



Press Release from Bournemouth University
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Further information:
Charlotte Knight
Tel: 01202 961033

E-mail: press@bournemouth.ac.uk

BU tackles tourism sustainability and climate challenge

“Focus on the alternative needs for travel and communicate the positive aspects of tourism” was the advice given by leading environmentalists and tourism experts at a recent Bournemouth University (BU) event to discuss how the tourism industry can survive a global economic recession and the environmental impact of climate change.

Supported by *Travel Daily News* and *Earthscan*, the international forum on ‘Sustainability, Climate Change and Tourism: Challenges posed by the global economic crisis’ was hosted by BU’s International Centre for Tourism & Hospitality Research (ICTHR) one of the UK’s leading experts on tourism. The event was attended by delegates from around the world including senior representatives from the United Nations Educational Scientific & Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO).

Dr Ishwaran Natarajan, Director UNESCO Man and Biosphere Programme (MAB) and the Division of Ecological Sciences spoke about UNESCO’s World Network of Biosphere Reserves – a large network of internationally protected ‘green’ tourism destinations located in over 100 countries throughout the world. Highlighting the popularity of the reserves, Dr Natarajan explained how tourists were keen to visit the sites to learn more about how they can help to improve biodiversity conservation and contribute to sustainable development. His advice to the industry was: “to focus attention on alternative needs for travel, such as to learn and explore, rather than just for leisure purposes.”

Reflecting on the significant relationship between the industry and the environment Dr Luigi Cabrini, Director UNWTO’s Department of Sustainable Development of Tourism added: “Tourism is a highly climate-sensitive sector. Climate patterns threaten to alter tourism flows, with less developed countries particularly affected, and yet travel, such as air travel, is one of the biggest contributors to climate change.”

He advised the delegates to look to reducing energy use and improving its efficiency where possible, specifically in the case of transport and accommodation, and to focus on communicating the positive aspects of tourism.

Dr Vijay Reddy from BU's ICTHR organised the event. He said: "Both climate change and sustainability must be approached as a common challenge. This cutting-edge international forum provided the perfect opportunity to identify and explore current issues facing sustainable development as well as the likely impacts associated with climate change from the point of view of the tourism industry."

Also involved in the forum were representatives from TUI Travel PLC (Mr James Whittingham), South West Tourism (Ms Emma Whittlesea), University of Oxford (Dr Murray Simpson), and Lincoln University in New Zealand (Dr Susanne Becken).

Highlighting case studies from areas such as Galapagos Islands Ecuador, Noosa Reserve Australia and San Andres Nicaragua, the speakers also delivered presentations based on research into areas such as the response of the tour operator, the new policy for Climate Change in New Zealand, and CARIBSAVE – a sectoral approach to climate change and tourism in the Caribbean.

Notes to Editors:

1. BU is the UK's Number One New University (first place among all institutions that became universities since 1992) according to The Guardian University Guide 2009 & 2010. (www.guardian.co.uk/education)
2. In the 2008 [Research Assessment Exercise](#) (RAE) BU is the fourth most improved university in the UK for the quality of its research (according to *Times Higher Education*).

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Please contact the Bournemouth University Press Office: Tel: (01202) 961033
Mob: (07738 143100) **e-mail:** press@bournemouth.ac.uk