

The Opinions of the State Council On Speeding up the Development of the Tourism Industry

The people's governments of all provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the central government, all ministries and commissions of the State Council, and all agencies directly under the State Council:

Tourism is a strategically important industry that features low resource consumption, high leverage effect, abundant job opportunities and good overall efficiency. Since the launch of reform and opening-up program, China's tourism industry has embarked on a fast-track of development, characterized by expanded industrial scale and improved industrial system. China is now at a stage of rapid industrialization and urbanization, with growing public demands for popular and diverse forms of consumption, which presents new opportunities for the development of the tourism industry. To fully leverage on the facilitating role of tourism in maintaining economic growth, expanding domestic demand and adjusting industrial structure, the State Council has put forward the following opinions on speeding up the development of the tourism industry:

I. General requirements

1. Guiding strategy. Take the Deng Xiaoping Theory and the important thoughts of "Three Represents" as guidelines, fully apply the Scientific Outlook on Development, continue to broaden our minds, deepen reform and opening-up, adopt a more coordinated and balanced approach, transform the mode of development and raise the efficiency of development so as to turn tourism into a pillar industry with strategic importance to the national economy and a modern service industry that better meets the aspirations of the general public.

2. Basic principles. Stick to reform and opening-up, remove institutional barriers, bring into full play the primary role of the market in resource allocation, follow the path of intensive development, and strike the right balance among the pace, pattern, quality and efficiency of growth; adopt a people-oriented and safety-ensured approach, combine tourism administration with tourism service, and make sustained efforts to meet the rising public demand for tourism consumption; focus on the development of domestic tourism, actively promote inbound tourism, and develop outbound tourism in an orderly way; proceed from local conditions and advantages, and promote local tourism with unique features; stay committed to energy conservation and environmental protection and make effective use of resources to ensure the sustainable development of the tourism industry.

3. Development goals. Gradually expand the size of the tourism market. By 2015, the number of domestic tourists, inbound overnight tourists and outbound tourists shall reach 3.3 billion, 90 million and 83 million respectively, representing an average annual growth rate of 10%, 8% and 9%; steadily increase tourism consumption, with urban and rural residents traveling more than twice a year and tourism consumption accounting for 10% of total resident consumption; generate better economic and social benefits, with the total revenue of the tourism industry increasing by over 12% a year, and the added value created by the tourism industry accounting for 4.5% of China's total GDP and 12% of the value of the entire service sector; create 500,000 more jobs in the tourism industry each year; significantly enhance the quality of tourism services, significantly improve the order of the tourism market, and significantly boost the sustainability of the tourism industry so that China's tourism industry will become internationally competitive in terms of scale, quality and efficiency by 2020.

II. Main missions

4. Deepen reform and opening-up in the tourism sector. Lower the threshold for the tourism market, break industrial and regional barriers, streamline approval procedures, facilitate the equal participation of non-government investors in the development of the tourism industry, and encourage enterprises with different ownership structures to invest in the tourism industry in accordance with law; promote the reorganization and reform of state-owned tourism enterprises, support the development of private and small- and medium-sized tourism companies, support the merger and consolidation of enterprises representing different industries, from different regions and with different ownership patterns, and foster a group of competitive large-scale tourism groups; actively bring in foreign tourism enterprises, and, starting with pilot programs, gradually open the market of outbound travels by Chinese citizens to foreign-invested travel agencies; support tourism enterprises with proper conditions to "go global"; introduce new institutions and mechanisms and advance the reform of the tourism administration system in a balanced, coordinated and coherent way; support different localities to carry out, on a trial basis, integrated and special programs for the reform of the tourism industry, and encourage areas with proper conditions to explore ways for integrated management of tourism resources; transform the functions of tourism administrative authorities and other related departments so that they can spin off the duties and institutions that belong to tourism enterprises, industrial associations and intermediary organizations; the personnel and payroll of tourism industrial associations at various levels and of various types shall be separated from tourism administrative authorities in five years' time.

5. Improve the environment for tourism consumption. Gradually put in place a tourist destination evaluation system based on the opinions of the tourists; tourist sites shall publish plan for ticket price change six months in advance, and all tourism-related charges shall be made public according to law; fully implement the policies according to which elderly population, students and other special groups receive ticket discount at tourist sites, increase the frequency of flights and passenger trains between tourist destinations and main sources of tourists, and improve the methods for buying passenger train tickets before the departure date or in places other than the departure city; expand the urban public transit network to main tourist sites in city outskirts and tourist spots in the countryside, and enhance the tourism service functions of expressway service zones; further improve the service system for self-drive tourists; regulate and properly guide spontaneous tourism activities; extend the opening hours of museums, financial service outlets and postal service outlets in tourist seasons; public toilets of commercial facilities shall be open to tourists; establish and improve tourist information service platform, and promote the sharing of tourist information resources; radio, TV, newspaper, website and other mass media shall provide tourism-related sections to promote public knowledge of tourism.

