

Tourism key to foster trade for least developed countries – UN-backed report

13 July 2017 – A United Nations-backed report released today stressed the need for greater recognition of tourism as a key service export in order to attract technical assistance to the sector in least developed countries (LDCs).

Although tourism [represents](#) seven per cent of all international trade and 30 per cent of the world's services trade, it is often difficult to direct trade-related technical assistance towards the sector because tourism and trade tend to fall under different line ministries, the report points out.

Produced by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF), the report, titled [Tourism for Sustainable Development in Least Developed Countries](#), was launched on the occasion of the Aid for Trade Review held in Geneva.

In [LDCs](#), tourism accounts for seven per cent of total exports of goods and services – a figure that stands at 10 per cent for non-oil LDC exporters.

The report says that tourism can make a strong contribution to the economies of LDCs, but successful interventions in tourism require strong collaboration across government agencies as well as across different actors at the regional or local level.

The report also aims to increase the commitment and investment in coordination and raise tourism's prominence in trade-related technical assistance as to ensure the sector delivers on its powerful capacity to create jobs and incomes where they are most needed and for those who are most vulnerable – including youth and women.

UNWTO, ITC and EIF are working to contribute to this process of increased coordination and collaboration by joining forces in the design and implementation of tailored tourism technical assistance and tourism export strategies, and leveraging resources.

The report's launch coincides with the [International Year](#) of Sustainable Tourism for Development 2017.

The Year aims to support a change in policies, business practices and consumer behavior towards a more sustainable tourism sector that can contribute to [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs).

Goal 17 sets as one of the targets a significant increase of exports of developing countries, in particular with a view to doubling the least developed countries' share of global exports by 2020, to which tourism as service export can contribute.