

UNWTO Commission for the Americas

65th Virtual Meeting
Madrid, Spain
18 June 2020
Decisions

CAM/65/Dec.
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Decisions taken by the UNWTO Commission
for the Americas at its sixty-fifth meeting

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MINUTES OF THE SIXTY-FIFTH MEETING OF THE UNWTO REGIONAL
COMMISSION FOR THE AMERICAS

On 18 June 2020, the Regional Commission for the Americas held its 65th meeting in the city of Madrid, Spain, in virtual form, under the chairmanship of Jamaica represented by the Minister of Tourism, Edmund Bartlett. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following Member States of the Commission: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay and Venezuela.

I. Agenda

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1. Adoption of the agenda **(Document CAM/65/ODP)**

The Commission adopted the agenda of its sixty-fifth meeting as set out on page 2 of this document.

2. Communication of the Chair of the Commission (Jamaica) **(Document CAM/65/2)**

In its communication as Chair of the Commission, Jamaica welcomed the presence of the delegations, although expressing disappointment at not being able to receive them in the country because of the pandemic.

The Chair stressed that tourism policies today require innovative thinking to match the dynamism of this current threat to sustainable development, where effective recovery and the "new normal" will be characterized by greater flexibility for the viability of businesses, in particular micro, small and medium-sized tourism enterprises; a new and united generation with strategies tailored to this new emerging market; increased application of technology for digital transformation; new modes of work and measurements for productivity; as well as enhanced resilience.

The Chair of the Commission agreed with the UNWTO that will be a useful vehicle to drive recovery and re-balance our economies. The promotion of diversity and inclusion within the sector provides employment and opportunities for the most vulnerable populations. The sustainable development slogan of leaving no one behind applies just as much to inequalities among countries as it does to those that exist within countries – developing and developed. The systems and tools created to confront COVID-19 are useful guides for revising policies and procedures to take account of these social and economic realities.

There were opportunities born out of the region's COVID-19 response that compel us to maintain a certain approach even beyond this period. These include targeted support and focus on micro, small and medium size enterprises; re-thinking business models and the application of existing, new and emerging technologies for innovative responses to the challenges encountered during this critical period.

The principles of multilateralism must, indeed, ring true for greater cooperation and collaboration at the regional level and further, on the global stage. This is particularly important as we keep in view the existential threats to humanity such as climate change, food insecurity, and poverty that continue to plague some of our countries.

The reports, research and initiatives undertaken by the UNWTO during this period were very useful and served as good foundation. The region was pleased to contribute to this process by virtue of our participation on the various

Committees. The region further stands ready to collaborate with the organization and all Member States for improved solutions to the greater benefit of our nationals, visitors and the wider international community.

3. Introductory remarks, presentation on UNWTO Initiatives and Activities in response to COVID-19 Outbreak
[\(Document CAM/63/3\)](#)

The Secretary-General and the Deputy Regional Director for the Americas, made a joint presentation outlining the state of tourism in the face of the pandemic, the initiatives taken by UNWTO as a response, as well as the different alternatives, recommendations and guidelines that emerged from the Crisis Committee that was created with UNWTO member countries, some agencies of the United Nations system and leading actors of the global private tourism sector.

To access the presentation click [here](#).

Subsequently, UNWTO Legal Counsel Alicia Gómez made a presentation on the rights of international tourists during the COVID-19 crisis.

The presentation focused on the different difficulties that tourists have faced, such as flight cancellations, airport closures, cancellation of reservations without warning, as well as situations with insurance companies that did not cover force majeure situations such as a pandemic, for example.

She stressed the importance of restoring confidence in order to move forward. The first step would be to adopt minimum standards on international assistance and the protection of the rights of tourists, as consumers, in emergency situations. The second step would focus on the harmonization and development of international standards on the protection of tourists as consumers, which could be implemented through a code for the protection of the rights of tourists.

She also mentioned the desirability of establishing a UNWTO Working Group on the protection of tourists as consumers with the objectives of:

- Clarifying the obligations of tourists, service providers and states during emergencies.
- Fair and balanced distribution of responsibilities.
- Strengthening international cooperation for the assistance and repatriation of tourists.

To access the presentation click [here](#).

4. Interaction by the Ministers on policy issues in response to COVID-19

Thirteen delegations including [Brazil](#), [Chile](#), Colombia, Cuba, [Ecuador](#), [Guatemala](#), Jamaica, [Mexico](#), Nicaragua, [Panama](#), [Paraguay](#), Uruguay and Venezuela took the floor to succinctly explain how they dealt, through their respective national tourism administrations, with the ravages produced by the pandemic.