6. Promote decent and healthy tourist activities. Encourage the public to participate in decent, civilized and green tourist activities as a way to acquire new knowledge, new horizons and lofty values; tourist sites, hotels, travel agencies and other tourism enterprises shall, through multiple means, encourage tourists to travel and spend smartly in keeping with the *Tourism Etiquette Rules for Chinese Citizens Traveling within China and the Tourism Etiquette Rules for Chinese Citizens Traveling Abroad*; tourists shall respect the nature, the local culture and their service providers, resist bad habits and reject indecent behaviors; outbound tourists shall uphold China's sound image and serve as a messenger of the Chinese civilization.

7. Speed up the development of tourism infrastructures. Develop, as a matter of priority, tourist roads, tourist site parking lots, tourist service centers, tourist safety facilities, and infrastructures for the protection of tourism resources and environment; carry out tourist toilet renovation and expansion projects; enhance the construction of tourist roads that connect major tourist sites with transport trunk lines; take into full consideration the development needs of the tourism industry when planning for the construction of passenger ship terminals; speed up the construction of regional airports in central and western China, and improve the flight network for tourist routes; ensure clear telecommunication signals in tourist sites and along transport routes; improve the quality of tourist centers in key cities; endeavor to provide basically smooth

tourist transport services, basically complete the system of tourist signs and directions, basically qualified tourist toilets and basically sufficient parking space in all A-grade tourist sites in China in five years' time.

8. Promote the diversification of tourism products. Help farmers lead an affluent life by promoting countryside tourism; promote agriculture-based sightseeing and experience with unique features; on the precondition of properly protecting the eco-environment, folk houses, historical and cultural heritages, make effective use of tourism resources such as ethnic minority-inhabited villages, ancient towns and ancient villages, develop tourism villages and towns with unique sceneries, and promote tourism products such as “agritourism” and leisure farms in a standard-based way; develop tourist sites with typical features in national cultural and natural heritage sites; facilitate the development of leisure tourism and promote the building of leisure tourism belts in areas surrounding cities; advance the development of national tourist resorts in an orderly fashion; regulate the development of golf courts and large-scale theme parks; continue to promote “red tourism”.

9. Foster new hotspot areas for tourism consumption. Vigorously promote the integration of culture, sports, agriculture, industry, forestry, commerce, water conservancy, geology, marine affairs, environmental protection, meteorology and other related industrial sectors; support the development of eco-tourism, forest tourism, commercial tourism, sport tourism, industry tourism, medical and healthcare tourism, cruise and yacht tourism in areas with proper conditions; incorporate the manufacturing of caravans, cruise ships and yachts, cable cars, recreation facilities, digital tourist information facilities and other tourism-related equipments into the catalogue of industries encouraged by the state, and vigorously develop, with proprietary intellectual property, products for outdoor activities such as leisure, mountain hiking, skiing, diving, camping, expedition and golf as well as products exclusively designed for hotels and restaurants; make hard endeavor to promote tourism shopping and raise the share of tourism commodities and souvenirs in total tourism consumption; use large-scale international exhibitions, major cultural activities and sports events as platforms for fostering new hotspot areas of tourism consumption, and, in particular, take the hosting of the Shanghai World Expo 2010 as an opportunity for expanding tourism consumption.

10. Improve the quality of tourism services. Fully implement the *Outline for Enhancing Tourism Service Quality* in a way that meets tourist satisfaction; urge tourism employees to provide voluntary and quality services that are tailored to the special needs of customers; encourage professional tourism management companies to develop brand chains and innovative tourism services that serve the purpose of building tourism brands; improve the system

of tourist standards with a standard-based approach, and make speedy endeavors to formulate and implement tourism-related public health, safety, energy conservation and environmental standards, with focus on ensuring the sanitary conditions of catering, accommodation and toilet facilities; improve the efficiency of tourism services with the use of information technology; actively promote online tourism service, online marketing, online reservation and online payment, fully mobilize social resources in the building of tourist data centers and call centers, and help tourism enterprises, tourist sites and key tourist cities provide more effective tourism services powered by information technologies.

