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Report of the Secretary-General 2020-2021

This report provides an overview of the situation of international tourism and the actions undertaken by the Organization during 2020-2021, with a major focus on UNWTO initiatives and activities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

International trends

- Tourism suffered the greatest crisis on record in 2020 following an unprecedented health, social and economic emergency amid the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- International tourist arrivals (overnight visitors) plunged by 73% in 2020 over the previous year due to widespread travel restrictions and a massive drop in demand.
- By regions, Asia and the Pacific suffered the largest decline with an 84% drop in international arrivals in 2020. Africa and the Middle East both recorded a 74% decrease in international arrivals, followed by Europe (-69%) and the Americas (-68%).
- The overall impact translates into:
 - 1 billion fewer international tourist arrivals worldwide, bringing the number of travellers around the world in 2020 back to levels of 30 years ago
 - a drop of over US\$ 900 billion in international tourism receipts (-64% in real terms), cutting the overall worldwide exports value by over 4% in 2020. The total loss in total export revenues from international tourism (including passenger transport) amounts to nearly US\$ 1.1 trillion, almost ten times the value lost in 2009 amid the global economic crisis
 - loss of about US\$ 2 trillion in direct tourism Gross Domestic Product (GDP), more than 2% of the world's GDP
 - 100 to 120 million direct tourism jobs at risk
- International tourist arrivals (overnight visitors) dropped by 83% in the period January-March 2021 compared to 2020, as travel restrictions remained high and consumer confidence low due to the coronavirus pandemic.
- In January-March 2021, Asia and the Pacific continued to show the highest impact with a 94% drop in international arrivals as compared to the same period in 2020. Europe recorded a decline of 83%, followed by Africa (-81%), the Middle East (-78%) and the Americas (-71%).
- Industry confidence is slowly rising for the period May-August 2021 according to the latest survey of the UNWTO Panel of Experts. The pace of the vaccination rollout in some key source markets



as well as policies to restart tourism safely, most notably the EU Digital Green Certificate, have boosted hopes for a rebound in some markets.

- However, uncertainty remains high due to the ongoing pandemic and surge of new variants, the travel restrictions still in place and the uneven rollout of vaccines.
- Due to weaker-than-expected results in the first quarter of 2021, scenarios for 2021 were revised downward. The first scenario points to a rebound in July and would result in a 40% increase in international arrivals in 2021 compared to 2020, though still 63% below the pre-pandemic levels of 2019. The second scenario considers a rebound in the month of September and a 10% increase in arrivals compared to 2020, though a 75% decrease compared to 2019.
- The scenarios assume a gradual re-opening of borders and improvement in traveler confidence in the months of July and September 2021 respectively, in line with the increase in vaccination and expected improvement in coordination of travel requirements, though projected results are somewhat lower.

Impact of COVID-19 on the tourism sector in the Americas

- The Americas saw a 68% decrease in international tourist arrivals in 2020 to reach around 70 million down from 219 million in 2019. The Americas was together with Europe the least impacted regions in the world.
- International tourism receipts in the Americas declined 60% (in real terms) in 2020 over the previous year.
- Data for the first quarter of 2021 shows a decline of 71% with a stronger impact in Central and South America. However, the Americas recorded a comparatively smaller decrease among world regions, partly due to better performance in Caribbean destinations.
- 10 destinations in the Americas (20% of all destinations in the Americas) had completely closed their borders as of 1 February 2021, according to UNWTO's ninth report on travel restrictions.
- Air traffic in North America was down 65% in RPKs in 2020, according to IATA, while Latin America declined 62%. In 2021, American carriers continued to show negative performance with a 81% decline in traffic in March versus March 2019, while carriers in Latin America were further down at -82%.
- According to STR, occupancy rates dropped to 33% in the Americas in 2020. Data for 2021 show signs of improvement with occupancy rates at 50% in March, with particular progress in North America. Occupancy in the remaining sub-regions continue at around 30%.
- The positive pace of the roll out of vaccines in key source markets such as the USA may benefit recovery in the region. April data on hotel searches and bookings for the Caribbean and North America show positive trends.



