



## UNWTO Commission for the Middle East

Forty-Seventh meeting  
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 27 May 2021  
Provisional agenda item 4.

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### 4- Implementation of the General Programme of Work

#### 1. Update on Regional Activities

The Organization's programme of activities in the region is built around the following five strategic priorities, which are also part of the SDG's:

1. Make tourism smarter: innovation and the digital transformation **SDGs 8, 9, 10 and 17**
2. Grow our competitive edge: investments and entrepreneurship **SDGs 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15 and 17**
3. Create more and better jobs: education and employment **SDGs 4, 8, 10 and 17**
4. Build resilience and facilitate travel: safe, secure and seamless travel **SDGs 3, 8, 11, 12, 13 and 16**
5. Protect our heritage: social, cultural and environmental sustainability **SDGs 8, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16**

### **UNWTO Regional Office for the Middle East, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia:**

Through a letter dated 16 June 2020, the Minister of Tourism of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, H.E. Mr. Ahmed bin Aqil Al Khateeb, informed the Secretary-General of the intention of Saudi Arabia to establish a UNWTO Regional Office for the Middle East in Riyadh.

The Members of the 112th session of the UNWTO Executive Council in Georgia, warmly welcomed the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's offer to establish and host a UNWTO Regional Office for the Middle East, which was reflected in decision CE/DEC/5(CXII).

As the Kingdom works to increase tourist arrivals, including through the relaxation of visa rules for visitors, the new office will provide UNWTO with a base from which to guide tourism's development across the whole region.

The agreement for the establishment of the new Regional Office was signed in September 2020, within the framework of the 112th EC and will enter into force upon notification to the Secretariat of Saudi Arabia having completed the necessary formalities. The Regional Office will work to implement its activities in the Middle East and serve the Member states belonging to this region, with the aim of achieving sustainable growth in the tourism sector, developing human capital and implementing specific tourism statistics for the Middle East.

With the approval by the KSA Council of Ministers on 21 April 2021, the Agreement has entered into force as of that date in accordance with its Article 10.2.

The Kingdom's initiative to host the Middle East Regional Office comes in support of UNWTO's efforts in support of countries' focus on tourism as an important source of income, job creation, and to diversify their national economies. The inauguration of the UNWTO Regional Office of the Middle East in Riyadh will take place on 26 May 2021.

The Office will be responsible for the coordination, follow-up and reporting of the activities undertaken in the Middle East through continuous relations with each and every Middle East Member States, as well as with the Affiliate Members in the region, the office will ensure, a fair, yet strategic, geographically balanced repartition of UNWTO activities.

It will also establish and maintain relations with non-Member States in order to integrate them within the Organization and keep the Management informed on all relevant regional issues (priorities, requests from Members, etc.), and other departments on activities of their respective competency.

The Office will work on meeting the specific needs of the National Tourism Authorities, local authorities and tourism enterprises in the region, and to conduct seminars and conferences on topics of interest to the tourism industry, including courses on tourism human resource development and tourism statistics. It will contribute actively to the dissemination and promotion of the operational departments' products and gather any useful information regarding Member States, particularly, but not only, upon request from operational departments.

The Office will work on furthering production of internationally comparable tourism statistics in the region, in accordance with international methodological standards, and expand their scope, improve their quality and develop research initiatives in collaboration with regional members.

The Office will have an integral role in the national tourism human capital development enablement and regulatory programs, and initiatives such as implementation of quality certification systems, monitoring current and future skills development of the sector, tour guide training and licensing programmes, as well as provide on-going advice on priority strategic issues to regional members.

Fully financed by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia through a voluntary contribution the UNWTO Regional Office for the Middle East will be established in Riyadh as an integral part of the Organization to carry out the functions assigned to it by the General Assembly and the Secretary-General. Other Member States and the private sector may provide additional voluntary contributions to complement the work of the regional office, as appropriate, and in accordance with the regulations and policies of the UNWTO.

For more information, please refer to the document CE112\_03 Establishment of a UNWTO Regional Office for the Middle East and corresponding decision CE/DEC/5(CXII).

## **1. Regional activities:**

The activities carried-out by UNWTO in the Middle East during the period 2020-2021, as well as those planned for the rest of 2021, in implementation of the Organization's general programme of work covering each of the strategic objectives listed above - were noticeably affected by the Covid-19 and alternatively the switch to organize online activities was remarkably achievable and successful - are summarized in the attached table.

