

Agenda item 5(a)

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

CE/113/5(a)
Madrid, 18 December 2020
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Executive summary

The report of the Chair of the Board summarizes the most significant activities of the Board Members and Affiliate Members since the 112th session of the Executive Council (Tbilisi, Georgia),

The main objectives were participation in the 42nd plenary session of the Affiliate Members, the preparation of the Programme of Work for 2021, the constitution of the Working Group for the Reform of the UNWTO Affiliate Membership Legal Framework and activities aimed at the recovery of the tourism sector.

DRAFT DECISION¹

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Communication of the Chair of the Affiliate Members
(document CE/113/5(a))

The Executive Council,

Having examined the Communication of the Chair of the Affiliate Members

1. *Thanks* the Chair of the Board for her communication and congratulates the Members of the Board and the Affiliate Members for their activities;
2. *Stresses* the importance of the holding of the 42nd plenary meeting of the Affiliate Members and notes the contributions proposed for the Programme of Work 2021;
3. *Welcomes* the initiatives of Affiliate Members aimed at the recovery of the tourism industry; and
4. *Supports* the reform of the legal framework of the Affiliate Members and requests the Working Group to inform the Executive Council of its progress.

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. 42nd Plenary Session of the Affiliate Members

1. One of the most important meetings of the Affiliate Members was the 42nd Plenary Session, held in Madrid on 5 and 6 November 2020. It was one of the first events held by UNWTO in a hybrid format, in which more than 200 Affiliate Members from all over the world participated in a face-to-face and virtual format. Thanks to the support and collaboration of the hosts, the Madrid City Council, the event was a great success despite the difficult conditions.
2. The plenary session focused both on the immediate priorities for the vital revival of tourism and on the longer-term task of ensuring that the sector remains a fundamental pillar of sustainable development. One of the most important themes of the session was the presentation of the proposed Programme of Work for 2021. The process of drawing up and developing the Programme is largely in line with new business models, public-private cooperation and the increase of value of membership. The Affiliate Members submitted numerous proposals to the Affiliate Members Department to be incorporated into the Programme of Work, not only in the areas we want to develop, but also in the areas where we have the capacity and experience to support the activities of UNWTO and its Member States. This approach is truly in line with the objective of improving opportunities for cooperation between Member States and Affiliate Members.
3. The best initiatives of the Affiliate Members received the valuable "Awards to outstanding initiatives shared with the UNWTO by our Affiliate Members" at a gala organized in the framework of the plenary session.

II. Thematic sessions "Tourism recovery. Rebuilding trust. Strengthening Partnerships"

4. In the framework of the plenary session thematic discussions were held on the theme "Tourism recovery. Rebuilding trust. Strengthening Partnerships", which presented best practices applied by Affiliate Members in order to share knowledge and solutions to address the challenges posed, as well as to create further opportunities for partnership. In addition, for the first time, the Affiliate Members had the opportunity to share best practices in the space dedicated to Affiliate Members' initiatives, the Virtual Corner, where they were able to give Affiliate Members more international visibility.

III. Participation of the Members of the Board in UNWTO Committees and Working Groups and other activities

5. The Members of the Board, with the strong support of the Affiliate Members Department, have attended the recently established UNWTO Committees and Working Groups to ensure that Affiliate Members are reflecting the perspectives as representatives of the private sector and academia in the future of tourism.
 - (a) The First Vice-Chair of the Board, Prof. Donald Hawkins from the George Washington University, participated as representative of the Affiliate Members in the Committee for the development of an International Code for the Protection of Tourists, as one of the most important initiatives of UNWTO in the context of COVID-19.
 - (b) Ana Larrañaga, the Chair of the Board, as a member of the Working Group on the Reform of the Legal Framework of UNWTO Affiliate Members, participated in the first two meetings of the Working Group.
 - (i) The first meeting was held on 2 December 2020 with the virtual participation of the 14 Member States forming part of this Working Group. During the first meeting the Group's statutory documents were approved and other important issues were discussed in the process of reviewing the legal framework for Affiliates.
 - (ii) The second meeting of the Working Group is to be held on 14 January 2021, in order to advance the progress of the reform and continue to achieve the objectives set for 2021.
 - (c) Members of the Working Group on Science Tourism met for the first time to exchange views on the prospects for developing new initiatives and to discuss the roadmap for 2021. The meeting, which took place on 3 December 2020, was convened by the Starlight Foundation. One of the main topics discussed was the forthcoming 1st International Conference on Astro-tourism to be held in Évora, Portugal, from 3 to 5 June 2021. The event will be a major step forward in the development

of this new niche tourism product, which has also been incorporated into the Affiliate Members' Programme of Work for 2021.

(d) On the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, the Board Member, Argentine Chamber of Tourism (CAT), organized the second meeting of the series of virtual meetings called "Let's talk about Accessible Tourism", through its Commission on Accessible Tourism. During the meeting, the launch of the First Inclusive Recovery Guide, dedicated to people with disabilities, was announced. This valuable project is already included in the Affiliate Members' Programme Work 2021, with the intention of promoting it as an example of a good practice that can be replicated both regionally and globally.

IV. Conclusions

6. The Board and all Affiliate Members hope that the private sector will be able to provide more support and expertise to Member States to meet the challenges imposed on tourism industry and will be able to recover better and stronger together with the Member States.

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