

Tourism alliance will have a global impact

A newly established international tourism organization initiated by China is expected to push the global tourism industry forward and further facilitate cooperation around the world, insiders said.

Gino Andreetta, chief executive of Club Med Greater China, said the World Tourism Alliance initiated by China will play a leading role in the development of the world tourism industry and also will contribute to the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative.

Tokozile Xasa, tourism minister of South Africa, said he believed the alliance would connect the tourism industry around the world by offering a good platform for them to cooperate and share the experience of developing tourism with each other.

They spoke as the World Tourism Alliance was officially set up on Tuesday in Chengdu, Sichuan province, where the 22nd General Assembly of the United Nations World Tourism Organization is being held.

Premier Li Keqiang sent a congratulatory message to the inauguration ceremony of the World Tourism Alliance.

According to Duan Qiang, the newly elected first chairman of the alliance, it was proposed by the China Tourism Association and is a nongovernment, nonprofit organization for tourism consultation and cooperation.

"Following the vision of 'better tourism, better world' and the objectives of promoting development and poverty alleviation, the alliance aims to enhance international exchanges and cooperation in the global tourism community," he said.

He said the alliance has 89 founding members, many of which are tourism associations, enterprises, think tanks and research institutes.

More than 60 percent of the members are from overseas. The headquarters and secretariat of the alliance are based in Beijing.

Duan, who also serves as president of the Beijing Tourism Group, one of the biggest tourism enterprises in China, said the establishment of the China-proposed tourism alliance is a "natural outcome", as the country is becoming increasingly influential in the development of the world tourism industry.

According to a report on travel and tourism competitiveness released by the World Economic Forum in April, China, ranked 15th among the 136 countries and regions involved in the rating, has become the largest tourism market in the world and is making greater contributions to the development of tourism worldwide.

Li Jinzao, director of the China National Tourism Administration, said that in an era when the tourism industry worldwide faces opportunities as well as challenges, nongovernmental organizations have been a major force in the global tourism governance system.

“The establishment of the alliance is one of the milestones in the history of world tourism,” he said.

“I hope that the World Tourism Alliance will get involved in the Belt and Road Initiative, so the tourism industry in China will take the opportunity to deepen cooperation with countries involved in the initiative,” he said.