

**Statement of Mr. Francesco Frangialli  
Secretary-General of the World Tourism  
Organization  
TO DO!96 Awards für Socially  
Responsible Tourism  
March 9, 1997  
ITB Berlin**



**(The spoken word applies)**

Guten Tag, Good Afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen,

It's a pleasure for me to join you this afternoon for the presentation of the To Do!96 awards for socially responsible tourism. In the great tourism marketplace of ITB – amid the buying and selling of hotel rooms, package tours and new destinations – it is extremely important to take time out to recognize the human side of tourism. Because it is precisely the human component of tourism that makes all of our work worthwhile.

It is tourism's tremendous capacity to create jobs. It is tourism's potential for raising the standard of living in poor regions. And, above all, it is tourism's ability to bring people from different cultures together in friendship and peace... that sets our industry apart from all other economic activities.

Too often these fundamental human values are forgotten or brushed aside in the scramble for more tourists, more hotel rooms and more earnings from the tourism industry.

That's why I had no hesitation about participating this afternoon at the award ceremony for socially responsible tourism sponsored by the »Studienkreis für Tourismus und Entwicklung«.

The World Tourism Organization exists to assist our 134 member countries in developing high-quality and sustainable tourism destinations. We also advise them on how to cope successfully with the tremendous growth in tourism forecast for the future.

According to our latest forecasts – which we released to the media in a news conference just a few minutes ago – tourism will continue to expand rapidly in the 21st century. We predict that there will be 1.6 billion international tourists by the year 2020 or nearly three times more than last year.

This rapid growth is already putting tremendous pressure on the human, natural and cultural resources that form the foundation of tourism attractions.

That is why WTO and the majority of our members advocate a sustainable approach to tourism development with a responsible respect for the environment, traditional cultures and local residents.

Just last month, WTO held a major conference on the lovely Maldives islands called *Tourism 2000: Building a Sustainable Future for Asia-Pacific*.

I was very pleased that the 27 nations participating in this conference pledged their support for socially responsible tourism. Some of the policy objectives contained in the conclusions of the meeting include:

- Increasing local community involvement in tourism.
- Consultation between tourism stakeholders and the public.
- Support for local economies.
- Respect for social and cultural diversity.

The two projects which are receiving the TO DO! awards this afternoon meet many of these same types of objectives. In the case of the Toledo Eco-tourism Association of Belize – using tourism as a mean of making environmental and cultural protection economically viable. I should note here that Belize is not yet a member of the World Tourism Organization, but I hope they will join us soon because we need good quality destinations among our members.

In the case of the International Centre of Bethlehem – the criteria of socially responsible tourism are used as a way to stimulate the local economy and bring together partners from different backgrounds – partners within the local community itself and partners from tourism generating countries and the destination. WTO has a close relationship with the Palestine Tourism Authority, headed by my friend Mr. Frejus, the mayor of Bethlehem. They are affiliate members of WTO and we are beginning a project there in association with UNDP, which will help them prepare for the avalanche of tourists expected in the Holy Land in the year 2000.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is a pleasure to be able to help recognize two programmes that are living, and breathing examples of the core philosophy of sustainable tourism development which WTO advocates to its members.

As the name of these awards implies, there is still much work TO DO.

Much to do in making tourism more economically fair. And much to do in making tourism more socially responsible.

Congratulations to both the winners. I hope that your programmes will receive the attention they deserve, so that they can serve as an inspiration for tourism development projects based on similar goals in other parts of the world.