



Press release

Stockholm, 19 June 2012

## Swedish tourism initiative launches at RIO+20

**The Swedish Travel and Tourism Industry Federation (RTS) and the UN's World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) will launch a joint project entitled "Down to Earth for Tourism" at the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. The project is a Swedish initiative that is now being developed together with the UNWTO and is generating international attention as a high-profile project that uses space missions and technologies as catalysts for innovation.**

RTS and UNWTO have signed a partnership agreement on the global project Down to Earth for Tourism, which applies experience from space exploration and the International Space Station to identify innovative solutions for the development of sustainable tourism. The goal is to develop tools and models that can be repurposed globally and assist other countries, regions and future tourist destinations in sustainable development. A pilot project has already been carried out in China and Scandinavia and the project is now being launched internationally.

"Sweden is already among the top contenders for its innovation, space technologies and sustainability. To put it simply, it is thrilling to begin a partnership with the UNWTO on innovation in tourism, and I am looking forward to presenting the project in Rio. Our vision is to establish a 'mission control centre' based in Stockholm where planning and concept development will take place and be distributed globally within the framework of the project," says Jan Lundin, President of the Swedish Travel and Tourism Industry Federation.

The Down to Earth for Tourism project is based on a concept produced by Swedish innovation company Umbilical Design, which used "the astronaut lifestyle" as its starting point. By looking at the use of closed looped systems in space regarding material, technology and resource scarcity, the same approach can be applied to sustainable tourism development for future destinations, travel and tourist attractions. New innovations can be developed by transferring know-how from space missions in order to meet future challenges related to climate change, a higher population and environmental impact.

With space as the catalyst for innovation, the aim is for Down to Earth for Tourism to help in achieving the Millennium Development Goals\*, for example, by creating new jobs, innovative services and products for sustainable growth.

*\* The eight Millennium Development Goals range from improving life for the poor to creating the conditions for sustainable global development.*

Here is a link to RTS's item on the programme for 19 June at RIO+20 under the theme of Green Economy and sustainable development:



<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/62/52/50495670.pdf>

The Swedish Travel and Tourism Industry Federation (RTS) is a business organisation that conducts business and development projects in partnership with players from the private and public sectors. Our objective is to encourage increased entrepreneurialism and business enterprise, thus developing the common market for the Swedish travel and tourism industry. For further information, [www.rts.se](http://www.rts.se).

Umbilical Design, a Swedish company working with innovation and space technology transfer. Umbilical Design was founded in 2001 by industrial designer Cecilia Hertz, and since its inception has worked with NASA and the European Space Agency (ESA) on design for the space industry. "The Down to Earth project" was initiated in 2009 to unlock the potential of commercialization rate of space related findings and innovations. For further information [www.umbilicaldesign.se](http://www.umbilicaldesign.se).