Dear Colleagues and friends,

Although many of you have some time ago provided us with information, our Guidelines Internetion@l was not yet ready. The reason is that our publisher Tina Engström had some severe family problems and thus lost weeks, and then her computer crashed. Our Guidelines issue is now published end of June, with information that has been collected since Macau, especially concerning International Tourist Guide Day (ITGD); still interesting enough for all of us and hopefully of help for preparing the next ITGD!

This newsletter is more of a collection of in-house information to tell you about ExBo’s efforts to promote the tourist guide profession, and various travels to resume some of our international obligations and contacts these last months.

One important trip to Cyprus included President Felicitas Wressnig and Treasurer Pat Blain, with a long list of documents to provide our bank with official and legal information in order to change signatures to the new ExBo members, and to redeem a certain amount of control over our account there. Finally, after two meetings at the former Laiki Bank, we were able to resolve some problems and fulfill our legal obligations: pay invoices and expenses to internet provider and designer, trainers who performed a course last autumn, and other outstanding expenses since the beginning of this year. For all our members, heed this important note: no money was lost or confiscated; all WFTGA’s money will be released during the coming months. WFTGA has new banking contacts, which you will receive with your 2013/14 invoices. These have been postponed as to ensure correct access to our new bank.

Some other, less spectacular travel brought President Felicitas Wressnig to IMEX at Frankfurt where she met with destination and convention representatives during ICCA Seminar and Association Day: both very interesting Round Tables, especially how to sustain associations in the future – a completely new view on sustainability: not nature and green but how to keep your members happy (please do comment on that)!

Additionally, I was able to secure various interests for future bidding countries – naturally we have to keep this a secret until next year, and then until Prague for you to vote! So do check your calendars and mark January 2015 for Prague. Go into our website www.wftga.org and look at the possibilities offered by our next convention site, the Czech Republic.

When you check our website you will read about our freshly appointed Area Representatives under Maria Aristidou’s co-ordination. Some you will know, others are completely new – so please check and get/keep in contact with them! If you know of any happenings in your area, need support or presentation brochures let them/us know. This is why you are members and we are here to help you in any matter!

Meanwhile, our newcomer to ExBo, Lakshmi Priya S, visited Hyderabad for a meeting of UNWTO on sustainability. You will find an interesting report on the following pages. And Roger Rajah, the other new member within ExBo, was busy preparing the first course in Malaysia, to take place in July. Please do check in our website for more information, registration and possible scholarships!

Back to matters for all:
UNWTO declares a Day of Tourism on September 27th, this year on Water Preservation. This might be of special interest to members who have difficulties in celebrating our ITGD on February 21st. If you officially connect the September date to ITGD you might also choose this UNWTO Day of Tourism. Be aware though, that the date and topic changes each year and ours does not! We celebrate International Tourist Guide Day in February and that has now become quite a hit in many publications, a real promotion on facebook and other media!
Guidelines International

Message from the President

I forward the invitation to join free of charge, WTM in London, on our website. For some of you this might be of major interest and might result in less expense for you. Just let us know if you will be there and could also represent WFTGA in certain connections: another cooperation that would lead to increased international acceptance of our profession.

And finally a short run-down by Vice President and Head of Training Wilja Siebe, including the cooperation of the Training Committee during the last months:
- Report on the Trainers’ Meeting in Macau including an Action List/Work Groups for the Training Division.
- Update of the General WFTGA Training Brochure 2013, published on the website since March.
- Various Newsletters and updates in the section on trainers on our website.
- A visit to Armenia with President Felicitas Wressnig, to investigate the possibility of opening another International Training Centre, in Yerevan. This was approved by EXBO at the end of May.
- Cost Calculations and Programmes for various training courses around the world, like Armenia, Bhutan, Costa Rica, Crete, Greece, Sabah, Sweden.
- It is with great pleasure that ExBo announces two countries to arrange for Museum Guide Training Courses by the National Associations – more the next time!

This list shows that WFTGA Training is very successful in promoting tourist guide standards.

