

Agenda item 5(a)

**Communication of the Chair of the
Affiliate Members**

CE/112/5(a)
Madrid, 24 August 2020
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Executive summary

The communication of the Chair of the Board of Affiliate Members gives an overview of the main activities and achievements of the Board of Affiliate Members and of the Affiliate Members network (AMs) for the period elapsed between September 2019 - August 2020.

The report includes the following topics: I. Value of the Affiliate Membership; II. Meetings of the Board of AMs; III. Participation of AMs on the Global Tourism Crisis Committee; IV. Initiatives of AMs aiming to contribute to the resolution of the crisis caused by COVID-19; V. Participation of AMs in UNWTO statutory meetings.

The Board of the Affiliate Members invites the Executive Council to support the proposals and initiatives aiming to improve the cooperation between the Member States and the Affiliate Members, for the recovery of the global tourism industry.

DRAFT DECISION¹

Agenda item 5(a)

Communication of the Chair of the Affiliate Members
(document CE/112/5(a))

The Executive Council,

Having examined the Communication of the Chair of the Affiliate Members

1. *Takes note of* the activities implemented by the Affiliate Members;
2. *Thanks* the Chair of the Board, Board Members and Affiliate Members for their valuable contributions to mitigate the impact of the crisis COVID-19;
3. *Supports* the initiatives of the Board aiming to foster cooperation and joint work with the UNWTO Affiliate Members for the recovery of the tourism industry; and
4. *Requests* the Secretary-General
 - (a) To invite the institutional representatives of the Affiliate Members to actively participate in the statutory meetings of the Organization and other relevant events organized by the Member States, and
 - (b) To continue the efforts oriented to improve the cooperation between Members States and Affiliate Members.

¹This is a draft decision. For the final decision adopted by the Council, please refer to the Decisions document issued at the end of the session.

I. Value of the Affiliate Membership

1. The recognition of the fundamental role of the partnership with the private sector is a very important component of the strategic approach of the UNWTO management at the current stage, as clearly illustrated by the Strategic Objectives of the Organization, that are:
 - to build better value for the Affiliate Membership;
 - to expand Affiliate Membership;
 - to strengthen the partnership of the Organization with the private sector; and
 - to provide a modern and efficient support for the relation between the Organization and its Affiliate Members, in order to allow AMs to take full advantage of their Membership.
2. An extremely important institutional specificity of UNWTO is that it places together the Member States and the best tourism stakeholders - i.e., UNWTO Affiliate Members-, which is one of the main strengths of our Organization.
3. UNWTO considers the private sector a very important partner, because it allows the Organization to count on a valuable source of innovative ideas and projects for tourism.
4. The value of the public-private partnerships in tourism become even more relevant within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, because a solid and successful recovery of tourism sector would be feasible only based on solid public-private cooperation.
5. For the UNWTO Affiliate Members it is of great importance to be actively involved in the statutory meetings of the Organization, as it is the adequate framework to underline the importance of UNWTO Affiliate Membership and the fact that it is an extremely valuable asset of the Organization.

II. Meetings of the Board of Affiliate Members

50th meeting of the Board, held on 24 January 2020 (in Madrid, Spain)

6. The Board was informed about the most relevant activities carried out during the referred period, including various coordination meetings of the Chair of the Board with the UNWTO Secretary General and the Director of the Affiliate Members Department (AMD).
7. It was underlined that the practice of regularly holding meetings between the Chair of the Board, the SG and the AMD Director will continue, in order to improve and make more visible the UNWTO - Affiliate Members institutional coordination.
8. The Board celebrated the success of the Affiliate Members' dedicated events, organized by AMD within FITUR 2020. It underlined the priority of Affiliate Members to be institutionally represented in all the relevant events of the UNWTO, including statutory meetings, to deliver the AMs institutional messages to the Member States and other relevant actors in the sector.
9. The Chair assumes the mentioned institutional representation responsibility, designating also the Vice-Chairs or other representatives of the Board, from the respective region, whenever necessary.
10. It was proposed to link the activities of the Working Groups with the activities of the Member States, for better coordination.
11. In line with the priority to better inform the Affiliate Members about all UNWTO activities, the Director of the Department of Technical Cooperation and the Silk Road participated in the Board meeting, to present the opportunities of reinforced collaboration with UNWTO Affiliate Members.