UNWTO Response

1. Monitoring the impact

1.1. Assessing the Impact of COVID-19 on International Tourism

- In order to provide comprehensive, reliable and updated information on the impact of COVID-19 on international tourism, UNWTO has:
 - Released a first assessment report in early May 2020 with subsequent monthly updates of its World Tourism Barometer. The [latest issue](#) (March 2021) provides results for the January 2021 and scenarios for 2021. A new update will be released end of May 2021.
 - Created an interactive online market intelligence system to provide timely and updated data and insights – the [UNWTO Global Tourism Dashboard on Tourism and COVID-19](#).
 - Launched a [Tourism Recovery Tracker](#) - the most comprehensive tourism dashboard to date, the Tracker is the result of a partnership between international organizations and the private sector. It covers key tourism performance indicators such as air capacity, air bookings, hotel searches and bookings, online travel sentiment and others by month, regions and subregions allowing for a real time comparison of the sector recovery across the world and industries.
 - Launched in cooperation with the International Air Transport Association (IATA), the [Destination Tracker](#), the first global dashboard on Air Travel Restrictions and Health-related Travel Requirements at the destination, aims to build confidence among travellers and business and support policy making by providing a global overview of travel restrictions worldwide. Available for free, it provides information and insights on the current status regarding air travel restrictions and measures in place at destinations worldwide.
 - Released the document '[COVID-19 and Tourism, 2020: a Year in Review](#)', which presents an overview of tourism results and trends in 2020, in the context of the pandemic and its impact on tourism.
 - Organized a series of [webinars](#) with key data partners to provide updated and industry wide information and tools to better understand market trends and consumer behaviour.

1.2. UNWTO online monitoring system on country and international policy response to mitigate the effects of COVID-19

- The [online policy tracker on country and international policy response to mitigate the effects of COVID-19](#) provides unique global and updated information (every two weeks) on the policies in place in over 160 countries, as well as support measures that are relevant for tourism by over 50 international and regional organizations.
- Information shows that governments have responded quickly and strongly with the level and coverage of measures stepping up over time, and that most countries have adopted economy-wide stimulus packages (fiscal and monetary measures) along with job protection measures.
- As of June 2020, a closer look at the measures adopted across all regions shows that there has been a swift and strong response by governments around the world to the impacts of COVID-19. Along with health and confinement measures as well as travel restrictions, countries adopted economy-wide stimulus packages (fiscal and monetary measures) along with job support measures to respond to the crisis, in many cases supported by international and regional institutions. Alongside these measures, since mid-May 2020 a growing number of countries

announced measures to restart tourism, particularly safety protocols, and to promote domestic tourism ([see UNWTO Briefing Note – Tourism and COVID-19, Issue 1. How are countries supporting tourism recovery?](#)).

- As travel restrictions began to ease and the summer season kicked off in the northern hemisphere, destinations worldwide prioritized domestic tourism and thus prepared and adopted measures to promote travel within their countries. The main objective of such initiatives is to boost domestic travel and restore confidence in the tourism sector. The promotion of domestic tourism is, in many cases, the first step to restart tourism and in most of the countries this is expected to be followed by initiatives intended to attract international tourists, at a first stage, from the same region (see [UNWTO Briefing Note – Tourism and COVID-19, Issue 3. Understanding Domestic Tourism and Seizing its Opportunities](#)).

UNWTO participated in a webinar jointly organized with the World Bank Group for their staff on “Domestic Tourism: Strategies for Going Local” on 10 December 2020. This webinar provided an opportunity for UNWTO to showcase its research, present an analysis of the global domestic tourism market including the identification of the world’s major domestic tourism markets (according to data available) and show the main initiatives and incentives to promote domestic tourism at country level.

