

Spain to Host World Tourism Day 2012 under the Theme Tourism and Sustainable Energy



The 2012 official World Tourism Day (WTD) celebrations will be held in Maspalomas, Gran Canaria, Spain (27 September 2012). Under the theme “Tourism and Sustainable Energy: Powering Sustainable Development”, WTD 2012 highlights the need to bring the tourism sector and energy stakeholders closer together to spur tourism’s contribution to sustainability.

“Tourism is at the forefront of many of the latest and most innovative sustainable energy initiatives,” said UNWTO Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai. “One only has to think of the investments being poured into renewable energy sources for aviation, or the energy technology solutions implemented in hotels around the world, to know that sustainable energy is a major priority for the sector.”

“The message at the heart of World Tourism Day 2012 is that these initiatives and commitments are not only helping to protect the environment, they are also creating economic opportunities and jobs for millions, whether in tourism, energy or other sectors,” he said.

Official celebrations will take place in the town of Maspalomas in the Canary Islands, Spain, as was announced during the UNWTO Press Conference at the ITB Travel Trade Show with the presence of the Spanish Secretary of State for Tourism, Isabel Borrego.

“Spain is among the top five countries investing in renewable energies worldwide and 20% of the energy consumed in Spain comes from renewable sources,” said Ms. Borrego. “We are convinced that the celebrations of World Tourism Day 2012 will be of great interest given the high caliber of participants, as well as the other events being organized to raise awareness of World Tourism Day among the general public.”

Holding this year’s celebrations in Spain is particularly fitting given its reputation as “one of the world’s top tourism destinations and a global leader in renewable energies,” said the Secretary-General. As well as being a major tourism destination, one third of the island of Gran Canaria, including the town of Maspalomas, where the celebrations will take place, is a Biosphere Reserve of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Official WTD celebrations will include a High-Level Think Tank on the 2012 theme, at which public and private tourism stakeholders will join leaders from the energy sector to further the use of sustainable energy in the tourism sector. Confirmed participants include the Spanish Minister of Industry, Energy and Tourism, José Manuel Soria, and the President of Acciona Energy, Carmen Becerril, of Spanish multinational Acciona.

WTD 2012 coincides with the UN International Year of Sustainable Energy for All, offering the opportunity to further highlight the shared responsibility of the tourism and energy sectors to the wider sustainability objectives of the UN.

About World Tourism Day

World Tourism Day is celebrated annually on 27 September. Its purpose is to foster awareness among the international community of the importance of tourism and its social, cultural, political and economic value. The event seeks to address global challenges outlined in the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and highlight the contribution the tourism sector can make in reaching these goals.

Contacts:

Principal Media Officer:

Marcelo Risi

mrisi@unwto.org

Tel: (+34) 91 567 81 60

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