Unfortunately our material is quoted in a message recently sent around by an Indian tourism manager. Although no permission was given by ExBo or any credit given to WFTGA, he offers via internet, a theoretical "publication for tour guides" which borrows heavily from our manuals and uses our contents! I would advise NOT TO BUY this book as it is against copyright conditions from our side.

Above I have mentioned our website a lot: Esther, Martina and Felicitas – sometimes with the help of Sam Cohen and former president Ros – have been in charge to up-date; so it’s up to you to use the information there and to distribute our Circular to your members…

With best wishes for your work and progress,

Felicitas Wressnig

Executive Board 2013-2015

From left: Priya Sudhakar Lakshmi, Patricia Blain, Roger Rajah, Felicitas Wressnig, Wilja Siebe, Esther Banike, Maria Aristou
March, 2013

Dear colleagues and friends,

As you know, this year’s biennial convention took place from January 14th – 18th in Macau, SAR, China. As very few of our members (145) had the opportunity to come on this long travel I would like to describe some of the outstanding experiences the participants enjoyed:

After a long bidding process and some unexpected changes, our regional colleagues prepared for us a thorough introduction to their culture: the tiny Protuguese enclave within China has shown to be a veritable example of genial stimulation of contradictory traditions! For many of us the obvious constant need of patience caught us unawares and opened some very new aspects: like drinking tea when not in a hurry, watching the long preparation, the movements coordinated with swift performance, stimulating ones’ senses and taking small sips instead of pouring the drink down… if you do not learn meditation there, you will end with burn out!

It was most exquisite – and real fun - to experience Lion Dancing: learning about the variety of masks to be used, to clap these heavy bamboo and cotton pieces over your head, move the huge lips and ears, roll the eyes when at the same time you have to move your legs synchron with your neighbour: quite a task, which showed the endless training of all those glorious lion dancers that celebrated our opening. This half hour workshop proved that you cannot achieve professionalism without loong training: how very suitable for tourist guides who support continuous adult learning!

Another quite crowded workshop proved the Portuguese folkdance which taught the particants that dance in Macau starts with embroidery, silk and gold thread is used to beautify the robe; no one would dare to join official festivity dance parties with a common every day dress! The music, a mixture between Portuguese and Chinese influence, again proved exeptional and will help many of the participants to understand better when future visitors from Chinese areas come and compare their with our culture.

Calligraphy, to mention the most typical of all Chinese perfectionist arts, was another stimulating presentation: it proved extremely difficult to know what your hand wanted to do but your brush did not show! Concentrating for copying one simple line across one page - but to follow in one single even movement of your hand, swift and straight: what a task - and what admiration for all those magnificent paintings and graphics we can admire in collections!

The enormous difference between this refined art and the colossal hotels with casino halls and artificial indoor replicas of cities around the world showed the other side of the coin. We found tourist guides to explain St. Marcs’ Square within the Hotel walls: certainly a different standard for our profession!

For all other professional skills we offered a set of workshops concentrating on contemporary techniques: whisper system, creating your webpage, marketing methods: all well received and certainly helpful to all attendees. And the General Assembly ended with the Macau Declaration; please download from our website for your use!

We would like to thank our hosts in Macau: Angelina Wu and her efficient daughter Emilia; Cheryl and Maria whom we kept busy with ideas; Ada and Dily who coordinated and all the other hidden helpers, including the Tourism Board and their institutions!

Felicitas Wressnig
World Tourism Day 2013 - promoting tourism’s role in water preservation

Centered on the theme ‘Tourism and Water: Protecting our Common Future’, World Tourism Day 2013 will underline tourism’s responsibility and needed commitment to preserving the world’s vital water resources. The Maldives will host the official celebrations on 27 September 2013.

This year’s World Tourism Day (WTD) theme focuses on tourism’s significant role and contribution to worldwide water conservation efforts. The theme is in line with the UN General Assembly’s declaration of 2013 as the United Nations International Year of Water Cooperation, providing the opportunity to further highlight the shared responsibility of the tourism sector to the wider sustainability objectives.

As a trillion dollar economic sector, tourism is a powerful force capable of tackling this challenge by offering effective solutions geared towards a more sustainable water future. With over one billion people traveling internationally each year, tourism can also be an important vehicle of raising awareness and changing behaviors.

