



2017  
INTERNATIONAL YEAR  
OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM  
FOR DEVELOPMENT



## General Assembly

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### Membership of the Organization

#### (a) Membership status

##### (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 twenty-first 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. Candidatures for membership

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2. By letter, dated 1 September 2016 and addressed through the Secretary-General to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain, in his capacity as Depositary of the Organization's Statutes, the Minister of Tourism and Antiquities of **the State of Palestine** formally submitted the country's candidature to full membership of the Organization, and declared formal acceptance of the UNWTO Statutes and the obligations of membership. Pursuant to Article 5(3) of the Statutes, this application is submitted to this session of the General Assembly.

3. On 27 April 2017, the Vice-President and Minister of Economy, Planning, Energy, Industry, Crafts, Tourism, Investments, Private Sector and Land Affairs of **the Union of the Comoros** announced to the Secretariat his country's formal acceptance of the UNWTO Statutes, with a view to joining the Organization as a Full Member. Pursuant to Article 5(3) of the Statutes, this application is submitted to this session of the General Assembly. This State is a Member of the United Nations.

4. On 22 August 2017, the Minister of Information, Culture & Tourism of the Federal Government of Somalia, declared his country's formal acceptance of the UNWTO Statutes and the obligations of membership, with a view to joining the Organization as a Full Member. Taking into account that the Secretariat informed all Members of the interest of Somalia in joining the Organization on the 9th August 2017, the Secretary-General requests that an exception to Rule 50 (c) of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly be applied and that the General Assembly considers the candidature to Full



Membership of Somalia, in accordance with Article 5 (3) of the Statutes. The Federal Republic of Somalia is a Member of the United Nations.

### III. Withdrawals

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5. Australia notified the Secretariat and the Spanish Government of its intention to withdraw from the Organization.

### IV. Contacts with non-member States

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6. The Secretary-General and the Regional Directors have been in touch with the countries mentioned below 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 were held with representatives of the ministries of foreign affairs, ministries of tourism and other national institutions of Estonia, Iceland and Sweden. During these official visits, meetings with representatives of the public and private tourism stakeholders took place and issues of common interest, as well as membership were discussed. Further official visits of the Secretary-General to Estonia and Iceland are being planned for the end of 2017.

8. In the **Americas** region, conversations with the private sector and the United States Department of Commerce have continued, and representatives from this Department have participated in various UNWTO events. Efforts with Canada have also been made by collaborating with Global Affairs Canada in the organization of the Global Consular Forum (Songdo, Republic of Korea, October 2016).

9. There have also been meetings with a number of ministers of the Caribbean region, namely Antigua and Barbuda, St. Lucia, Grenada and Guyana. Additionally, memorandums of understanding have been signed with the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) for closer collaboration, which have strengthened the relationship among the organizations and have given the UNWTO more visibility in the Caribbean Region. CARICOM has also been invited to participate in UNWTO events and has attended several of them. In order to encourage membership by some of the smaller Caribbean States with less economic resources, a resolution of the twentieth General Assembly approved a contribution fee scheme granting a special deduction to small island States with a population of under 200,000.

10. As far as **Africa** is concerned, only one country has not yet joined the UNWTO as full members. This country is **South Sudan**. Different initiatives have been undertaken towards the country for its membership.

### V. Present membership

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11. At the date of this document, the total number of Member States of the Organization is 156. Should the General Assembly approve the candidatures of the State of Palestine, the Union of the Comoros and the Federal Republic of Somalia to full membership, the total number would therefore come to 159 Member States.

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

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12. The General Assembly is invited:

- (a) To welcome the decision of the State of Palestine, the Union of the Comoros and the Federal Republic of Somalia to join the Organization and to approve their candidatures;
- (b) To take note with regret of Australia's withdrawal; 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.