	Activities	Dates	Status
<b>1. <u>SG's official visits</u></b>	2. Official visit to <b>Egypt</b> – Restarting Tourism	July 2020	Completed
	3. Official visit to <b>Saudi Arabia</b> - The Saudi Summer initiative	September 2020	Completed
	4. Official mission to <b>Saudi Arabia</b> and participation at the Future Hospitality Summit	October 2020	Completed
	5. Official visit to Egypt – Pharaos Golden Parade	April 2021	Completed
<b>2. <u>Researches/ Reports</u></b>	1. Tourism for <b>rural development</b> in the Middle East region	2021 Q2	Ongoing discussions
	2. UNWTO <b>Best tourism villages</b> of the world	2021 Q2	In review process
	3. The Regional Report on <b>Women</b> in Tourism for the Middle East.	2020 Q4/ 2021 Q2	Published AE versions available at UNWTO e-library
	4. Report on the <b>G20</b> meeting	2020 Q3	Complete
	5. Al Ula Framework for Inclusive Community Development through Tourism, Saudi Arabia	October 2020	Published
	6. Gastronomy Brochure, <b>Saudi Arabia</b>	2020 Q4	Published
	7. Gastronomy Brochure, <b>Egypt</b>	2021 Q2	Published
	8. <b>Saudi Arabia</b> /UNWTO Discussion on Unified Action for Coordination on Travel and Tourism Protocols	May 2021	In review process
	9. Exploring <b>Arab Chinese</b> partnership on Tourism	2021 Q4	Ongoing discussions with LAS

	Activities	Dates	Status
3. <u>Conferences, Webinars and Forums</u>	1. Webinar on Innovative Healing solutions for the tourism private sector in the Middle East.	10 August 2020	Completed
	2. Webinar on The Future of the Hospitality Sector post COVID-19: Middle East insights.	12 August 2020	Completed
	3. Webinar on UNWTO technical assistance package, jointly with the <b>World Bank</b> .	17 August 2020	Completed
	4. Webinar on The Deep Impact of COVID-19 on Tourism from a Statistical Perspective	24 August 2020	Completed
	5. <b>UNWTO / ICCA</b> joint webinar on the Recovery post Covid-19.	28 September 2020	Completed
	6. UNWTO- <b>Casa Árabe</b> joint Webinar on the Economic Impact of COVID-19 on the Tourism Sector in the Arab World, Special focus on MICE Tourism.	21 October 2020	Completed
	7. MED Regional Meeting 2020 - Ready to Travel? Tourism in Europe and the Gulf under, and after, the COVID-19 Pandemic, In cooperation with the King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies (KFCRIS)	October 2020	Completed
	8. G20 meeting, Riyadh, <b>Saudi Arabia</b>	October 2020	Completed
	9. International Conference and Ministerial Forum in the framework of EXPO 2020, <b>Dubai, UAE</b>	October 2021 - March 2022	Postponed Ongoing discussions
	10. <b>Sharjah</b> Hospitality Forum.	16 November 2020	Completed

<b>3. <u>Conferences, Webinars and Forums</u></b>	11. UNWTO and <b>Google</b> Tourism Acceleration Programme for the Middle East.	10 December 2020	Completed
	12. 75 Minutes of Conversation: Rethinking Tourism (As part of the <b>United Nations 75th anniversary initiative</b> (UN75), jointly with UN Impact Academy)	21 January 2021	Completed
	13. <b>ICCA</b> Webinar on the Future of the events industry, Emerging Trends and Recovery Strategies: Technologies and Relief Fund for the Tourism Industry	17 February 2021	Completed
	14. Regional Conference on Statistics, <b>Manama, Bahrain.</b>	Postponed to 2021 Q4	Ongoing discussions
	15. Activities on the occasion of the Grand Egyptian Museum opening, <b>Cairo, Egypt.</b>	Exact dates TBC	Postponed
	16. Introductory meetings on UNWTO Affiliate Membership, <b>Bahrain, Egypt and Saudi-Arabia.</b>	Exact dates TBC	Postponed
	17. Tourism and media Conference, <b>Lebanon.</b>	Dates TBC	Postponed
	18. Tourism workshop on Crisis Communication, <b>Lebanon.</b>	Dates TBF	Postponed
	19. Regional Conference on Gastronomy, <b>Kuwait.</b>	Q4	Ongoing discussions
	20. International Conference on Tourism and Culture, <b>Egypt.</b>	Q4	Ongoing discussions
	21. UNWTO- <b>Casa Árabe</b> joint Webinar on the Tourism Recovery	June 2021	Planned

