



**MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF UNWTO
BUSINESS COUNCIL OF THE WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION (UNWTO)
MRS. ZORITSA UROSEVIC**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE 15TH MOSCOW INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL AND
TOURISM EXHIBITION**

On behalf of the World Tourism Organization, the specialized UN agency for tourism, I would like to welcome all participants, organizers and visitors to the 15th edition of MITT 2008.

On the back of strong global economic growth, international tourist arrivals exceeded 6% growth in 2007 to reach a new record figure of nearly 900 million – an astonishing achievement given that the 800 million mark was only reached two years earlier. This represents nearly 52 million more arrivals than in 2006, well over the total count for either the Middle East or Africa. In fact, world tourism enjoyed its fourth consecutive year of growth in 2007 above the long-term forecast of 4.1% and, surprisingly, it even exceeded the 5.5% increases recorded in 2005 and 2006.

Developing countries grew by 8%. These figures again underscore UNWTO's long held view that sustainable tourism can play a major role in helping to achieve the UN Millennium Development Goals, in two way world services trade and in responding positively to climate change imperatives.

UNWTO expects international tourist arrivals to continue its positive growth trends this year in 2008, but at a moderated rate.

The development of the travel industry in Russia has been particularly strong over the last few years and, as the main event in the industry calendar, MITT has a key role to play in providing the most effective means of targeting this important market.

I would like to wish all MITT participants every success.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Zoritsa Urosevic'. The signature is stylized with a large loop and a horizontal line.

Zoritsa Urosevic

Executive Secretary

UNWTO Business Council