

UNWTO Brings Tourism Sector Together to Plan for the Future

Madrid, Spain, 6 November 2020 – *The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has once again brought leaders from across the sector together for high-level talks aimed at strengthening cooperation between the public and private sectors. The 42nd Plenary Session of the United Nations specialized agency's Affiliate Members focused both on immediate priorities for tourism's vital restart and on the longer-term task of ensuring the sector continues to be a key pillar of sustainable development.*

The event provided a **unique, high-level platform** to allow Members to share their best practices and proposals for recovery. With the theme "**Recovering Tourism. Rebuilding Trust. Reinforcing Partnerships,**" the Session echoed the wider priorities of UNWTO, above all restoring confidence in international travel and promoting collaboration at every level. Participants were encouraged to make use of the new [Affiliate Members Virtual Corner](#), launched to coincide with the [Plenary Session](#).

United behind the UNWTO Programme of Work

The Plenary Session focused on laying the foundations for UNWTO's Programme of Work for 2021. This roadmap includes continuing to make tourism a key pillar of the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and further **enhancing sustainability and inclusivity across the whole of the sector**. UNWTO's Affiliate Members, who include businesses, academia and civil society actors, will play an important role in the United Nations specialized agency's work in the challenging months ahead.

UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili said: "The engaged participation of every part of our sector will be needed to restart tourism and drive recovery. From the start of this crisis, tourism has led the way in adapting to the new reality and putting public health concerns first. Now, tourism needs the support of governments and international organizations to grow back and grow back stronger and more resilient, benefitting many millions of people and businesses worldwide."

Making good on **UNWTO's pledge to lead by example**, this hybrid meeting again demonstrated that **international travel is safe** and that tourism is proactively adapting to the new post-COVID reality. In all, more than 200 delegates took part in the Plenary Session, either in-person or virtually, with the diversity of tourism on full display

Celebrating tourism at its best

Against the backdrop of Plenary Session, the UNWTO Affiliate Members Distinction Awards show how tourism is living up to its status as the ultimate people-first sector. The event celebrates those stakeholders who that best embodied the spirit of **solidarity and determination** that underlined the sector's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. IFEMA, was recognized for its response to the crisis, in particular for allowing its exhibition spaces to be repurposed for healthcare. At the same time, CNN was recognized for its inspirational communication campaigns, including its work bringing the UNWTO #TravelTomorrow campaign to a global audience of millions.

Other Affiliate Members recognized at the 2020 Awards include Chameleon Strategies for its work in Asia, and both Facility Concept and the Africa Tourism Partners Company for advancing UNWTO's work in Africa. The Xcaret Group was recognized for its work restarting attractions and theme parks, while IATA was commended for its work in support of the global air transport sector. Alongside these, CaixaBank was recognized for its support for tourism businesses of all sizes, with the Ayuntamiento de Madrid leading by example in fostering public-private partnerships for response and recovery.

The ceremony also highlights tourism's wider contribution and the role Affiliate Members are playing in advancing this. EGEDA was recognized for its work promoting the Sustainable Development Goals, the Seoul Tourism Organization, was commended for its work promoting tourism as a tool for peace and reconciliation, while the Royal Commission for Al Ula was singled out for its promotion of inclusive community development through tourism.

The UNWTO Affiliate Members Distinction Awards ceremony can be watched live online from 20:00 on Friday 6 November. [Access the live stream here.](#)

Related Links:

[UNWTO Affiliate Members: Working with the Private Sector](#)

[UNWTO Affiliate Members Virtual Corner](#)

[42nd UNWTO Affiliate Members Plenary Session](#)

[UNWTO in Namibia – First Visit to African Member State Since Start of Pandemic](#)