

WORLD TOURISM DAY 2012: APPLYING  
OUR ENERGIES

**DATE :**                    **SEPTEMBER 2012**

### NATURAL POWER

There is no doubt about it – travel and tourism has the ability to ignite and excite people to take action. The dream and desire to explore new places, meet new people, discover new cultures, learn new things, build new friendships, establish new business associates, close new deals, and gain new perspectives can turn the passing of time until departure into sweet anticipation and sleep counts.

Travel's remarkable natural energy is, in the case of travellers, in unlimited supply. It can be generated at any time, in any place, even before any actual travel occurs. Just the thought of travelling can increase people's energy - searching the internet for information on next holidays, discussing with colleagues the new markets for next ventures. *It's going to be great!*

As thought turns to planning, planning to booking, booking to packing, and packing to 'time to go', energy levels increase. Perspective widens, inspiring people to be more productive, passionate and committed to things bigger than themselves.

Once the journey has begun, a natural phenomenon occurs – one's energy increases. You can see it in the visible upliftment of mood, and quickening of movement, as travellers set out for their chosen destination. Airport departure lounges become hubs of hope, happiness and *'I can hardly wait!'* Even if not traveling, onlookers can feel the excitement. It is infectious! We see it everywhere, every day.

For all of the growth of the global travel and tourism sector, however, huge amounts of energy are required to keep airplanes flying, hotels operating, services serving, experiences unfolding, and people working. The energy demands of the sector grow as the desires of travellers, and numbers of travellers, increase.

Thankfully, with the remarkable milestone of 1 billion international arrivals being reached in the latter part of 2012, the tourism community has made sustainable energy, and its ability to power sustainable development, an ongoing priority – applying the industry's energies to where it matters most.

### THE POWER OF ONE X ONE BILLION

Noting the growing energy demands of the sector, yet risks of irreversible depletion, the matter of sustainable energy is something that the global tourism community sees not as a programme, but as a part of sector stability and responsibility. Sustainable energy is, in fact, viewed as something that the global tourism community is particularly well positioned to play an active part in, both philosophically and practically.

Philosophically, the matter of sustainable energy is embedded in the role of conscience in responsible tourism.

'Responsible tourism', a single statement of approach to tourism, is in fact a multi-layered concept. Travellers venturing out into the world carry with them not only their passports and luggage – they also carry the responsibility of taking care of the places and people that they travel to experience. Respecting local cultures, people, history, natural environments and energy supplies is core to traveling with appreciation and awareness.

While one individual may question *'what difference can I really make by turning off the lights in this one hotel room?'* that one traveller multiplied by one billion has the ability to make a world of difference. The global travel community is increasingly coming together

to get travelers to work together to, one by one, make small changes in travel behaviour that make a massive difference to energy reduction.

In addition, and at a practical level, the global tourism community is applying its collective resources – intelligence, expertise, experience, funding and sense of responsibility, to formalize policies and programmes that institutionalise sustainable energy as part of the infrastructure and ideology of sector.

As stated by Dr. Taleb Rifai, Secretary General of the UNWTO (United Nations World Tourism Organisation),:

*“Tourism is leading the way in some of the world’s most innovative sustainable energy initiatives. Energy efficient upgrades to aircraft, the shift to renewable fuel for aviation and cruise liners, energy technology solutions in hotels, as well as countless other initiatives are placing tourism at the forefront of the clean energy transformation.*

*Sustainable energy initiatives in tourism are creating economic opportunities and jobs for millions, whether in tourism, energy or other sectors. As UNWTO findings show, the return on investment in sustainable energy can be enormous, enabling tourism businesses to grow and create jobs. At the same time, tourism infrastructure in developing countries is helping to bring modern energy services to some of the world’s most vulnerable communities.”*

For tourism to continue to create opportunities for the building of stronger societies and economies in destinations across the globe, the tourism sector has the opportunity to combine its energies to ensure the sector is continuously powered by sustainable energy.

### A DAY OF FOCUS

Even with a world of good intentions, formal focus is required to ensure that issues critical to the long-term, equitable growth, development, and inclusivity of the travel sector are given the attention they deserve. For this reason, the United Nations has dedicated one day each year to global tourism - World Tourism Day – the 27<sup>th</sup> of September.

In 2012, World Tourism Day puts the spotlight on the issue of sustainable energy – establishing awareness and understanding around the vital role that energy plays in tourism sector advancement, and the role that each and every stakeholder and traveler has to play in ensuring a bright, energy-rich future.

Under the theme **“Tourism & Sustainable Energy: Powering Sustainable Development”** the goal, as articulated by Dr Rifai, is clear:

*“With international tourist arrivals reaching one billion in 2012, more must be done to guarantee a brighter energy future. Destinations and companies must accelerate their transition to low-emission technologies and embrace existing opportunities to leapfrog conventional options in favor of more sustainable energy solutions.*

*As we celebrate World Tourism Day 2012, I urge all tourism stakeholders – governments, businesses and tourists themselves – to play their part in reaching the*



## COMPASS – Insights into Tourism Branding

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*UN goal of achieving sustainable energy for all by 2030 and position tourism at the center of the clean energy economies of the future.”*

At the heart of the message of World Tourism Day 2012, September 27<sup>th</sup>, is a spirit of individual responsibility. This spirit pervades throughout the year, every year, everywhere. And applies to everybody.

For travel to remain one of the greatest joys, privileges and opportunities of our lives, protecting and managing the world’s energy supplies is everyone’s responsibility.

Energy appreciation and conservation is not something to be delegated – it is something to be celebrated.

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