

TOURISM IN MEXICO TO FOCUS ON DOMESTIC TRAVELERS



The minister of tourism in Mexico, Enrique de la Madrid Cordero, expects the sector to record positive growth over the coming 5 years. The estimates show that by 2020 the amount of domestic tourists in the country will reach 100 million.

Last year, Mexican tourism industry increased and the positive trend is expected to continue for the next 5 years, according to the tourism minister. **With an annual average growth rate of 4 percent, the 83.2 million domestic travelers recorded in the country in 2015 are likely to increase to 100 million by 2020**, said Enrique de la Madrid Cordero.

To further develop tourism in Mexico, the government will support social tourism projects, encouraging disadvantaged people to travel, and domestic travel sector. Currently, Mexicans account for 82 percent of tourist spending in Mexico.

"We want to take advantage of the weak exchange rate, so that instead of going abroad tourists will explore local destinations. This has to be linked to the growth of the economy, which is doing well, because the consumption is up," said the minister.

Currently, in Mexico there are more than 70 new luxury hotels being built including Four Seasons Resort Los Cabos at Costa Palmas and Ritz Carlton Mexico City.

In 2014, tourism in Mexico accounted for 8.5 percent of GDP. The sector is larger than the construction industry which represents 7.5 percent of GDP and also larger than the national financial system itself which is around 3.5 percent. Travel sector employs some 9 million Mexicans.

Recently, the government launched a new program, called "Mejora Tu Hotel" (Improve Your Hotel) to support the modernization of the hotel industry and to attract more sophisticated tourists.

Also, the ministry of tourism in Mexico plans to develop and diversify the attractions.

"From the beginning of his administration, the president's instructions were to not necessarily develop new destinations, but rather to consolidate the existing ones, because it is more profitable in terms of resources. In this case, the ministry is working on a program to promote Huatulco. The plan is to build up to 2,000 additional rooms by the end of the six-year period."

Other destinations where the government plans to invest are Loreto in Baja California Sur, Acapulco, and Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo.

Yucatan is one of the regions increasing in popularity among tourists especially because of its underwater world. The reef located south off the coast of Yucatan is considered particularly rich in species and is the second largest in the world, after the Great Barrier Reef in Australia.

Another attraction is the fun park Xcaret Cancun, which is a kind of natural Disneyland with beach, equestrian show, diving, restaurants and all kinds of animals.

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