	22. 3 <sup>rd</sup> UNWTO- <b>ICCA</b> joint Webinar	June 2021 TBC	Planned
	23. Webinar on <b>Women</b> in Tourism in the Middle East.	June 2021	Planned
	24. World Tourism Day 2020 - Kuwait official celebration on its official English TV channel	September 2020	Completed
	25. Arab-Chinese ministerial conference, jointly with the <b>League of Arab States</b>	Q4 2021	Ongoing discussions
	26. Webinar on <b>Accessible</b> Tourism for all in the Middle East.	September 2021 (TBC)	Planned
	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>4. <u>Capacity building</u></b>	1. Establishing a UNWTO Crisis Management Centre in <b>Egypt</b>	Dates to be fixed	Ongoing discussions
	2. Establishment of The Saudi Ministry of Tourism Academy in collaboration with UNWTO Academy in <b>Saudi Arabia</b>	Dates to be fixed	Ongoing discussions
	3. UNWTO- <b>Saudi Arabia</b> partnership in online education	April 2021	Pending agreement signature
	4. UNWTO SDG Global Startup competition, Doha, <b>Qatar</b>	June 2021	Agreement signed
	5. Google Acceleration Programme ( <b>Egypt, Saudi Arabia, UAE</b> )	February 2021	Completed
	6. Regional workshop on statistics, <b>Bahrain and Saudi Arabia</b>	Dates to be fixed	Ongoing discussions
	7. Executive training programme for <b>Bahrain</b> on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Tour guiding (2<sup>nd</sup> phase);</li> <li>b. Entrepreneurship and innovation in tourism;</li> <li>c. Digital marketing strategy for tourism sector, and</li> <li>d. Tourism sustainability and competitiveness.</li> </ul>	Dates to be fixed	Ongoing discussions



<b>4. <u>Capacity building</u></b>	8. Executive training courses on Crisis Communication, <b>Lebanon</b>	Dates to be fixed	Ongoing discussions
	9. Startup competition on rural tourism, <b>Egypt</b>	Dates to be fixed	Ongoing discussions
	10. Quality Assurance for Tourism Education Programmes for Al-Hukeir Institute for Tourism and Hospitality, <b>Saudi Arabia</b>	Dates to be fixed	Ongoing discussions
	11. Quality Assurance for Tourism Education Programmes for the Royal Commission for Al-Ula, <b>Saudi Arabia</b>	Dates to be fixed	Ongoing discussions
	12. Online training on MST, <b>Iraq</b>	Dates to be fixed	Ongoing discussions
	13. Online Training/webinar/workshop on MST, Online training on Marketing, <b>Kuwait</b>	Dates to be fixed	Ongoing discussions
	14. UNWTO/EBRD Assignment of Dashboard Development, <b>Jordan</b>	Q4 2020	Ongoing
	15. Workshop on Tourism and the SDGs	June 2021 Exact date TBF	Ongoing discussions
	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>5. <u>Policy and Technical Support Missions</u></b>	1. Project formulation mission on Measuring Sustainable Tourism (MST), <b>Saudi-Arabia</b>	2020	Completed
	2. UNWTO/EBRD Assignment of Training of Inspectors, <b>Jordan</b>	TBC	Pending

<b>6. Technical Cooperation Projects</b>	1. Tourism Experience Awards Programme, <b>Qatar</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> half of 2020/Q1 2021	Ongoing
	2. Evaluation of the Tourism Statistical System and Calculation Methodology of Inbound Tourism and Tourism Expenditure, <b>Saudi-Arabia</b>	2020	Completed
	3. Tourism statistics project, <b>Saudi Arabia</b>	January 2021	Ongoing
	4. Measuring Sustainable Tourism (MST), <b>Saudi-Arabia</b>	2020	Ongoing
	5. Measurement of Employment in Tourism Sector, <b>Oman</b>	Dates to be fixed	Ongoing discussions
	6. Hotel Classification Scheme, <b>Oman</b>	2020	Ongoing discussions
	7. EBRD Technical Assistance Programme / Recovery Project for <b>Egypt</b> (Building Resilience of Tourism Enterprises" – facilitating tourism recovery in the aftermath of COVID-19 in Egypt)	2020	Ongoing
	8. Human Capital development of EBRD/UNWTO project, Egypt, including a remote online Training Programme for "Building Resilience of Tourism Enterprises".	Feb.2021 March 2021	Completed
	9. EBRD Technical Assistance programme for <b>Jordan</b> on: Review of Safety Operational Procedures (SOPs), Tourism Recovery Trends Roadmap, Market Intelligence System, and Data visualization, Dashboard Development.	July 2020 to August 2021	Ongoing
	10. Tourism Statistics and TSA for the <b>UAE</b>	Dates to be fixed	Ongoing discussions
	11. Chimelong Technical Assistance Project, <b>Lebanon</b>	Dates to be fixed	Ongoing discussions

