Davos Declaration and urging industry stakeholders to follow its recommendations.

END

Notes to the Editor:

To view Margaret Hodge's speech at the UNWTO ministers' summit on tourism and climate change in full, please go to:

http://www.culture.gov.uk/Reference_library/Minister_Speeches/margaret_hodge/margarethodgespeech_tourism_climatechange_13nov07.htm?contextId={9B8FBB48-E179-4D27-8011-C814908EF247}

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