5. Presentation: “Beyond Tourism Innovation Challenge”, an IDB Project with the collaboration of UNWTO

IDB Lab expert Irene Arias made her presentation on the "Beyond Tourism Innovation Challenge", focusing on the revitalization of the tourism sector.

This challenge focuses on:

1. Adoption of innovative technologies: To ensure consumer protection and trust, the industry needs to adopt innovation and embrace digital transformation, with technologies such as biosecurity measures to protect travellers, big data for analytical purposes to develop visitor profiles, guidelines and trends, virtual reality to bring remote places closer to the traveller, and the Internet of Things to bring updates to the industry.
2. The tourism workforce of the future: The sector must invest in up-skilling and reskilling its human capital and developing new talent, by supporting tourism entrepreneurship, with an inclusive approach. Multidimensional training geared towards the development of new products such as nature, medical and wellness tourism should be supported.
3. Environmental sustainability: Augmented numbers of visitors in fragile destinations require safeguarding biodiversity and natural habitats, as ecosystem disruptions can exacerbate infectious diseases. The industry's supply chains must reimagine the tourism offer with measures to conserve energy, water and transition to circular economy approaches including agriculture and food waste management.

Ms. Arias invited the participation of applicants from the 48 IDB Group member countries, including innovators, entrepreneurs, destination marketing organizations, businesses, public innovation agencies, academic institutions, research centres, social enterprises, NGOs and similar applicants, with proven experience in the tourism sector. Applicants not located in one of the 15 target countries may participate if they apply in partnership with a local organization registered in one of those countries.

To access the presentation click [here](#).

6 Presentation: “Green Investments for Sustainable Tourism”, an IFC-UNWTO Project

UNWTO Senior Expert Natalia Bayona explained to participants that UNWTO is collaborating with the International Finance Corporation (IFC) to provide the tourism sector with technical training programmes to promote green funding in order to stimulate tourism recovery and ensure the development of competitive and sustainable economic growth.

Three objectives have been set in this process:

1. Identify "aggregators" throughout the hotel value chain to promote and implement sustainability measures.
2. Provide training in skills related to the adoption of green building parameters and transition processes to encourage sustainable investment.
3. Facilitate sustainable investment mechanisms to access green financing opportunities.

To access the presentation click [here](#).

7. Update on the celebrations of the World Tourism Day

The Deputy Regional Director spoke briefly on the celebration of World Tourism Day. He recalled that the MERCOSUR countries had supported Argentina's proposal to hold the celebration in the MERCOSUR region, presented at the 64th meeting of the UNWTO Regional Commission for the Americas, which took place in La Antigua, Guatemala.

He also mentioned his participation in the Meeting of the Ministers of Tourism of MERCOSUR held virtually on 26 May 2020, where the ministers decided to give a little more time to see the evolution of the pandemic in that region; if there were no improvements, the celebration would be done virtually.

The Minister of Tourism of Paraguay took the floor to reiterate her interest in carrying out the meeting virtually while Brazil, through the Executive Secretary of the Ministry, supported the possibility of an in-person celebration in the event of a positive evolution of the pandemic or, otherwise, resorting to the virtual format.

The Secretary-General stated that the conditions for holding the meeting in person were not in place, but called for a virtual meeting among the countries involved, the UNWTO Chief of Communications and the Deputy Regional Director in mid-July to make an assessment and make a decision on the matter.

8. Place and date of the 66th meeting of the Regional Commission for the Americas

Jamaica reaffirmed its interest in holding the 66th CAM meeting in its country, as it could not be done this year for the known reasons.

The countries took note of Jamaica's offer and approved the motion. Therefore, the next CAM meeting will be held in Jamaica on a date to be determined.

ANNEX I – LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Chair of the Commission

JAMAICA

Head of delegation

H.E. Mr. Edmund Bartlett

Minister of Tourism

Ministry of Tourism

Delegates

Mrs. Tyesha Turner

Advisor/Consultant to the Minister

Member States

ARGENTINA

Head of delegation

Mr. Leandro Balasini

Undersecretary of Institutional Relations
and International Cooperation

Ministry of Tourism and Sports

Delegates

Mrs. Ana Inés García Allievi

Specialized Professional in International
Relations

Mr. Ezequiel Gliubizzi

Specialized Professional in Tourism

BRAZIL

Head of delegation

Mr. Higino Brito Vieira

Deputy Executive Secretary

Ministry of Tourism

Delegates

Mr. Antônio Ricarte

Head of the International Advisory Office

Mr. Diego Feijó

General Coordinator of Multilateral Affairs

Mr. Mário Mottim

General Coordinator of Tourism and Sports
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

CHILE*Head of delegation*

H.E. Mr. Jose Luis Uriarte
Undersecretary of Tourism
Ministry of Economy, Development and
Tourism

