

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations will sponsor the 2008 edition of the *Rendez-vous Champlain's* international seminar on tourism under the theme of "Tourist destinations and prospects for research"

Paris, September 25, 2007 — Mr. André Vallerand, President of the Destinations Council of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and President of the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) announced today, in the presence of Mr. Raymond Bachand, Minister of Economic Development, Innovation and Export Trade, that the UNWTO and the CED will sponsor the second edition of the *Rendez-vous Champlain* on tourism to be held in 2008 in Montréal and Québec City, Canada. Mr. Vallerand said he was very pleased with the theme that was chosen for the event, given that it is a central issue in the UNWTO and CED work program. "Excellence in tourist destinations at the national, regional and local scale has become a fundamental issue in an increasingly competitive global environment. The *Rendez-vous Champlain* seminar will significantly contribute to our deliberations on this topic," said Mr. Vallerand.

Mr. Vallerand confirmed that Mr. Francesco Frangialli, UNWTO Secretary-General, will participate in the *Rendez-vous Champlain 2008* seminar, the only France-Québec international venue for research on tourism included in Québec City's 400th anniversary celebrations program. "Mr. Frangialli has asked me to extend his best wishes to the organizers of this important seminar and to ensure them that they will have the UNWTO's full cooperation to see that the greatest possible number of international representatives will take part in the event," added Mr. Vallerand.

Finally, Mr. Vallerand announced that he and Mr. Frangialli will take advantage of the presence of the several hundreds of tourist destinations managers at a special day dedicated to tourism industry artisans – which will take place on June 3, 2008, at the Québec City Convention Centre as part of the *Rendez-vous Champlain* – to launch the new system for measuring excellence in tourist destinations that was developed by the CED in partnership with the UNWTO.

The mission of the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations, a non-profit organization headquartered in Montréal, is to implement the decisions of the UNWTO's Destinations Council by enhancing and developing expertise on tourist destinations. The CED acts as a binding agent for partnerships and collaborations with public and private sector stakeholders having expertise that may improve tourist destinations' performance.

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) whose headquarters are located in Madrid, Spain, is a United Nations agency specialized in the field of tourism. It has a membership of 150 countries, including Canada. In addition, the agency has some 300 affiliated/ associated members: businesses, non-profit organizations, tourism-related associations and educational institutions. The UNWTO plays a central and decisive role in the development of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism as a tool for economic and social development, international understanding, peace and prosperity.

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