- The collapse of international tourism in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) amid the COVID-19 pandemic has had a dramatic impact on export revenues, jobs and livelihoods. Tourism accounts for more than 30% of total exports in the majority of SIDS and this proportion can reach as high as 90% in some, making them especially vulnerable to falling tourist numbers. Such a major shock translates into a massive loss of jobs, a sharp decline in foreign exchange and tax revenues which curbs public spending capacity and ability to deploy the measures necessary to support livelihoods through the crisis. Women, who account for half of the workforce in almost all SIDS, and informal workers are particularly at risk. UNWTO has been closely monitoring the impact in these particularly vulnerable island states which heavily rely on tourism (see [UNWTO Briefing Note – Tourism and COVID-19, Issue 2. Tourism in SIDS](#)).

1.3. Monitoring COVID-19 Related Travel Restrictions – A Global Review for Tourism

- The UNWTO has been regularly monitoring travel restrictions caused by the pandemic since the start of the crisis. The series [COVID-19 Related Travel Restrictions - A Global Review For Tourism](#) provide an overview and analysis on the implementation of travel restrictions by governments as one of the means to address the global health crisis of COVID-19.
- The reports are updated on a regular basis to support mitigation and recovery efforts of the tourism sector, providing a global overview of the measures in place and analysing them from a tourism perspective. With a view to supporting the responsible and successful implementation of travel restrictions strategies through which countries are planning the gradual recovery of their tourism sector, the reports also aim at identifying critical issues and commonalities of COVID-19 related travel measures to better help governments to form decisions regarding the implementation of specific travel restrictions.
- The monitoring of travel restrictions is carried out from the standpoint of travel facilitation for tourism purposes (i.e., focusing on temporary visitors/tourists) and does not take into account measures that are directed to residents, diplomats and other categories of travellers.



2. Policy Guidance and Coordination

2.1. The Global Tourism Crisis Committee

- In order to ensure a coordinated and effective response, the Secretary-General established the Global Tourism Crisis Committee with the international public and private sector stakeholders, which held its first meeting on 19 March 2020.
- The Committee is comprised of UNWTO, representatives of its Member States (Chairs of the UNWTO Executive Council and six Regional Commissions as well as some States nominated by the Commission Chairs), the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the World Bank (WB), and the private sector – the UNWTO Affiliate Members, Airports Council International (ACI), Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA), the International Air Transport Association (IATA), and the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC).
- After six crisis committee meetings, it decided to create a technical committee to create global standards and protocols to restart tourism again.
- The Committee adopted two strategic guidance documents: **UNWTO Recommendations for Actions – Supporting Jobs & Economies through Travel and Tourism**, providing more than 100 practical actions in 23 areas for the three key crisis phases: **mitigation, recovery and building for the future**; and **UNWTO Global Guidelines to Restart Tourism**, providing high-level guidance for reopening tourism operations.
- On 8 April, at its 9th Meeting the Committee endorsed the **UNWTO Recommendations to Restart Tourism** consisting of 4 key areas: 1) Resume safe cross borders travel; 2) Promote safe travel at all points of the journey; 3) Provide liquidity to companies and protect jobs; 4) Restore Travellers' Confidence.

2.2. Guidelines and Recommendations

UNWTO Recommendations for Action

Aiming to support governments in devising policies to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on tourism and accelerate recovery, the [***UNWTO Recommendations for Action***](#) provide more than 100 practical actions in 23 areas for the three key crisis phases: **mitigation, recovery and building for the future**.

