Hon'ble Chairman and Distinguished Delegates:

The importance of tourism, as an instrument of economic development and employment generation, has been well recognized the world over. It accounts for roughly 10.6 per cent of the world's GDP and 8.3 per cent of the world's employment. It is indeed a large service industry globally in terms of gross revenue as well as foreign exchange earnings. The Indian tourism industry had a contribution of 5.92 per cent in the GDP and created 49.8 million jobs in 2007-2008. Tourism in India has experienced huge buoyancy in the recent years. Our tourism industry witnessed an increase of 8.1 per cent in Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) in the year 2010. There were 5.58 million FTAs in India during 2010 as against 5.17 million in 2009 and this is on the rise. India did much better than the UNWTO's (United Nations World Tourism Organisation) projected growth rate of 5 to 6 per cent for the world during the same period. The Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEEs) from tourism also witnessed a significant increase from 11394 million US dollars in 2009 to 14193 million
US dollars in 2010, registering a growth rate of 24.6 per cent in US dollars terms.

Tourism in India has come into its own as a brand - India tourism. India’s diverse colours, fairs & festivals, religions, ethnicity, wildlife and numerous cultural heritage sites makes it one of the most attractive tourist destinations in the world. With its backward and forward linkages with other sectors of the economy, like transport, construction, handicrafts, manufacturing, horticulture, agriculture, etc., tourism has the potential to be not only the economy driver but also to become an effective tool for poverty alleviation and ensuring growth with equity. Thus, tourism’s role in achieving economic, social, environmental and developmental objectives is vast and profound. It plays an extremely important role in the economy of our country and we would like to see that tourism sector delivers on its full potential to accelerate our economic growth and development. Our efforts are also aimed at making India an ecologically and socially sensitive tourist destination.

India is one of the fastest growing economies of the world today and precisely at a time when we are confronted with development imperatives,
we are severely impacted by climate change. With close economic ties to natural resources and climate sensitive sectors like agriculture, water, forestry and tourism, India is more vulnerable to climate change. We have a large coastline, with a huge and growing population of about 300 million (living along the coast), vulnerable to tsunamis and rise in sea levels. The United Nations Environment Programme ranks India among the first 10 of the 27 countries that are most vulnerable to a sea level rise. Our half a billion population living in the north Indian region is dependent for water security on the Himalayan glaciers which are under retreat. Our economy is still dependent on the monsoon and any indifferent monsoon pattern can create havoc on our economic performance. India is acutely aware of the considerable challenges we face today from climate change. We, like other developing countries, bear an inordinate share of the burden of climate change even though this is due to high-level emissions of the developed countries.

India with 17.31 per cent of the world’s population contributes only 4 per cent of the total global Greenhouse Gas Emissions. We have taken ambitious domestic actions to address climate change challenges. The Eight National Missions (solar, energy efficiency, sustainable habitat, water,
Himalayan eco-system, Green India, eco-green agriculture, and knowledge) which form the core of our National Action Plan on Climate Change represent multi-pronged, long term and integrated strategies for achieving key goals in the context of climate change. Our Government has also launched the ‘Green India’ project that will be the world’s largest afforestation project covering six million hectares of degraded forestland. All these measures are contributing to reduce emission of greenhouse gases in our country.

We are a developing nation faced with challenges of economic growth and poverty alleviation. We are making major efforts to achieve the UN Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development objectives apart from those which we have set ourselves nationally. We are striving to bring a better quality of life for millions of our people and consequently a higher level of human development. We have to undertake major irrigation projects to meet our growing agricultural infrastructure needs. We need to expand our industrial base in core areas with a view to achieving self sufficiency in vital spheres besides creating employment opportunities for our educated youth. Any talk of binding commitments by developing countries like India for cutting emission of
greenhouse gases while the developed countries who have committed to specific emissions reduction targets under *Kyoto Protocol* have hardly done anything to fulfill their own commitments, is premature and violates the central principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities” enshrined in the UNFCCC.

We believe that climate change mitigation by developing countries needs to be seen in the context of their over-riding priority for development. Therefore, efforts towards climate change mitigation and poverty eradication should be addressed simultaneously. India is of the view that the vulnerability to climate change and global warming can best be reduced through the process of sustainable development. The process of burden sharing must be fair and equitable. It should take into account the factor of historical responsibility for the current stock of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and also the over-riding concern of developing countries for poverty eradication. India has held that the developed countries should transfer environmentally sound and cleaner energy technologies for use by developing countries for early adoption, diffusion and deployment accompanied with transfer of financial resources.
The international community is already taking a concerted action to combat and mitigate the adverse effects of climate change under the UNFCCC. India welcomes the successful outcome in Cancun on Climate Fund, Technology Mechanism, Adaptation Framework and Tropical Forestry. We hope the developed countries will reciprocate the flexibility shown by developing countries at Cancun by addressing the concerns of developing countries on all outstanding issues and commit higher and more ambitious targets for reduction of emissions in the post-2012 period.

The tourism sector is greatly affected by climate change, given its global economic and social value, its role in sustainable development and its strong relationships with climate. Tourism plays an extremely important role in the economy of developing countries such as India and has emerged as a vital force for the promotion of international understanding, peace and prosperity.

We appreciate the efforts being taken by UNWTO in responding in a timely and balanced manner to the climate change imperatives in the tourism sector. However, we strongly advocate that the UNWTO should limit its role to discussions on policy measures at global level and in
assisting developing countries in the field of tourism. It should not become an instrument to maintain economic status quo and encourage the use of environmental conditionalities as barriers to international tourism, particularly in developing countries. It is appropriate that the matters relating to climate change that are discussed in UNWTO are taken up in close consultation with UNFCCC. The UNFCCC is the sole multi-lateral platform for discussion of all climate change related issues.

The Davos Declaration that was adopted in Second International Conference on Climate Change and Tourism held in October 2007 promotes the concept of ‘tourist destination carbon footprint’. We feel that such measures should not be used as non-tariff barriers to the flow of tourism in the world. The resolutions of UNWTO and UN General Assembly should emphasize sustainable development of countries on the basis of nationally appropriate mitigation actions. There should not be any linkage of measures in the specific industries like tourism or aviation for reducing emissions or mitigation. It may be noted that the Cancun agreements adopted in December 2010 do not recommend any such sectoral measures.
India strongly feels that climate change should not be used as an excuse to impose such unilateral trade measures on developing countries through tourism and aviation industry which may constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or disguised restriction on international trade. The measures for addressing climate change should include not only adoption/development of appropriate clean technologies but also provision of resources and creation of enabling conditions to take necessary actions in accordance with the established principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities of nations.

The APPCED, which represents countries at various stages of economic development, is an ideal forum to interact and understand each other’s concerns cutting across countries, cultures and climates. We have a greater emotional bonding as people’s representatives. And, it would be a fitting gesture if we can adopt a consensual approach on this issue and send a message across that it is possible to come to a harmonious understanding on tackling the challenges of climate change on tourism through a mutually acceptable plan of action.

Thank you.