“As one of the largest economic sectors in the world, it is the responsibility of the tourism sector to take a leadership role and ensure companies and destinations invest in adequate water management throughout the value chain. If managed sustainably, tourism can bring benefits to the national and local communities and support water preservation,” said UNWTO Secretary-General Taleb Rifai in his official WTD 2013 message. “I urge all those involved in the tourism sector to join our global World Tourism Day campaign and continue to devise innovate solutions to ensuring sustainable access to water resources worldwide.”

Clean, accessible water is vital to tourism, running most of the sector’s businesses, from hotels and restaurants to leisure facilities and transportation. More importantly, wetland tourism is growing, with many of the world’s coastlines, lakes and other wetlands among the most popular tourism destinations.

World Tourism Day will be a unique opportunity to examine the challenges facing water management in tourism and the measures being undertaken by the sector to protect and promote water resources while creating benefits for local populations around water tourism destinations.

Official WTD celebrations in the Maldives will include a High-Level Think Tank bringing together public and private tourism stakeholders and water experts to devise policies and strategies aimed at ensuring the tourism sector contributes to protecting water resources.

Note to editors:
World Tourism Day is celebrated annually on 27 September. Its purpose is to foster awareness among the international community of the importance of tourism and its social, cultural, political and economic value. The event seeks to address the global challenges outlined in the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and highlight the tourism sector’s contribution in reaching these goals.
### AUSTRIA

The International Tourist Guide Day (ITGD) in Vienna was held on the 24th February, a Sunday, which allowed more people, especially families and children to join - at least there were more than 4,000 visitors who came for this years topic "Vienna between 1918-38" (interwar period). Totally 123 licensed tourist guides offered - also in 12 foreign languages, 140 tours, 88 of it in the Leopold Museum - our partner this year, and 10 lectures.

Like every year donations were collected, this time more than EUR 4,300 for two organisations: "Licht ins Dunkel" (German for "Light into the Dark") and "Stones of Remembrance".

At the end of a very joyful day the "Association of Licensed Guides of Vienna" honoured the employees of the Schönbrunn and Hofburg Palaces, two major sights in Vienna, to thank for their support of and cooperation with licensed tourist guides throughout the last years.

**Martina A. Schümatschek**

### EGYPT

Celebrating The International Tourist Guides Day.

The faculty of tourism, Monofia University celebrated international Tourist Guide Day on the 12th of March at the university headquarter in Sadat city. The celebration came a little bit late this year because of the political turmoil in Egypt as it was not possible to set the event on time and had to be postpone the event to a further day. The international tourist day is normally celebrated at the 21st of February.

A number of Known and senior tourist guides were invited to the event and as speakers on that day such as Mr Aladdin Khalifa WFTGA Former EXBO and area representative And Mohamed Gharieb, the former EGTGS president and the Arab Federation president. Also Mr Wagih Gamal President the Light of civilization association for promoting tourist guides.

The day start by a welcome note given by the Dr. Manal Massoud the dean of the Faculty of tourism followed by speech of Dr. Wagih , about the rule of promoting tourist guiding in Egypt

Then Spoke Mr. Aladdin Khalifa the world federation Area Rep and the former Vice president of WFTGA. He spoke the International tours day and WFTGA rule in promoting tourist guides worldwide and the shared his experience with the professional over the course of his 23 years' experience as tourist guide.

Mr Mohamed Gharieb Spoke about the rule of the Egyptian tourist guides association in promoting the tourism industry and raising the flag of the Egyptian tourist guides.

After words a number of senior tourist guides have been honored for the rule in enriching the profession of tourist guiding in Egypt.

Then there was a field trip with the student of the tourist guiding section to the Famous monasteries of Wadi El-natoron Where Pop Shendouda have been buried.

We thank all those who have been in involved to organize of this wonderful event to celebrate the day and. We thank those quests of honors who have enriched the day with their speeches and valuable input. Special thanks goes to faculty of tourism teachers Dr. Nashwa Soliman, Dr noha Azmy, Mr Islam El-bestawy and Karim Anwer.