Virtual meeting of the Members of the Board from Spain and Latin America, 24 April 2020

12. The Director of the Affiliate Members Department highlighted the excellent collaboration and dialogue with the Chair of the Board, as well as with the Members of the Board and informed the Board about the internal mechanism and institutional structure created by the UNWTO with the objective of supporting its Members during the crisis caused by COVID-19, as well as to exchange ideas and keep Member States and Affiliate Members informed about all activities of the UNWTO.
13. The Chair reported to the Members of the Board on the participation in the Global Tourism Crisis Committee meetings, bringing inside the said Committee the initiatives and contributions proposed by the Affiliate Members.
14. The Members of the Board presented the initiatives and activities that they are carrying out in their sectors and fully supported the UNWTO and the Global Tourism Crisis Committee's efforts to face the crisis caused by COVID-19. In addition, the Members of the Board stressed that the UNWTO has to strengthen the cooperation of Member States with the private sector to work together for the recovery of the tourism industry.

Formal virtual meetings of the Members of the Board, 14 and 15 July 2020

15. The Director of the Affiliate Members Department underlined the proposals and valuable initiatives shared by many AMs with UNWTO, as contributions to the recovery efforts, and updated the Board on UNWTO activities.
16. He also informed the Board about the preparation of the coming Plenary Session of the Affiliate Members, to be held at the beginning of November, in Madrid.
17. The Chair informed the Members of the Board about the activities of the Global Tourism Crisis Committee, the publication of the Guidelines to Restart Tourism and about the participation of the Chair and Vice-Chairs in the UNWTO Regional Commissions.
18. The Director of the Legal Department was invited to present a very important topic such as the international protection of tourists to restore trust. The Director emphasized that it is essential to restore the confidence of tourists and that the collaboration of Member States and the private sector is crucial to find equitable solutions. This task goes beyond protocols and security measures and involves giving more protection to tourists as consumers. She also reported on a topic that UNWTO is facing in recent months, i.e., the proliferation of fraudulent schemes regarding COVID-free certificates, safe destinations, supposedly validated by UNWTO and stated that the UNWTO does not certify or validate destinations or products marketed as safe, because it has neither the competence nor the authority to do so. In order to face this increasing phenomenon, the UNWTO has created on its webpage a special section on this topic and a specific fraud alert email.
19. The Members of the Board showed full support for the reports and proposals presented. The Board received with great interest the initiative of the Legal Department on the protection of tourists and submitted reports on the activities of their entities carried out in recent months.
20. The Board Members stressed the need to hold a Board meeting within the framework of the next Plenary Session of the Affiliate Members.

III. Participation of AMs in the Global Tourism Crisis Committee

21. The Secretary General's call on March 26 to count on the institutional participation of the Affiliate Membership on the Global Tourism Crisis Committee, created as the appropriate framework to urgently identify the necessary measures to mitigate the effects of the crisis on the most vulnerable people and companies and push all Governments for coordinated implementation under the leadership of UNWTO, offered to the Chair of the Board the possibility to bring to the attention of the Committee, during the 5 meetings held, the most valuable initiatives implemented by the Affiliate Members. These contributions were reflected in the UNWTO Recommendations published in April and in the UNWTO Guidelines to Restart Tourism released at the end of May.
22. The Chair underlined the importance of the participation and contributions of the Affiliate Members to this important coordination mechanism, sharing their initiatives and measures, as well as their concerns and needs.