I. MANAGING THE CRISIS & MITIGATING THE IMPACT

1. Incentivize job retention, sustain the self-employed and protect the most vulnerable groups
2. Support companies' liquidity
3. Review taxes, charges, levies and regulations impacting transport and tourism
4. Ensure consumer protection and confidence
5. Promote skills development, especially digital skills
6. Include tourism in national, regional and global economic

	<p>emergency packages</p> <p>7. Create crisis management mechanisms and strategies</p>
II PROVIDING STIMULUS & ACCELERATING RECOVERY	<p>1. Provide financial stimulus for tourism investment and operations</p> <p>2. Review taxes, charges and regulations impacting travel and tourism</p> <p>3. Advance travel facilitation</p> <p>4. Promote new jobs and skills development, particularly digital ones</p> <p>5. Mainstream environmental sustainability in stimulus and recovery packages</p> <p>6. Understand the market and act quickly to restore confidence and stimulate demand</p> <p>7. Boost marketing, events and meetings</p> <p>8. Invest in partnerships</p> <p>9. Mainstream tourism in national, regional and international recovery programmes and in Development Assistance</p>
III. PREPARING FOR TOMORROW	<p>1. Diversify markets, products and services</p> <p>2. Invest in market intelligence systems and digital transformation</p> <p>3. Reinforce tourism governance at all levels</p> <p>4. Prepare for crisis, build resilience and ensure tourism is part of national emergency mechanism and systems</p> <p>5. Invest in human capital and talent development</p> <p>6. Place sustainable tourism firmly on the national agenda</p> <p>7. Transition to the circular economy and embrace the SDGs</p>

UNWTO Global Guidelines to Restart Tourism

Recalling the Priorities for tourism recovery

1. Provide liquidity and protect jobs
2. Recover confidence through safety & security
3. Public-private collaboration for an efficient reopening
4. Open borders with responsibility
5. Harmonize and coordinate protocols & procedures
6. Added value jobs through new technologies
7. Innovation and Sustainability as the new normal

UNWTO Recommendations to Restart Tourism

1. Resume safe cross borders travel
2. Promote safe travel to all points of the journey
3. Provide liquidity to companies and protect jobs
4. Restore Travellers' Confidence

2.3. UNWTO's role to advance harmonization of health and safety protocols

- As part of the measures to recover tourism, most countries have adopted health and safety protocols (labels, seals, etc.) as a key factor to build confidence and to restart tourism. The development and application of health and safety protocols is critical to mitigate risks among visitors, employees and host communities and a compilation of these measures is also included in the [UNWTO policy tracker](#).
- UNWTO continues to call for urgent coordination among governments, public and private sector and international organizations to harmonize health and safety protocols that will enable safer international travel (cross-border) and restore confidence at the destinations (hotels, restaurants, transport, travel agencies, attractions, etc.).
- UNWTO participates as liaison organization in the Working Group 18 on “Measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the tourism industry” within ISO (International Standardization Organization) Technical Committee 228 on Tourism and related services by providing comments and technical feedback. The outcome of this WG18 will be an ISO PAS (Publicly Available Technical Specification) 5643 on Measures to reduce the spread of Covid-19 in the tourism industry - Guidelines and Recommendations which is expected to be published in spring 2021.
- During the second half of November, UNWTO organized a series of joint UNWTO-ISO/UNE webinars in English, French and Spanish for its Members States to disseminate the work of ISO TC 228 WG 18 on “Measures to reduce the spread of Covid-19 in the tourism industry” with the aim to strengthen linkages between National Tourism Administrations with the national standards bodies and to encourage these bodies to participate in WG18.
- UNWTO is also providing support to Member States and in collaboration with international finance institutions (i.e., Asian Development Bank in Vietnam, etc.) on harmonization on health and safety protocols.
- UNWTO has joined forces with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the Organization of American States (OAS) on the revision and harmonization of [biosafety protocols for tourism](#) in Latin America and the Caribbean.

2.4. Various areas and initiatives

Rural Development through Tourism

- UNWTO designated 2020 the Year of Tourism and Rural Development and, on the occasion of the 2020 World Tourism Day on this same theme it launched the '[UNWTO Recommendations on Tourism and Rural Development – A Guide to Making Tourism an Effective Tool for Rural Development](#)'. These Recommendations aim to assist governments as well as the private sector and international community and outline the key steps necessary to fully harness the potential and resilience of tourism to drive inclusive and sustainable social and economic development in rural areas.
- In September 2020, the UNWTO and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) signed an MoU to work together advance shared goals for sustainable and responsible growth of rural tourism.
- The UNWTO and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) which signed an MoU end of October 2019 undertook joint activities in 2020 and are actively collaborating in

2021 to foster sustainable tourism development in the field of rural and agrotourism in the Americas.

