

The Secretary-General Message on World Tourism Day

In the 40 years since the very first World Tourism Day, much has changed. Demand for travel has soared. The world has opened up, allowing more people than ever to explore the globe and its different cultures.

Today, tourism is firmly established in the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as an engine for advancing prosperity, protecting our planet and laying the foundations for peace and understanding among peoples.

Many millions of people around the world rely on tourism for income, especially women and young people. People who might otherwise have been left behind have found decent work and the chance of a better life thanks to tourism's unique potential.

Tourism has suffered enormously during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some 120 million jobs are at risk. The impacts could lead to the loss of between 1.5 and 2.8 per cent of the global GDP. This will particularly affect the most vulnerable countries, including Small Island Developing States, the Least Developed Countries and many African nations, where tourism can represent between 30 and 80 per cent of exports.

As we look to recover from this profound crisis, the safe restart of tourism is essential, not least for rural development – the focus of this year's World Tourism Day. We have an unprecedented opportunity to transform the relationship of the tourism sector with people, nature, the climate and the economy. We must ensure a fair distribution of its benefits and advance the transition to a carbon-neutral and resilient tourism economy,

As well as providing opportunities for people, tourism can play an important role in preserving our unique and shared cultures and protecting the biodiversity and the ecosystems that sustain us.

In this most challenging year, let us focus on tourism's importance for people living in rural areas, so we can deliver on the promise of the Sustainable Development Goals to leave nobody behind.

ANTÓNIO GUTERRES
UN SECRETARY-GENERAL