

Tbilisi Declaration

ACTIONS FOR A SUSTAINABLE RECOVERY OF TOURISM



We, the Ministers and representatives of national tourism administrations of the Members of the Executive Council of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), gathered on the occasion of the 112th Session of the Executive Council of the UNWTO, in Tbilisi, Georgia, on 15–17 September 2020,

RECALLING:

The UN General Assembly Resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015 on Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals,

The UNWTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, adopted by resolution A/RES/406(XIII) at the thirteenth UNWTO General Assembly of 1999 and acknowledged by the United Nations General Assembly in 2001, and its set of principles as a reference for responsible actions towards tourism recovery,

The UNWTO Recommendations “Supporting Jobs and Economies through Travel and Tourism – A Call for Action to Mitigate the Socio-Economic Impact of COVID-19 and Accelerate Recovery”, a set of recommendations calling for urgent and strong support to help the global tourism sector recover from the unprecedented challenge of COVID-19,

The UNWTO Priorities for Global Tourism Recovery and the UNWTO Global Guidelines to Restart Tourism, prepared by the Global Tourism Crisis Committee to guide the response of the tourism sector to the COVID-19 crisis and to build the foundations for future resilience and sustainable development,

The One Planet Vision for a Responsible Recovery of the Tourism Sector, which provides guidance on key lines of actions for responsible tourism recovery for people, planet and prosperity,

The United Nation’s Policy Brief “COVID-19 and Transforming Tourism”, launched by the UN Secretary-General on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourism, which provides recommendations to policymakers for socio-economic recovery measures to integrate decisive and innovative responses for the broad and complex tourism ecosystem,

The UNWTO Recommendations calling for an “Inclusive Response for Vulnerable Groups” amidst the COVID-19 tourism recovery, with a special focus on women, youth, indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities,

Together with this infrastructure network, it is essential to also facilitate the possibility for tourists to have appropriate and economically accessible accommodation in real terms.

NOTING THAT:

Tourism is one of the hardest hit economic sectors by the COVID-19 pandemic, facing a decline in international tourist arrivals during 2020 of between 58% and 78%, with 100 to 120 million direct tourism jobs at risk;

The COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated the need to strengthen the resilience and the inclusiveness of the tourism sector through unity and cooperation among tourism stakeholders at the national (regional and local) and international levels;

AGREE THAT:

The crisis is an opportunity to rethink how tourism interacts with our societies, other economic sectors and our natural and cultural resources and ecosystems, to measure and manage it better, ensuring a fair distribution of its benefits, to advance the transition towards a carbon-neutral, more resilient and inclusive tourism economy;

AND REAFFIRM OUR COMMITMENT TO WORK TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE RECOVERY OF TOURISM:

In order for tourism offerings to be as effective as possible, coordination and joint efforts are necessary between the business sector, the private sector, civil society, and all relevant levels of the public sector, including the international level. The appropriate mechanisms should be established so that tourists receive the fullest attention at the destination, thus converting trips into a space and a time of happiness.

This requires ministerial and administrative coordination, involving all the public administrations concerned with making it possible for a country to become a tourism destination and ensuring that tourists receive maximum satisfaction from their trips, ranging from the entity responsible for tourism to those responsible for transport and infrastructure, accommodation, health care, legal certainty, public order and health.

All these ministries, departments and agencies should be coordinated through the corresponding commissions, under the direct supervision of an official forming part of the governance structure of each government. The result of such coordination should ensure that all measures also promote the recognition and social acceptance of tourism as a contribution to each country.

This coordination system should be extended to national organizations, to the United Nations system, as well as to other international organizations.

Coordination and collaboration between countries regarding exchange arrangements, successful models and experiences is essential.

1. FOR THE PEOPLE, BY:

- Sustaining jobs, particularly among women, youth and self-employed as well as informal workers and supporting businesses including Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSMEs),
- Enhancing international coordination and cooperation on travel procedures to promote non-discriminatory, safe and seamless travel,
- Promoting an integral government approach by strengthening vertical coordination and cooperation among tourism and other sectors, including health, transport, interior, foreign affairs, trade, culture and other services,
- Strengthening public-private partnerships and mechanisms that engage communities as a whole for the recovery,
- Protecting the health and fundamental rights of workers in the tourism industry, ensuring observance of decent work standards and guaranteeing equal opportunities in recovery for all,
- Building trust and confidence among travellers, workers and host communities through the provision of transparent and objective information, as well as the implementation of adequate health, hygiene and safety protocols, with a special focus on promoting inclusion for all travellers,
- Promoting education and skills development to increase the agility and value of human capital;

2. FOR THE PLANET, BY:

- Shifting to a more resource-efficient and carbon-neutral tourism sector in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and SDG 12 in particular,
- Monitoring and reporting CO2 emissions from tourism operations and accelerating the decarbonization of tourism operations,
- Leveraging digital technologies to support environmental planning, management and monitoring of tourism, including the impacts of new safety protocols,
- Supporting biodiversity and conservation, promoting national and regional tourism as well as rural, gastronomy, mountain, nature, heritage, adventure, maritime and coastal tourism and cultural tourism as experiences that add value to local communities, protect the environment and create local benefits,
- Investing in nature-based solutions for sustainable tourism and infrastructure, including energy efficiency, transport and waste management, that enable more sustainable tourism practices; and

3. FOR PROSPERITY, BY:

- Placing tourism, as a service trade, among the priorities for socio-economic recovery plans for its capacity to create jobs and transform societies with a strong multiplier effect on other sectors throughout its broad value chains,
- Building a stimulating environment for entrepreneurship and technological transformation, with a special focus on MSMEs as well as on self-employed and informal workers, in order to sustain existing jobs and support the creation of new employment opportunities,
- Investing in the development of new skills, including digital skills training, for current and future tourism professionals,
- Maximizing the use of technology in the tourism operations and improving digital literacy,
- Facilitating investment for tourism enterprises and public infrastructure aimed at diversifying markets and products, reducing seasonality and dependency on a narrow set of external factors, especially within the green-transition framework,
- Fostering the development of sustainable and responsible rural tourism as a means of job creation, social inclusion and regional development, with a particular focus on domestic tourism and nearby source markets,
- Accelerating the transition towards a circular economy in the tourism value chain,
- Measuring beyond economic impacts and generating regular and timely data to support decision-making towards sustainability in tourism, and developing and harmonizing data, indicators and intelligence systems, including big data and artificial intelligence (AI), to better measure and manage tourism.

We believe in tourism's unique ability to support the recovery of societies in the face of the unprecedented challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic and to contribute to the 2030 Agenda.

These unprecedented impacts call for innovative solutions in financing architecture, as well as solidarity and collaboration at all levels. A renewed commitment from the multilateral system and the development community at large will be required to sustain governmental efforts.

Effective reopening and recovery plans and policies should put people first, with partnerships and coordination allowing tourism to restart safely, accelerate economic recovery and provide hope for millions of people.

We also express our sincere appreciation and gratitude to the Government of Georgia for the gracious invitation to host a presential meeting of the Executive Council of the UNWTO in the aftermath of the pandemic, allowing us to experience its rich cultural heritage and unique hospitality.

We support Georgia's efforts and effective policy measures implemented to restart the hospitality and tourism sectors and to gradually reopen borders, which position Georgia as a resilient, sustainable and highly valued tourism destination on the global tourism map.

Tbilisi, 16 September 2020