

**Mr. Wu Hongbo Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs,
Secretary-General for the Third International Conference on Financing for
Development**

**United Nations Symposium on Mainstreaming Sector Policies into integrated
National Sustainable Development Planning: Enhancing Sustainable Tourism,
Urbanisation, Resource Efficiency, Biodiversity and Environmental Protection**

14 October 2014, Tehran, Iran

Your Excellency, Mr. Eshaghe Jahangari, First Vice President of the Islamic Republic of Iran,

Your Excellency, Mr. Soltanifar,

Distinguished guests,

My colleagues from the United Nations,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is indeed my honour and pleasure to participate in such an important Symposium on such a critical topic: mainstreaming sectoral policies, such as tourism, into broader national sustainable development planning.

Allow me at the outset, to express my deepest gratitude to the people and Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the very warm hospitality they have shown since our arrival. I would also like to thank H.E. Mr. Soltanifar and his colleagues for the excellent arrangements they have made and the commendable cooperation they have extended to my team in preparation for the Symposium. We, at DESA, are very pleased to be co-organizing this Symposium with Iran's *Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization*.

The high-level attendance and participation by numerous distinguished experts in this event signifies the importance of tourism and its contribution toward sustainable development in Iran. Iran is home to one of the world's oldest civilizations, whose history is traced back thousands of years. Its rich and diverse cultural heritage, beautiful landscape, and its talented and hospitable people make it one of the greatest crossroads for bringing people together from around the globe, and promoting dialogue, peace and cultural exchange.

The importance of sustainable tourism for sustainable development is well recognized by the global community. World leaders gathered at Rio + 20 noted the significant contributions that tourism can make to sustainable development, if well managed and designed. After two years of broad consultation and deliberation, the Open Working Group of the UN General Assembly has just proposed a set of Sustainable Development Goals, which will help us to complete the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals, and place our world onto a more prosperous, just, peaceful and sustainable path.

One of the proposed goals calls for the international community to, “By 2030 devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism which creates jobs, promotes local culture and products”.

We must act quickly, as tourism is one of the largest and fastest-growing economic sectors in the world. In 2012, tourism and travel contributed to 9% of the global GDP. Around the world, tourism accounts for 1 out of every 11 jobs. The number of international tourists traveling around the globe has increased dramatically: from 278 million in 1980 to over one billion in 2013. By 2030 that number is expected to reach 1.8 billion.

Over the last two decades, the tourism sector grew considerably faster in developing countries than in developed countries. According to UNCTAD, developing countries account for more than 45 per cent of world tourism arrivals and more than 35 percent of international tourism revenues.

Tourism creates linkages across sectors in the national economy; hence, it has the potential to make a great contribution to economic diversification. By the same token, if poorly designed and managed, tourism can undermine sustainable development and threaten indigenous cultural heritage, the environment and biodiversity. Tourism policy is an essential ingredient of a well-integrated national sustainable development strategy.

Tourism has tremendous potential for business, employment, infrastructure development, and poverty alleviation. But it can also enhance dialogue amongst cultures and civilizations of the world.

It is no coincidence that Iran initiated the global idea of “Dialogue Amongst Cultures and Civilizations” several years ago. Indeed, increased international cooperation in sustainable tourism can help advance this much-needed global discourse. It can help avert extremism and violence around the world, and advance peace and stability at all levels.

I believe that the people of the Islamic Republic of Iran and H.E. President Hasan Rouhani can play a pivotal role in promoting such spirit of cooperation and understanding at regional and global levels. The dialogue that will take shape in the next two days will deepen and broaden our understanding of the challenges and possible solutions for integrating tourism policies into national sustainable development planning. I wish you all a productive dialogue and a successful outcome.

I thank you (in Farsi: “sepasgozaram”).