**Aladdin Khalifa**
The Cyprus Tourist Guides Association inaugurated the ITGD 2013 celebrations with a three-fold programme held on the 21st February.

Three events highlighted the importance of the International Tourist Guide Day and promoted the TG role as a valuable partner of the tourism industry chain and as an “ambassador” of his/her area/country. The Cyprus Guides dedicated this year’s ITGD to “ACCESSIBLE TOURISM”, mainly focusing on people with mobility impairments.

The DAY was heralded by CTGA President, Mrs. Popi Hadjidemetriou, who was invited and spoke about ITGD and the TG’s role in “Accessible Tourism” in a TV and a radio programme of the CBC – the Cyprus national broadcasting corporation.

Next on the row was a visit of the CTGA Executive Board to the Leadership of the “Ecologists Movement” – the Green party of Cyprus – thus reassuring the will of the Cyprus tourist guides to support and promote Sustainable Tourism and contribute to the protection of the country’s ecology and cultural & natural heritage.

The third and most captivating event of the Day was held at the Cyprus Archaeological Museum in Nicosia where the CTGA arranged a free tour for people with mobility impairments.

The wheelchair guests were welcomed by the CTGA President who spoke about the Cyprus Tourist Guides’ determination to promote all efforts needed for making “Accessibility” possible for all citizens and guests to all Cyprus’s Museums and Heritage sites, ports and airports, hotels and reception areas, entertainment and leisure places, street pavements and public buildings…

Maria Aristedou, WFTGA ExBo Member and Area Representative Coordinator, read WFTGA President’s Message on ITGD and the UNWTO’s press release on the efforts and actions of this Organization for promoting “ACCESSIBILITY TO TOURISM”. She added that “Accessibility in Tourism” is an Ethical Value all professional Tourist Guides respect and promote and that the WFTGA, a UNWTO Affiliated Member, supports all UNWTO Ethics and efforts in making Accessibility in Tourism possible for everyone. Maria closed her speech saying that the Cyprus Guides, realizing since long the necessity for actions towards this direction, contributed to the CTO’s decision to include this topic – including practical training on “Guiding people on wheelchairs” - in the 2010-2011 Cyprus/CTO School for Tourist Guides training programme. She added that practical training on guiding people on wheelchair is also included in the WFTGA Cyprus International Training Centre’s training programme.

Titina Loizidou, past CTGA and WFTGA President, and the initiator of the ITGA, led the Cyprus Archaeological Museum tour; which was originally planned to be led by Mrs. Rena Michaelidou, past CTGA President, who is herself a person with mobility difficulties; Mrs. Rena Michaelidou was finally unable to conduct the tour as she was suddenly taken ill. The Cyprus tourist guides honored Mr. Rena Michaelidou, only a few days back, for her long dedication and work for the tourist guiding institution by proclaiming her “Honorable –Lifelong CTGA President”.

CTGA has since long incorporated in its ITGD Celebrations programme “The Get to Know Cyprus Week”. An annual event that began in 1978 and inspired the introduction of the ITGD in 1990. This year’s theme is “Treasures of the earth/grounds of Cyprus” (Cyprus has a very unique geological past which attracts geologists and visitors from all around the world) and the tours which are open to the public will be held between 25th February and 5th March. They include visits to places of special geological interest, ancient and contemporary mines of the island, Natural Trails Walks etc. The 2day duration excursion will be led by two prominent Cypriot geologists who will share their knowledge with all tour participants.
**GERMANY**

One Topic Germany-wide

A great success in Germany since 1999 with more than 200,000 guests

In Germany the ITGD is the day when the public is invited to get to know the work of well-trained guides who have organized themselves under the umbrella of the German National Tourist Guide Association (BVGD).

Since 1999, the BVGD board of directors has coordinated the ITGD. The events adhere to a common theme, which is fixed by the general assembly of the BVGD.

The topic of the German ITGD in 2013 is “Men and Markets”. 74 BVGD-member organisations participated in this year's ITGD and offered various interesting tours according to the motto: Get to Know Germany for Free.

The guided tours are publicised by means of a uniform poster and a booklet listing all tours. The offers receive extensive coverage in newspapers, radio, and TV channels.