<b>6. <u>Technical Cooperation Projects</u></b>	12. EBRD Technical Assistance Project, <b>Lebanon</b>	Dates to be fixed	Ongoing discussions
	13. Project on gender equality in collaboration with the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) and UN Women, <b>Jordan, Egypt.</b>	Dates to be fixed	Ongoing discussions
<b>7. <u>Online Meetings with Ministries</u></b>	1. Online meeting with <b>Lebanon's</b> Ministry of Tourism	7 April, 2021	Completed
	2. Online meeting with <b>Libya's</b> Ministry of Tourism	June, 2021	Exact date TBC
	3. Online meeting with <b>Iraq's</b> Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Antiquities.	14 June, 2021 TBC	Ongoing discussions

## **2. Affiliate Members activities:**

During 2020 and the first months of 2021, the efforts of the Affiliate Members Department (AMD) have been focused on achieving the strategic objective established by the Secretary General of **consolidating the Affiliate Membership as an essential asset of the Organization**. The department's work has been focused on the following priority lines of action:

1. Incorporating substantial contributions from our Affiliate Members to strengthen the capacity of the Organization to achieve its mission
2. Organizing dedicated activities aimed to offer to our Affiliate Members opportunities to showcase their relevant projects and products
3. Expanding and reinforcing the Affiliate Membership
4. Building better value for Members
5. Modernizing management of the Affiliate Membership network (with the participation and support of 14 Member States, including 3 from the Middle East region: Egypt, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia)
6. Implementing joint projects and organizing events with our Affiliate Members in 2021

More details are provided in the Report of the Secretary-General to the 47<sup>th</sup> CME meeting under item 3 of the provisional agenda (document CME/47/3).

**List of Affiliate Members from the Middle East**

<b>ORGANIZATION</b>	<b>COUNTRY</b>
AMMON APPLIED UNIVERSITY COLLEGE	Jordan
DIPLOMATIC QUARTER GENERAL AUTHORITY	Saudi Arabia
EGYPTIAN GENERAL COMPANY FOR TOURISM AND HOTELS (EGOTH)	Egypt
EGYPTIAN HOTEL ASSOCIATION	Egypt
EGYPTIAN TOURISM FEDERATION (ETF)	Egypt
ETIHAD AVIATION GROUP	United Arab Emirates
GULF AIR	Bahrain
HIGHER INSTITUTE FOR TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY	Saudi Arabia
JORDAN TOURISM BOARD	Jordan
KUWAIT INTERNATIONAL DRIVING PERMIT & CARNET CLUB	Kuwait
LEBANESE UNIVERSITY	Lebanon
LUXURIA TOURS	United Arab Emirates
MIDDLE EAST AUTOMOBILE AND TOURISM CLUB	Saudi Arabia
MIDDLE EAST UNIVERSITY	Jordan
MODUL UNIVERSITY DUBAI	United Arab Emirates
NEOM	Saudi Arabia
QIDDIYA INVESTMENT COMPANY	Saudi Arabia
RAS AL KHAIMAH TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY	United Arab Emirates
ROYAL COMMISSION FOR ALULA	Saudi Arabia
TAREEQ AL OFUQ CO. TRAVEL AND TOURISM	Republic of Iraq
THE RED SEA DEVELOPMENT COMPANY	Saudi Arabia
UNITED SAEED ASSIRI.CO.LTD	Saudi Arabia
VATEL SCHOOL IN BAHRAIN	Bahrain
WHITE SANDS TOURS AND TRAVEL	United Arab Emirates