Delegates

Mrs. Sofía Valenzuela
International Affairs Advisor

COLOMBIA*Head of delegation*

H.E. Mr. Julian Guerrero Orozco
Vice Minister of Tourism
Vice Ministry of Tourism
Ministry of Commerce, Industry and
Tourism

Delegates

Mrs. Luisa Fernanda Vásquez
Adviser Office Vice Ministry of Tourism

COSTA RICA*Head of delegation*

Mr. Hermes Navarro
Chief of Investment Attraction
Costa Rican Institute of Tourism (ICT)

CUBA*Head of delegation*

H.E. Mr. Juan Carlos García Granda
Minister of Tourism
Ministry of Tourism

ECUADOR*Head of delegation*

H.E. Mr. Ricardo Zambrano
Vice Minister of Tourism
Ministry of Tourism

GUATEMALA*Head of delegation*

H.E. Mr. Mynor Cordón
General Director
Guatemalan Tourism Institute (INGUAT)

Delegates

Mrs. Luisa Guzmán
Technical Advisor

HAITI*Head of delegation*

H.E. Mrs. Myriam Jean
Minister of Tourism
Ministry of Tourism and Creative Industries

HONDURAS

Head of delegation

H.E. Mrs. Nicole Marrder
Minister of Tourism
Honduran Institute of Tourism

Delegates

Mrs. Tatiana Siercke
Manager of Institutional Management and
International Affairs

MEXICO

Head of delegation

H.E. Mr. Miguel Torruco Marqués
Secretary of Tourism
Secretariat of Tourism (SECTUR)

Delegados

Mr. Humberto Hernández Haddad
Undersecretary of Quality and Regulation

Mr. Alejandro Aguilera Gómez
Undersecretary of Planning and Policy

Mr. Emmanuel Romain Ernest Rey
Head of the International Affairs and
Cooperation Unit

Mrs. Anabella Barbosa Chiñas
Head of Department of Bilateral Affairs

Mr. Gustavo Armanta
General Director of Social Communication

Mrs. Marilú López Santoyo
Social Networks - Secretary

Mr. Cesar Daniel González Madruga
General Director of Sustainable Tourism
Planning

Mrs. Laura Iveth Sánchez Villaseñor
Coordinator of Advisors

Mr. Rahel Ávila Guzmán
Director of Content

NICARAGUA*Head of delegation*

H.E. Mrs. Shanthanny Anasha Campbell
Co General Director of Administration
Nicaraguan Institute of Tourism (INTUR)

Delegates

Mrs. Mara Vanesa Stotti
Head of the Tourism Development Division

Mrs. Karina Ramírez
Responsible for the Tourism Projects and
External Cooperation Division

PANAMA*Head of delegation*

H.E. Mrs. Denise Mariela Guillén Zúñiga
Sub Administrator
Panama Tourism Authority (ATP)

Delegates

Mrs. Daisy Carolina Trujillo Bonaga
Head of Technical Cooperation

PARAGUAY*Head of delegation*

H.E. Mrs. Sofía Montiel de Afara
Minister - Executive Secretary
National Secretariat of Tourism (SENATUR)

Delegates

Mr. Benjamín Chamorro Cortesí
General Director of Tourism Products and
Technical Advisor

Mrs. Rosa Sanabria de Rádice
Director of the Directorate of International
and Institutional Relations

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO*Head of delegation*

Mrs. Satie Jamraj
Director
Ministry of Tourism

Delegates

Mr. Edward Lee Tang
Tourism Co-Ordinator

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC*Head of delegation*

Mrs. Maribel Villalona
General Coordinator Tourism Promotion
Program Colonial City of Santo Domingo

URUGUAY

Head of delegation

H.E. Mr. Remo Monzeglio
Undersecretary of Tourism
Ministry of Tourism

VENEZUELA

Head of delegation

H.E. Mr. Ali Padrón
Vice Minister of Tourism
Ministry of People's Power for Foreign
Affairs

**Presentation - BID-Lab
Speaker**

Mrs. Irene Arias
CEO

Delegates

Mrs. Terry-Ann Segree
Private Finance Operation Senior Specialist

Mrs. Adela Moreda
Tourism Lead Specialist

World Tourism Organization

Mr. Zurab Pololikashvili
Secretary-General

Mrs. Alicia Gómez
Legal Counsel

Mr. Alejandro Varela
Deputy Regional Director for the Americas

Mrs. Natalia Bayona
Senior Expert on Innovation and Digital
Transformation

Mrs. Daniela Urcuyo
Technical Coordinator
Regional Department for the Americas

Mrs. Esther Ruiz
Assistant
Regional Department for the Americas