

UNWTO RECOGNIZES SAFE AND RESPONSIBLE RESTART OF TOURISM ON THE CANARY ISLANDS

Madrid, Spain, 13 July 2020 – *The Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has paid an official visit to the Canary Islands to recognize the reopening of the destination and the steps the local authorities have taken to keep both visitors and tourism workers safe as the sector restarts.*

UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili was accompanied by the Spanish Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism, Reyes Maroto, for a series of **high-level meetings with both public and private sector leaders**. The delegation met with the President of the Canary Islands Ángel Víctor Torres and the Secretary of Tourism for the Canary Islands Yaiza Castilla, as well as with the Spanish government's representative on the islands, Anselmo Pestana and the President of Town Hall of Gran Canaria, Antonio Morales.

Mr Pololikashvili said: "Tourism is one of the most important economic sectors for the Canary Islands, providing jobs and livelihoods and supporting many local businesses. The **responsible restart** of the sector will allow the many benefits tourism offers to return, and UNWTO welcomes the measures that have been taken to build confidence and trust in the sector."

This official visit follows a successful visit to Italy – the first trip undertaken since restrictions on international travel were eased within the Schengen Zone of Europe. Both visits recognize how tourism is a lifeline for many countries and highlights support for tourism at every political levels and the close collaboration with the private sector.

The UNWTO Regional Director for Europe, Alessandra Priante, said: "Health and safety, including the state of healthcare systems, are now key elements for all destinations. This needs to be reflected in their marketing and communications strategies, both now as tourism restarts and into the future as the sector recovers. Tourism has proven its resilience and its unique ability to drive the recovery and development of societies and it will do so again, and this time sustainability and innovation must be front and centre."

Maximizing security and open to the media

Alongside meetings with public sector leaders, the UNWTO delegation also saw first-hand the steps being taken by the private sector to ensure the highest level of public safety and hygiene in tourism destinations.

In parallel, UNWTO officials visited each of the eight islands of the Canarian Archipelago to see first-hand the safety protocols put in place to **maximize security and safety**. A group of up to 60 Spanish and international media also witnessed the safety updates along the whole tourism value chain.

Useful Links:

[UNWTO and Italy Look Ahead as European Tourism Restarts](#)

[UN Tourism News: As Tourism Restarts, Our Responsibilities Remain](#)