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ORGANISATION MONDIALE DU TOURISME  
WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION  
ORGANIZACIÓN MUNDIAL DEL TURISMO  
ВСЕМИРНАЯ ТУРИСТСКАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ  
منظمة السياحة العالمية

Nº 9528 P. 1/1

The Secretary-General a.i.

3 August 2009

H.E. Mr. Somphong Mongkhonvilay  
Minister, Chairman  
Lao National Tourism Administration  
Lao PDR

Fax: (856) 212 769 (Lao)

Your Excellency,

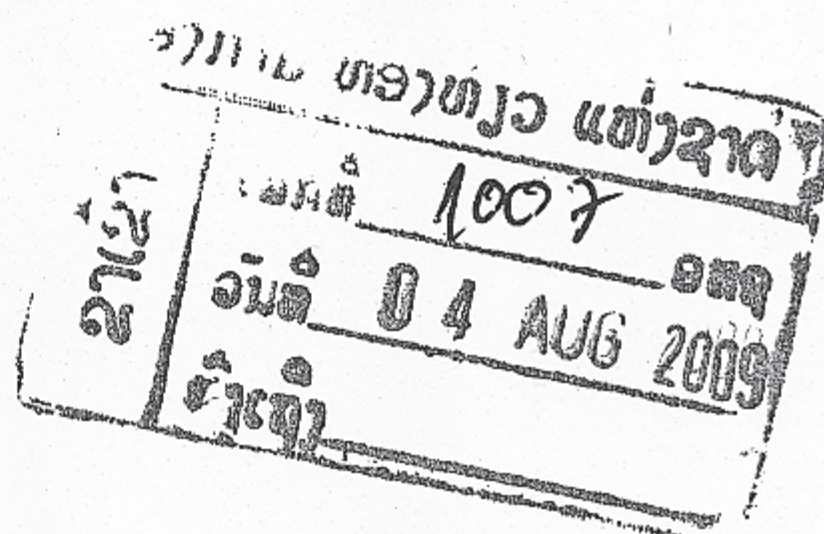
Thank you for your letter of 23 July 2009, through which you informed me about the very successful organisation of the World Ecotourism Conference and its results, which the Government of Lao hosted in Vientiane from 15-17 July 2009.

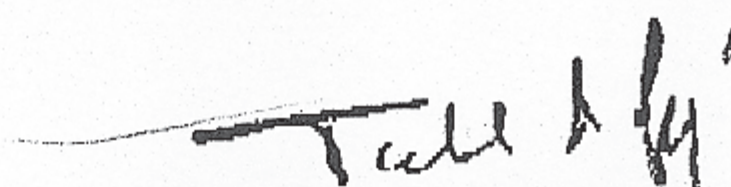
It is unfortunate that I was not able to participate in the conference owing to previously planned engagements. Nevertheless, I am happy to learn that our Director of Programme and Coordination, Mr. Eugenio Yunis, who represented the Organization, in my stead, was warmly received by the Prime Minister with whom he discussed issues relating to the development of tourism in Lao PDR and the support and assistance that UNWTO has given and can give to it.

Mr. Yunis has also given me a detailed briefing on the Conference as well as the *Vientiane Declaration on Ecotourism in Developing Countries*. This Declaration reaffirms the principles and guidelines developed by UNWTO during the *International Year of Ecotourism 2002*, providing fresh recommendations to enable stakeholders to not just advocate the principles of sustainable development of tourism, but also to deliver on the vision and goals of the World Ecotourism Conference in an effective manner.

In light of its importance to the international tourism community, I am pleased to inform you that the World Tourism Organization fully endorses the *Vientiane Declaration on Ecotourism in Developing Countries*; we will certainly disseminate the Declaration among our Members and through our website, and we sincerely hope that the implementation of the positive action plan it contains will reflect on the future performance of ecotourism in Lao PDR and other countries in the region.

Please accept, your Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



  
Taleb Rifai