Every BVGD-member organisation goes to great effort to contribute to the success of this joint program. Often, public institutions and educational establishments open their doors free of charge. Thus the ITGD reaches two goals:

On the one hand, guides serving without a fee help visitors experience their city, their region, or their country

on the other hand, the ITGD is a good instrument for attracting the attention of tourism organizers and decision-makers in local politics to the work of guides associated with the BVGD and to interest them in cooperating.

In this manner, the ITGD has successfully created public awareness for its work.

Since 2008, the ITGD in Germany starts with a central ceremony in one of the participating cities.

Read more information on the ITGD and the Germany-wide program on the BVGD website www.bvgd.org

**Ingrid Schwoon, BVGD**

**USA**

The Guides Association of New York City (GANYC) celebrated ITGD 2013 on 21 February with twenty guides giving an hour or longer tour in many areas of New York City and in one situation, a tour of subway art at various public transportation stations. International tourists participating in this year’s event came from The Netherlands, Japan, Ecuador and Ireland. Unfortunately, despite global warming, below freezing temperature along with a wind chill factor reduced the number of tourists participating this year when compared to last year. A copy of the scheduled tours is sent as an attachment with this email. GANYC guides that volunteer for this event are asking to do it again next year, but want to change the date in anticipation of a warmer temperature. The date would be delayed to some time in early or mid March as our busy tourist season usually starts and is in full swing in April; however, late March is getting more popular every year.

**Harvey Paul Davidson**
INDIA

Dear friends
You all are cordially invited to be my special guest for celebration of Bhagwan Sri Dev Narayan
Jayanti on Sunday 17.02.2013 at 5.00 p.m at Gurjar Ki Dhani, Sector 4, Vidhyadhar Naghar, Jaipur
(India). The purpose of celebrating the festive spirit for peace to promote fraternity, mutual
understanding and communal harmony. I am sure that such kind of programme & social activities will
strengthen mutual love and brotherhood and certainly spread the message of non-violence,
communal harmony and National integration

Ravi Shanker Dhabhai Jai mate

ITALY

The 24th edition of the International Day of Tourist Guides in Italy was this year a thrilling event that
has envolved guides all over the country.

For the first time ever, thanks to the use of social medias, in particular facebook, freelance guides
and Associations of guides scattered from the north to south, islands included, have pooled together
to coordinate an event that has put our profession under the spotlight for a week.

From February 16th to February 24th uncountless events and guided tours have been offered to the
general public, covering a wide range of age groups from adults to students from kids to seniors, all
united by the desire to share an experience with us. We are the professionals who have the ability to
unfold stories and blend together the most diverse ingredients that turn a guided tour into something
special.

It was a unique chance for many to discover or simply "rediscover" sites and monuments that
somewhat pass unnoticed because we are either too busy or too "blind" to appreciate the beauty that
surrounds us.

Our mission was to arouse public interest and awareness towards a profession that is still,
unfortunately, underrated and thanks to the almost 10.000 visitors and to the media coverage from
national, local and sectorial press, I am proud to claim that we reached our goal.

Find attached an image on the blog that shows the enthusiasm and participation.
http://24giornataguida.blogspot.it/

Andrea Ogunbisi
Guidelines internetion@l

ITGD

ITGD in Austria

ITGD in Egypt

ITGD in Cyprus

ITGD in Germany

ITGD in Italy
The Armenian Guides Guild (AGG) Training Committee organized an advanced Museum Guide Training in Yerevan April 4 to 7, 2013. WFTGA certified International trainer: Houri Nazaretian, National trainers: Shahane Halajyan, Tatevik Asryan and Sona Abrahamyan designed and delivered the intensive course.

This training was discussed between WFTGA President; Ms Felicitas Wressnig and Vice President – Chair of Training Division; Mrs Wilja Siebe, The Museum Association of Armenia and AGG during their meeting at the Museum of Arts and History where the Museum Association is based in February-March 2013. The Funding was provided by RA Ministry of Culture; DVV International (German Adult Education Association (Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband e.V., DVV), The Museum Association of Armenia, and AGG Training Committee.

