



## General Assembly

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### Membership of the Organization

#### (a) New membership

##### (I) Full Members

#### I. Introduction

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1. The purpose of this document is to inform the General Assembly on the changes in membership since its nineteenth session and to submit to it membership applications that it is called upon to consider pursuant to Article 5 of the Statutes and rules 49 and 50 of the Assembly's Rules of Procedure.

#### II. New membership

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2. **Myanmar** notified the Secretariat and the Spanish Government on 9 May 2012 of its decision to rejoin to the Organization. Myanmar had belonged to the International Union of Official Travel Organizations (IUOTO) and to UNWTO until 1999. In accordance with Article 5(2) of the Statutes, **on 1 June 2012** the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain, Depositary of the Statutes of the Organization, registered the formal declaration of the Government of Myanmar by which it adopts the Statutes and accepts the obligations of membership.

3. **Trinidad and Tobago** notified the Secretariat and the Spanish Government on 22 April 2013 of its decision to rejoin the Organization. Trinidad and Tobago had belonged to the International Union of Official Travel Organizations (IUOTO) and to UNWTO until 1977. In accordance with Article 5(2) of the Statutes, **on 22 April 2013** the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain, Depositary of the Statutes of the Organization, registered the formal declaration of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago by which it adopts the Statutes and accepts the obligations of membership.

4. The **United Arab Emirates** (UAE) notified the Secretariat and the Spanish Government on 26 April 2013 of its decision to rejoin the Organization. The UAE had belonged to the International Union of Official Travel Organizations (IUOTO) and to UNWTO until 1987. In accordance with Article 5(2) of the Statutes, **on 26 April 2013** the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain, Depositary of the Statutes of the Organization, registered the formal declaration of the Government of the UAE by which it adopts the Statutes and accepts the obligations of membership.



### III. Withdrawals

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5. **Latvia** notified the Secretariat and the Spanish Government on 22 December 2011 of its intention to withdraw from the Organization (on the expiry of one year's notice, Article 35 of the Statutes) effective on 22 December 2012. The Secretary-General took all the necessary steps to encourage Latvia to reconsider its position, but Latvia has maintained it and its withdrawal took effect on 22 December 2012.

### IV. Contacts with non-Member States

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6. The Secretary-General and Regional Directors have been in touch with the following countries in order to inform them of, or to recall, the benefits of UNWTO membership and to encourage them to consider joining or resuming their participation in the Organization.

7. Within the **Europe** region, several meetings with representatives of the ministries of foreign affairs of **Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Latvia and Sweden** took place. In addition, official visits and other missions to Denmark, Finland, Estonia and Ireland were organized. During these official visits, meetings with representatives of the public and private tourism stakeholders were held and issues of common concern as well as membership discussed.

8. In the **Americas** region, conversations with the US Administration have continued (US Department of Commerce and US Ambassador to Spain). The United States participated in the T20 meeting that UNWTO organized in conjunction with the Government of Mexico in May 2012 and conversations with representatives from the Department of Commerce and Department of State took place.

9. There have also been meetings with the Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, with the Ministers of Barbados, and of St. Kitts and Nevis and with the Ministry of Tourism of Grenada. Additionally, a meeting with the Secretary General of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) took place to obtain the ACS's support for UNWTO membership amongst its members. The UNWTO was also represented at events organized by the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), and explained to its members the benefits of joining the UNWTO. As a consequence of this, a contribution fee scheme is being proposed to the General Assembly granting a special deduction to the Small Island States with a population of under 200,000, which could encourage membership by some of the smaller Caribbean States with less economic resources.

10. In the **Asia-Pacific** region, **Singapore** has been the focus of the Regional Programme for Asia and the Pacific. Interactions with the country have been continued through Singapore Tourism Board during WTM 2010, ITB Berlin and the ASEAN Tourism Forum of 2011, 2012 and 2013. Within this framework of ongoing engagements with the Board, the UNWTO participated actively in Singapore's TravelRave event of last year. On their part, one official from the Singapore Tourism Board joined our 25<sup>th</sup> CAP-CSA joint meeting and the Conference on Sustainable Tourism Development which took place in Hyderabad, India, last April. The most recent meeting took place between the Secretary-General and the CEO of the Singapore Tourism Board on the occasion of ITB Berlin of last March. During their discussions, it was agreed that the two organizations would undertake joint initiatives in research and feasibility studies on regional issues. Further discussions carried out via teleconference between the Regional Programme for Asia and the Singapore Tourism Board confirmed the mutual interest of the Board and the UNWTO in tourism market trends on a long-term basis, cruise tourism, research into manpower, talent development and youth travel as well as sustainable tourism development. Following the success of our collaboration with them in TravelRave 2012, the STB has extended another invitation to the UNWTO to participate in this year's event scheduled to be held in October.

11. As far as **Africa** is concerned, only two countries have not yet joined the UNWTO as full members. These countries are the **Union of the Comoros** and **South Sudan**. Different initiatives have been undertaken towards these two countries for their membership. In the case of **Comoros**, a note verbale was received from the Permanent Mission to the United Nations, expressing the intention to become a Member State of UNWTO. The Regional Director of the Programme for Africa has communicated to the Government the membership procedure to follow and the relevant documents.

12. With regard to **South Sudan**, the Executive Director for Member Relations and Services sent a letter on November 2012 to the Minister of Wildlife, Conservation and Tourism to invite the Government of South Sudan to join the UNWTO as a full member. The correspondence sent to the Minister through UNDP in Juba, was delivered to the Minister's office on 13 January 2013.

13. In the correspondences addressed to the two countries, the Secretariat explained the technical assistance the UNWTO can provide to them in particular in the field of technical cooperation and other specific areas such as: tourism capacity building, ST-EP Programme, tourism planning, etc. Invitation letters have also been extended to the two countries to participate in the UNWTO activities organized in the region in the framework of the General Programme of Work such as seminars and meetings.

## V. Present membership

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14. At the date of this document, the total number of Member States of the Organization is 156.

## VI. Actions to be taken by the General Assembly

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15. The General Assembly is requested:

- (a) To welcome the decision of Myanmar, the United Arab Emirates, and Trinidad and Tobago to rejoin the Organization;
- (b) To take note with regret of Latvia's withdrawal with effect as of 22 December 2012 in accordance with Article 35(1) of the Statutes, and to urge Latvia to reconsider its decision and to once again to take its place in the Organization; and
- (c) To call upon the member countries of the United Nations that do not yet belong to the UNWTO to join the Organization, and to encourage the Secretary-General to continue his efforts in this regard.