11. Enrich the cultural dimensions of tourism. Enhance the cultural aspects of catering, accommodation, transportation, shopping, entertainment and every other aspect of tourism and enrich the cultural dimensions of tourism in the course of its development; in tourism development, efforts shall be made to better protect natural and cultural heritages, unleash the cultural potentials of tourism resources and promote scientific knowledge among the public; develop culturally creative tourism commodities, culturally unique tourism catering, and culturally advanced tourism services; tap into the cultural advantage of tourism resources, and develop cultural tourism products, including folk performance and festivals, that carry unique local and ethnic features; make full use of museums, memorial halls, stadiums and other facilities to organize cultural and sports tourism activities; foster a sound image of China's tourism industry and enhance China's cultural soft power by mobilizing resources from all sectors.

12. Promote energy conservation and environmental protection. Carry out tourism-related energy and water conservation and pollution control projects; support the utilization of new energy and materials by hotels, restaurants, tourist sites, countryside tourism operators and other travel agencies, make extensive use of energy and water saving and pollution control technologies, introduce contract-based energy plans, promote the use of efficient lighting, reduce greenhouse gas emission, develop circular economy and build green and environment-friendly enterprises; reduce water and electricity consumption of star-rated hotels and A-grade tourist sites by 20% in five years' time; set an appropriate limit for the tourist accommodation capacity of tourist sites, fully implement the system for evaluating the environmental impact of tourist programs, and make intensified efforts in water resource protection and soil preservation; promote a low-carbon way of tourism.

13. Promote balanced tourism development among different regions. The central and western regions, remote and border regions and areas inhabited by ethnic minorities shall leverage on their natural and cultural tourism resources to develop tourism industries with unique features; the developed east regions and the old industrial bases in northeast China shall work to build a

more competitive tourism sector through economic readjustment; promote in an orderly fashion regional tourism along the perimeters of Shangri-La, the Silk Road, the Three Gorges and the Qinghai-Tibet railway, as well as in the old industrial bases in northeast China, the pan-Bohai bay area, the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River, the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River, the pan-Pearl River delta, the western coast of the Taiwan Strait, the Beibu bay and other areas, and improve tourism-related transport, information and service networks; advance the development of Hainan International Tourism Island; continue to facilitate mainland tourists' travels to Hong Kong and Macao; strengthen tourism exchanges and cooperation across the Taiwan Strait.

III. Guarantee measures

14. Strengthen planning and legal institution building. Formulate the national plan for tourism development; incorporate the development of tourism infrastructures and key tourism projects into the national economic and social development plan; take into full consideration the development needs of the tourism industry when formulating and readjusting urban development plans, land utilization plans, ocean function zoning plans, infrastructure development plans and township development plans; formulate the national outline for leisure tourism; designate a specific date as “China Tourism Day”; fully implement the paid-holiday system; act quickly to launch integrated tourism legislation and formulate special regulations for tourism market supervision, tourism resource protection and tourism code of conduct, and constantly improve relevant laws and regulations.

15. Enhance the supervision and regulation of the tourism market and promote integrity building. Make sure that local governments, business operators and other relevant departments undertake their due supervision and regulation responsibilities; enhance the system of tourism supervision and regulation, improve the performance of agencies that supervise and regulate tourism quality, and strengthen the supervision of tourism service quality and the handling of tourism complaints; government departments responsible for managing tourism, industry and commerce, public security, business, public health, quality inspection and price supervision shall carry out more coordinated law-enforcement actions to crack down illegal profit-making tourism activities, rectify fraudulent behaviors such as “zero- or minus-fee tours”, misleading advertising, forced or covert forms of forced consumption, and safeguard the lawful rights and interests of tourists; strengthen the building of tourism integrity system, launch special programs for the promotion of honest tourism, formulate code of integrity for tourism employees, and introduce credit systems

for travel agencies and tourism commodity stores; enhance the self-discipline of the industry by capitalizing on the role of tourism industry associations.

16. Boost the competence of tourism employees. Consolidate tourism education resources, strengthen discipline building, optimize discipline structure, advance discipline-specific teaching reform, vigorously develop vocational education on tourism, and improve the quality of tourism education; establish and improve the system for approving the qualifications and professional titles of tourism-related jobs, enhance the system for occupational skills assessment, and create a market for professional executives; reform and improve the tour guide accreditation system, enhance the competence and capability of tour guides, and encourage professional technicians, especially retired experts and teachers, to join the team of tour guides; carry out the national plan for tourism training, provide intensive training opportunities for tourism employees engaged in red tourism, countryside tourism and cultural legacy tourism, and complete the training for all senior and middle-level managers and tour guides of tourism companies that are organized according to their specific pay grade and respective duties in five years' time.

