

Executive Summary of the 2nd Pacific Economic Cooperation Council Eco-Tourism Forum

The 2nd PECC Eco-Tourism was held at Shangri-la, Yunnan Province, China, on September 9-10, 2004. The theme of this Forum was Eco-Tourism and Cultural Heritage Protection.

The hosts for the event were China National Committee for Pacific Economic Cooperation, Yunnan Provincial People's Government, China Society for Promotion of the Guangcai Program, All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce. The organizers for the event were Chamber of Tourism of All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce, People's Government of Diqing Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province, China.

There were 250 participants from 31 countries/regions attended the Forum. In addition to the participants from China, there were overseas representatives from Algeria, Austria, Australia, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Colombia, Ecuador, France, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kuwait, Korea, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Singapore, Russia, UK, US, Viet Nam and Hongkong and Macao, as well as from PECC (Pacific Economic Cooperation Council) Secretariat, Resident Coordinator of UN Systems in China/Resident Representative of UNDP in China, the 6-nation Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The President of World Travel & Tourism Council was present at the Forum and gave guidance to the endeavor. The President showed great enthusiasm towards the cause of eco-tourism and raised many important, down-to-the-point ideas and suggestions based on WTTC rich experiences. In the course of the 2-day meetings, many speeches, lectures and entrepreneurs' presentations were given, and discussions were carried out relevant to the theme of the meetings—eco-tourism and cultural heritage protection. Case studies from both home and abroad were also heard.

The 2-day meetings were followed by a 3-day research & study tour to the Shudu Lake and Meili Snow Mountain. Participants visited Shudu Lake, Xiagei Ethnic Village, Tibetan families, Napa Grassland, pottery clay handicraft making, large bend of Yangtze River, Baimang Snow Mountain and Meili Snow Mountain. They enjoyed the beautiful eco-tourism resources and were impressed by the bio-diversity, cultural diversity in Shangri-la area.

Mr. Hu Deping, Vice President of China Society for Promotion of the Guangcai Program, made a summary of the meetings. He pointed out that eco-tourism development and ethnic cultural heritage protection are common responsibility of mankind. We expect that governments of all countries, all social circles including entrepreneurs in particular, together shoulder and carry out the responsibility with the objective of building our beautiful homeland.

This Forum was in continuation to the 1st PECC Eco-Tourism Forum held in Quito, Ecuador, in November 2002. The host of that Forum, the Ecuadorian National Committee for Pacific Economic Cooperation drafted the Quito Declaration—which was adopted at the Forum. The document proposed important actions and initiatives for eco-tourism development. This Forum further discussed and elaborated those actions and initiatives with more innovative and creative ideas.

Shangri-La Forum is advocating the following concepts: Building forward-looking strategic concepts; overcoming potentially damaging easy development ideas; raising awareness of local inhabitants and authorities; formulating government policies, environment protection standards, eco-tourism codes; balancing development of eco-tourism and economic development of local community (a prerequisite for sustainable development); enhancing public and private sectors partnership, promoting wide participation and cooperation among all relevant players and stake holders.

This Forum was concluded with the adoption of the <<Shangri-La Common

Understanding>> on Eco-tourism and Cultural Heritage Protection. The Common Understanding emphasizes:

1. Importance of the issue of eco-environment and eco-tourism was much emphasized. Mankind has already been severely punished by nature owing to their unawareness and short-sightedness. It is high time that mankind be mobilized to take up the challenge.
2. To learn to protect eco-environment is increasingly becoming public common understanding, but to protect cultural heritage is yet to call for much more public attention. Human beings with their unique culture are the pillar and main entity of the whole exercise of eco-environment protection and eco-tourism development. Ignorance of human beings and their culture would mean failure or estrangement of the exercise.
3. The integrity regional ecology must be protected and sustainability of tourism industry development must be kept. Only then, eco-tourism could be developed with eco-environment and cultural heritage preserved, and economic development could be really achieved with benefits brought to local ethnic inhabitants to change their poverty destiny.
4. Eco-environment and cultural heritage are treasures belonging not only to a particular region, to a particular country, but to the world. Hence, world-wide efforts are called for to contribute to the noble and humane exercise.
5. Shangri-la region was an excellent choice for this Forum. Participants, in addition to doing thinking, had some experience of how a paradise on earth was like and their love for it enhanced. The efforts already done by the people of Yunnan Province for eco-environment preservation and cultural heritage protection are appreciated, but indeed there is still a long way to go.

6. Governors of the Yunnan Province attended the meetings and met with representatives from overseas, and had cordial conversations with them. This showed how the local authorities viewed the issue of importance, and would add impetus to the endeavour for the exercise to which all are trying to contribute their efforts, as the local people and local authorities after all are the main players of the exercise.

China National Committee for Pacific Economic Cooperation (CNCPEC) thanked all participants who had traveled from near and far to joint the event, and thanked the local host—the Yunnan Provincial People’s Government and the Diqing Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture for the excellent arrangements made for the Forum to be successfully held, and for their unique Tibetan and other ethnic groups’ hospitality.

China National Committee for Pacific Economic Cooperation
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