The training took place at The Institute of Ancient Manuscripts (the Matenadaran). www.matenadaran.am. The course was offered in the Armenian language to 15 Museum guides (10 guides from different Armenian cities, and 5 guides from Yerevan). Helping with the moderation and final exams were: WFTGA certified International Trainer Ms Rita Nawojan, from the Museum Association Mrs Alvart Grigoryan.

For the first time the Cultural Sensitivities and Body Language was delivered during this training. The trainers found both subjects extremely useful, the guides were intensively interested and requested both subjects to be available in their basic training program (new guides) as well as in their refreshing courses and / or lectures.

Houri Nazaretian

Armenian Museum of Arts and History – Home of the Museum Association

The Participants
VISIT TO DOMINICAN REPUBLIC 2012

What a great holiday! After a spontaneous decision I visited the Dominican Republic in November and December for a holiday-trip – and it was amazing.

The Dominican Republic is situated on the eastern part of the second-largest island in the Greater Antilles. It shares the island roughly at a 2:1 ratio with Haiti. Both by area and population, the Dominican Republic is the second largest country in the Antilles (after Cuba), with around 48,500 square kilometers and an estimated 10 million people.

Christopher Columbus landed on the island in 1492, and it became the site of the first permanent European settlement in the Americas, namely Santo Domingo, the country's capital and Spain’s first capital in the New World. Santo Domingo, which is also the greatest metropolitan area, is located on the southern coast. I enjoyed a full day-tour to Santo Domingo with an excellent tourist guide who was a fabulous mixture of profound knowledge and a good sense of humor.

Punta Cana, where I stayed, is based on the eastern coast and the sea there is mixed of the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea. Generally I am not the person who stays in AI-resorts, but after a pretty busy season I just wanted to relax under the Caribbean sun. More or less… I remembered the WFTGA-Convention in Tallinn in 2011 where I met the delegate from the Dominican Republic who is also the president of the Tourist Guide Association there, Antonio Aponte, whom I contacted. Luckily he had time so we arranged an appointment in Higuey, the city where Antonio lives. I arrived our meeting-point, the Cathedral, after an hour drive with a local bus. During an impressive tour through the Cathedral with excellent explanations, Antonio verbally painted a picture of his country:

The Dominican Republic has become the Caribbean’s largest tourist destination, especially in Punta Cana, Puerto Plata and Santo Domingo. The country’s year-round golf courses are among the top attractions on the island. In this mountainous land is located the Caribbean’s highest mountain, Pico Duarte, as is Lake Enriquillo, the Caribbean’s largest lake and lowest elevation. Quisqueya, as Dominicans often call their country, has an average temperature of 26 °C and great biological diversity. Music and sport are of great importance in the Dominican culture, with Merengue as the national dance and music, and baseball as the favorite sport.

After the Cathedral we visited Antonio’s’ office, where the picture was made. It was a great opportunity to get the chance to meet other colleagues as well. Whilst I tried the national drink ‘Mama Juana’ on the terrace of a very stylish pub we all had an interesting discussion about new fields of tourism going on, e.g. eco-tourism. Later on we dived into the nightlife were I really got and inhaled the Caribbean feeling with music and dancing all night long.

I would really like to thank all dear colleagues in the Dominican Republic, especially Antonio Aponte, who made my holiday unforgettable. There are so many things I haven’t seen during my stay, so for sure I will, I have to come back once in the nearer future.

Martina A. Schümatschek
VISIT TO GAMBIA MARCH 2013

During my holiday stay in Gambia I could not resist to be in contact with our tourist guide colleagues. Of course not!

The Gambia National Tourist Guide Association is a full member of WFTGA.

We stayed in Bakau which is one of the best known beach resorts in the country situated along the Atlantic Coast. The Gambia itself is a stretched out country on the North and South Bank of the Gambia River that goes hundreds of kilometers upriver land inward. North of Gambia is Senegal. The total population of Gambia is 1.6 million and the total surface is 11,300 sq km. From the total population 45% is 15 years or younger.

I had sent an email to the Chair of the Gambia Association earlier but….on our first walk we came across Lamin (Flex) Sonko. Soon I found out that he is an official tourist guide and a member of the Board of the National Tourist Guide Association. I was invited to visit their office opposite the Sunbeach Hotel. Their real office however is in Banjul the Capital of Gambia. Their Association has 60 members as National Guides.

