MESSAGE FROM MADRID: TOURISM AND COVID-19

Dear Friends,

We remain united in facing an unprecedented challenge. The COVID-19 virus does not discriminate.

It knows no borders and, as we have seen over recent days, nobody is immune.

We are all, therefore, grateful to all those who cannot stay safe at home right now: To the healthcare workers on the frontline in the fight against the virus, and to everyone working to keep vital supply chains moving, thank you.

The situation is also constantly evolving: Predictions, statements of hope as well as statements of fear quickly become irrelevant.

This is particularly true for tourism. Ours has been the sector hardest hit by this crisis. And we cannot yet say how bad the full impact will be.

But tourism will return. And we must make sure that, as the sector grows again, the benefits are felt throughout society, especially where they are needed the most.

Two weeks ago, we formed the Global Tourism Crisis Committee. This enjoys high-level support from across the sector. It also includes UN agencies among its members. I am pleased to say we are collaborating to minimise the impact this crisis has on lives and livelihoods.

We are also looking to the future, united and determined.

Today, we released our Recommendations for Recovery. We shared these among our Members, throughout the tourism sector, and the wider public.

I trust that these Recommendations will help guide tourism in the challenging weeks and months ahead. We call on governments to include them in their action plans. This way, tourism can help lead recovery, just as it has done many times before.

Thank you.

ZURAB POLOLIKASHVILI
SECRETARY-GENERAL