

Reflection and Resolve as Tourism Looks to the Future

Across Europe, the responsible restart of tourism is now underway. But even as growing numbers of tourists cross borders and businesses open up again, this is **no time for complacency**.

Just as we stressed at the beginning of this crisis: words of support are not enough for tourism to recover. Concrete actions are needed.

For UNWTO, this means supporting Member States and the wider tourism sector as it adapts and transitions towards a more resilient and sustainable future.

The visit of a [UNWTO delegation to the Canary Islands](#) allowed us to do just this.

Through inviting members of the media, private sector leaders and political leaders to join us for this official visit, UNWTO was able to show that **tourism's return can be managed safely and responsibly**. It is possible to prioritise health while at the same time safeguarding jobs and promoting economic recovery!

At the same time, the innovation running through our sector means that the restart of tourism can help get the global community back on track as we work together to fulfil the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The [UNWTO Sustainable Development Goals Startup Competition](#), which was launched this week, will identify new ideas with the power and potential to reimagine tourism and enhance the sector's **positive impact on people and planet**. I urge all entrepreneurs and innovators to step up and take part. Only through embracing the new can we emerge from this crisis stronger, more resilient and better prepared for the challenges that lie ahead, including addressing inequality and climate action.

As we look to the future, however, we must also pause to reflect on the **terrible human cost of the pandemic**. This week, I was honoured to join His Majesty King Felipe VI, alongside the Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez and guests including the Director-General of the World Health Organization Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen, and Jens Stoltenberg, Secretary-General of NATO, as well as other national and international political leaders at a special event to commemorate all those who have lost their lives to COVID-19 in Spain.

The presence of such high-level figures from within and also from outside of Spain was testament to the **international solidarity** that has characterised our response to this pandemic. It also represented an opportunity for us all to express our appreciation to the health workers who worked – and continue to work – on the frontline of this public health emergency.

Throughout this crisis, our host country has shown great **resolve**. It now carries that spirit into a determination to grow back and recover.

UNWTO offers our full support to Spain, as we do to every other Member State, and will continue to work closely with the government to ensure tourism fulfils its unique potential as a tool for economic recovery and social cohesion.

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