17. Strengthen the tourist safety guarantee system. Follow strict safety standards, improve safety facilities, step up safety inspection, clarify safety responsibilities and clear safety risks, with focus on tourism transport, tourism facilities and tourism catering, put in place and improve the tourist safety guarantee system; strictly implement the tourism accident reporting system and the major accident accountability system; improve the tourist safety early-warning system, and introduce the monitoring and early-warning system for tourism meteorology, geological disaster prevention and eco-environment preservation in key tourist sites; prevent the spread of major communicable diseases by travelers; facilitate the development of the tourism emergency rescue system, improve the contingency handling mechanism, strengthen the emergency aid mechanism for outbound tourists and build stronger capacity for contingency handling; provide high-standard tourism insurance services, increase the variety of insurance schemes, expand the coverage of insurance policies, and raise the efficiency of claim settlement.

18. Step up government input. Local governments at various levels shall step up input in the development of tourism infrastructures; finance departments at various levels shall increase their support for tourism-related promotion, professional training and public services; central government investment shall mainly be used to support infrastructure projects for major tourist sites in central and western regions, red tourism and countryside tourism; the state tourism development fund shall mainly be used to support the promotion of China's tourism image, the formulation of tourism plans, the training of tourism

professionals and the development of the tourism public service system; the special funds earmarked from the central budget for the promotion of service industries, SME development, foreign trade, energy conservation and pollution reduction projects shall be used to support tourism enterprises that meet certain conditions; incorporate tourism-generated jobs into employment boost and vocational training plans, and ensure the full implementation of corresponding policies; improve the policy of “bringing home appliances to the countryside”, and support the wholesale purchase of home appliances, automobiles and motorcycles by farmers that are engaged in “agritourism” and other forms of countryside tourism.

19. Increase financial support. Intensify the financing and credit support in various forms for tourism enterprises and projects that meet the qualifications for entering the tourism market and the principles for receiving credit, and set an appropriate range for the maturity and rate of loans; provide qualified tourism enterprises with preferential SME loan policies; financial institutions shall provide active credit support to tourism enterprises that are rich in resource availability and market potential yet face temporary difficulties in business; further improve the finance guarantee scheme and other credit enhancement systems dedicated to tourism enterprises, and encourage different types of credit guarantee institutions to provide stronger guarantees for tourism enterprises and projects; widen the financing channels for tourism enterprises, and allow financial institutions to provide profit-making tourist attractions with collateral loans that are secured by business right and ticket revenue; encourage small- and medium-sized tourism enterprises and countryside tourism operators to apply for micro finance through mutual support and guarantee; support qualified tourism enterprises to issue short-term financing bills, corporate bonds and medium-term notes, and encourage qualified tourism companies to mobilize funds by listing in the SME Board and the Growth Enterprise Board; encourage consumer finance companies to provide credit services for tourism consumption through pilot programs; actively promote business cooperation in various forms between financial institutions and tourism enterprises, explore and develop financial products that meet the needs of tourism consumption, and enhance the tourism service function of bank cards.

20. Improve supportive policies and measures. Fully implement the policies according to which hotels and restaurants are charged with the same standard of water, electricity and gas fees as ordinary industries; allow travel agencies to participate in government procurement and service outsourcing; the service charges collected by travel agencies on behalf of others shall be deducted from the benchmark figure for the fees that are charged in proportion to their business revenues; tourism enterprises that meet national or local pollutant discharge standards and that are already part of the urban sewage

treatment network shall be exempted from paying pollution discharge fees after making the payment of sewage treatment fees; the expenses incurred by the promotion and marketing campaigns of tourism enterprises shall be included in their business costs as required by law; encourage banks to charge travel agencies and ticket merchants in tourist sites the same standard of commission fees for the use of bank cards as supermarkets and gas stations, and study new and appropriate ways to charge hotels and restaurant lower fees; allocate an appropriately higher portion of annual land supply for the development of tourism industries; actively support the development of tourism projects in deserted land, barren slopes, desolate sands, landfills, abandoned mines, remote islands and rocky desertification areas that provide tourism values; support enterprises and government-affiliated institutions in running tourism industries with stock properties and land resources.

All regions and relevant departments shall fully understand the importance of speeding up the development of the tourism industry, recognize tourism as a multi-dimensional and integrated industry, make extra efforts to promote and support tourism as a new industry and a new engine for economic growth, and earnestly implement these Opinions. The National Development and Reform Commission shall undertake the responsibility of coordination, and the National Tourism Administration, in collaboration with other relevant departments, shall guide and supervise the implementation of these Opinions. Tourism authorities and tourism-related departments at various levels shall fully capitalize on the unique advantages of their respective duties and ensure the sound and fast development of the tourism industry through enhanced coordination and collaboration.

The State Council
1 December 2009