So under the Palm tree we discussed – together with some colleagues – tourism and tourist guiding in Gambia. Lamin (right of me on the picture) explained that he has been educated as a tourist guide at the school in Georgetown. This city is situated a 300 km inward situated on an island in the Gambia River which we have visited on a trip with Lamin.

Going upriver Gambia shows a completely different picture from what you see at the sea shore. We have passed and visited old traditional villages with women in colourful dresses in the streets of the city of Farefenni and Wassu with their very lively markets and streetlife. Many people from the countryside and also from Senegal come here to the market to sell their products. We visited a most interesting side called the Wassu Stone Circles now a UNESCO World Heritage Side which gives evidence of ancient African Cultures. Gambia knows also many National Parks which are paradise especially for bird watchers.

Lamin introduced us in Georgetown to some colleagues who are city and site guides. They are now working on having their own Association and they want to provide their guide members with an official badge to show to tourists that they are qualified tourist guides.

We had a wonderful and very interesting trip with my colleague Lamin. Thank you for everything and best wishes to all our colleagues in Gambia.

Wilja Siebe
25TH CSA/CAP JOINT MEETING & UNWTO CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT in HYDERABAD:

It was a great opportunity to meet and interact with a lot of high officials who are decision makers or part of the decision-making team of Tourism in their respective countries. Apart from this there were, of course, the staff and officials of the UNWTO itself who were understanding and supportive.

WFTGA participation in the Hyderabad event positively helped increase the awareness of the existence of our professional and International body amongst these officials from different parts of Asia who sometimes lack knowledge about our existence, working conditions and strength.

Another step forward was also to create the awareness of our training and accreditations; many countries were interested in knowing more or wanting training for their guides when I was making informal contacts to introduce WFTGA and our aims and processes during the two days.

The inauguration of the conference on 12th morning was grand with the Chief Minister of the State of Andhra Pradesh attending and the Tourism Minister of India, who is also the Megastar of Telugu Cinema, inaugurating it. Wide local media coverage was given, http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=94657 gives the press release on the summary of the inauguration.

The evening dinner on 11th was lavishly arranged with tourism officials of the country and state playing hosts. There were cultural shows with monumental backdrop and dinner served in style as guests of the maharaja, seated on floor.

My first attendance to a UNWTO meeting taught me its value as it keeps us in constant touch and relation with top officials of the Tourism Industry. It puts us on a higher or easier level to aid our effective communication in the industry. This would have value additions to the work of the EXBO and existence and aims of our organization a sure positive direction – positive results for all our members.

*Priya Sudhakar Lakshmi*
In the month of May I was invited to the First Latin American Congress of Tourist Guides in Cusco, Peru. Since I was already scheduled to be in Lima for other reasons, I decided to attend. The Congress was organised by the Federation of Tourist Guides of Peru, and in attendance were guides from Peru, Bolivia, Chile, Brazil, Mexico, Colombia and Uruguay. I was very pleased by the fact of the increasing awareness of the importance of belonging to WFTGA and that this was mentioned several times. During the working meetings, it was obvious that the main issues concerning Latin American Guides were: tariffs and "intruders". The first issue is of paramount importance, it is simply the right to a fair payment for the highly specialised skills required for the job. Tourist guides need to be accepted as professionals! The question remains, how much is fair payment? This was a matter of lengthy discussion. The other issue are "intruders": either they are not qualified and/or accredited as guides and do not pay taxes; others are Tour Managers asked by their agent not to hire an area specific guide in order to save money: both are incapable to deliver qualified state-of-the-art commentary! Cooperation and development is very difficult to show effect, due to several factors: the huge distances among the countries; the cost in money and time due to these distances; the amount of work involved would call for very dedicated people. My final thoughts are that it was a very positive experience since it created a forum for networking and getting to know the issues of various colleagues in other countries of the region.

Tamara Levinson

The first from right is me and the third from right is Mr. Daniel Abarca Soto, President of the Federation of Guides of Peru.