

## Message from Madrid: Trust is the New Currency

Dear Friends,

It is imperative that we get the world moving again – once it is safe to do so.

We are monitoring the introduction of travel restrictions around the world. Our latest data shows 100% of all destinations have restrictions in place. Depending on when and where travel restrictions are lifted, international tourist numbers could fall between 60 and 80% this year.

The global tourism decline has already taken a toll on national economies, people's livelihoods, and on our efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Without a strong and vital tourism sector, many millions of jobs and small businesses are at risk.

UNWTO has been calling for concrete steps which put words of support into action. This week, we have been encouraged by the action plan set out by the European Union to relaunch tourism in a timely, responsible and coordinated manner. The lifting of travel restrictions, first within nations and then across international borders, will allow the many social and economic benefits tourism brings to return not just in Europe but around the world.

The EU plan, which owes much to the work of Commissioner Breton, is an example for the rest of the world to follow. The coordinated rolling out of new health and safety protocols for every part of the tourism value chain – including travel, accommodation, food and leisure – will make it safer to travel.

Trust is the new currency of our 'new normal'. And tourism is ideally positioned to be the vehicle to channel trust. If people trust in governments and in the tourism sector to keep them safe from harm, they will indeed travel tomorrow. As the ultimate person-to-person sector, and one that promotes solidarity and friendship, **tourism will play a key role in spreading trust** more widely, with benefits traveling far beyond tourism itself. Only this way can we drive our economies back towards growth and start rebuilding our societies.

**ZURAB POLOLIKASHVILI**  
SECRETARY-GENERAL