

MESSAGE FROM MADRID: WE HAVE TO WAKE UP QUICKLY!

Dear Friends,

Across the world, countries continue to count the cost of COVID-19: in **lives lost**, in economic disruption and in the threat to sustainable development where it's most needed.

This week, the Spring Meetings of the **World Bank and International Monetary Fund** set the backdrop for global leaders to advance immediate response and the economic policies to chart a **path towards a sustainable recovery**. The meetings follow decisions made by the **European Union** and national governments across the world.

Tourism must be recognized as a **key pillar** for building a better future in all world regions. **Past recoveries prove** that the importance of our sector cannot be overstated.

In **Europe**, the world's leading tourism destination, the sector generated last year more than US\$407 billion in international tourism receipts, providing more **than 27 million jobs**. And jobs are a **lifeline for communities**, including the most vulnerable members of society.

Europe can be a leading example: Recognizing the unique power of tourism not just with words but with concrete action.

At UNWTO we urge our partners in the European Commission, across the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions to **embrace tourism** like never before.

This will ensure that tourism grows back stronger and better – **but only if it has the right support** from the highest levels of government and international organizations.

Waking up quickly to start concrete action is of the essence so that we may face up to our shared challenge.

Thank you.

ZURAB POLOLIKASHVILI
SECRETARY-GENERAL