IV. Initiatives and contributions of the Affiliate Members to the joint effort to face the crisis caused by COVID-19

23. From the beginning of the crisis, the guiding line of AMs actions has been to ensure that between Affiliate Members and UNWTO there is a win-win relationship: on the one hand, to ensure that UNWTO receives the most solid inputs from the private sector, incorporating all the sensibilities and knowledge from the point of view of the practical and economic viability of the measures, protocols, and, on the other hand, give assistance and support to the Affiliate Members.
24. The AMD has been supporting the Affiliate Members during this difficult period, mainly through:
 - (a) Sharing UNWTO activities and resources with the AMs
 - (b) Regularly holding bilateral and multilateral meetings with the AMs in different thematic and regional formats (including meetings of the Board, Working Groups, etc.)
 - (c) Collecting Affiliate Members' most relevant initiatives and share it through AMConnected, an interactive and modern portal to inspire and empower all the AMs to contribute to the solutions and restart tourism
 - (d) The inclusion of the re-opening protocols and guidelines received from the Affiliate Members in the UNWTO Global Guidelines to Restart Tourism, which was also the recognition and a great contribution to make the guidelines more practical and feasible, showing the importance of the private sector for the restart of tourism.
25. One of the most valuable and consistent initiatives received from AMs was the document Industry Guidance: Safely Restarting Aviation, a document produced and submitted by our Affiliate Member IATA, whose content is widely reflected in the chapter dedicated to airline air transport in the Global Guidelines for the Restart of Tourism. This protocol arises from the joint efforts of the airline and airport sectors to identify a roadmap to resume operations, with security as the highest priority. The document describes the journey from one end to the other of the passenger, including the measures linked to each stage of the journey.
26. Other prominent Affiliate Members developed guidelines and recommendations for the accommodation industry - for Hotels and Tourist Apartments - with the aim of reducing the spread of COVID-19, which was also reflected in the chapter of global recommendations dedicated to the hotel sector.
27. Another very important contribution received from one of our AMs (The Xcaret Group, Mexico), whose content was included in the Global Guidelines, is a solid reopening guide for the global attraction industry, compiled by attraction operators around the world and in consultation with epidemiologists and developed through joint effort of the members of the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA), some of them relevant affiliate members.

V. Participation of the Members of the Board in UNWTO statutory meetings

28. The Board meeting celebrated in FITUR 2020 underlined the importance to foster the connection with Member States and highlighted the importance of the Statutory Meetings (Regional Commissions and Executive Council) as the perfect opportunity to have representatives of Affiliate Members to deliver the messages from the AMs to Member States. Institutional representatives of the Board have participated on the following Regional Commissions:
 - (a) The Chair, Ana Larrañaga, represented AMs at the 65th Meeting of the UNWTO Regional Commission for Europe, celebrated virtually on 25 June 2020.
 - (b) Mr. Jens Thraenhart, the 2nd Vice-Chair of the Board, represented the Affiliate Members at the 32nd Joint Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific and the UNWTO Commission for South Asia, celebrated virtually on 30 June 2020.
 - (c) The 1st Vice-Chair of the Board, Prof. Donald Hawkins, participated as representative of AMs at the 46th UNWTO Regional Commission for the Middle East, which was held virtually on 6 July 2020.

29. The Board of Affiliate Members remains committed to enhance the visibility and representation of the Affiliate Members in the Regional Commissions and other UNWTO Statutory meetings, with the aim to provide better opportunities for collaboration with UNWTO's Member States and other relevant tourism stakeholders.

VI. Conclusions

30. Although at this stage the evolution of the tourism sector is characterized by a lot of uncertainty, there is certainty about the fact that tourism is in a unique position to help affected societies and communities return to growth and stability. Over the years, the sector has demonstrated its resilience. Within this context, the Board of Affiliate Members, as the representative body of AMs:
- (a) Will continue to promote the UNWTO Affiliate Membership, to create a stronger and more valuable Affiliate Members network;
 - (b) Will advance in its efforts to restart recovery, with a particular focus on rebuilding confidence and further develop strong public-private partnerships;
 - (c) Being aware that it is crucial to be prepared for possible new outbreaks, that may slow down the recovery efforts, will work on preparing for such a possible scenario, using all the protocols to ensure the health & safety of tourists.
 - (d) The Board of the Affiliate Members calls on Member States to support the private sector in their respective countries in this difficult period and renew its commitment to be part of the joint effort to place tourism as a strategic pillar for the recovery of the global economy.

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