- Also in 2020, under the Saudi Presidency of the G20, UNWTO and the G20 Tourism Working Group developed the '[AIUla Framework for Inclusive Community Development Through Tourism](#)' aimed at promoting tourism as an effective tool for communities' empowerment and sustainable future. (See [Presentation of the Alula Framework of Inclusive Community Development through Tourism at the 113th UNWTO Executive Council](#)).
- Following the 2020 UNWTO Year of Tourism for Rural Development, the '[Recommendations on Tourism and Rural Development](#)' and the AIUla Framework, UNWTO is launching a new pilot project – the UNWTO Best Tourism Villages Initiative. With the vision of making tourism a driver of rural development and wellbeing, **the UNWTO Best Tourism Villages Initiative** aims to identify, safeguard and promote the development of rural sites along with their landscapes, biodiversity, knowledge systems, cultural diversity, traditional social structure and lifestyle through tourism. The Initiative will be launched in 2021 as a pilot project. (See [Presentation of the Best Tourism Villages Initiative as delivered to the UNWTO Executive Council](#)).
- The **UNWTO Global Rural Tourism Startup Competition** (2021) seeks to source new startups and entrepreneurs that advance the contribution of **tourism to rural development** and **support recovery** <https://www.unwto.org/unwto-global-rural-tourism-startup-competition>
- The UNWTO World Forum on Gastronomy Tourism, postponed from 2020, will take place in November 2021 in Bruges, Belgium on the theme of Gastronomy Tourism and Rural Development.
- The UNWTO Wine Tourism Conference, also postponed from 2020, will take place in September 2021 in Alentejo, Portugal, with a focus on rural development.

Innovation, Education and Investments

- **[UNWTO Healing Solutions for Tourism Challenge](#)**: Launched on 25 March 2020, this call for entrepreneurs selected top 9 initiatives to address the crisis from the health, economy and destination management perspectives and has presented them to the world in an online forum on 7 May. Throughout its 4-week call, 1183 projects from 110 countries were received. Solutions mostly feature technologies such as Virtual and Augmented Reality, Internet of Things, Artificial Intelligence, Big Data and Blockchain to deliver their impact.
- **[UNWTO SDGs Global Startup Competition](#)**: Seeking the long-term recovery of tourism, this competition has been created to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in corporations and destinations. Its call period reached over 10,000 participants from 138 countries. Currently, 25 winning startups have entered a curated programme of benefits with the support of 21 partners and collaborators, including mentorship, access to technological support, connection to Member States, corporates and investors for opening the doors of funding and pilot projects opportunities. Furthermore, they will have the opportunity to pitch at a UNWTO Event at FITUR and they will be eligible to participate in the upcoming UNWTO Tourism Tech Adventures Forum Qatar in June 2021.
- **UNWTO Rural Tourism Competition**: Launched as a pilot project in collaboration with the Government of Spain, the Federation of Rural Women Associations (FADEMUR for its Spanish initials) and Google Spain, closed its applications stage with over 110 projects to address



challenges such as depopulation, digitalization and sustainability through tourism. Due to the quality of the startups, 2021 will feature its first Global Edition.

- **UNWTO Hospitality Challenge:** Starting 31 August 2020, more than 600 applications were received for the Hospitality Challenge, a global call aiming to receive projects that can help hospitality sector reboot. The 30 finalists will be eligible for full scholarships in 15 different programmes in Hospitality, Culinary and Pastry Arts Management, offered by Sommet Education. In the second half of the year 2021, the second edition of the Hospitality Challenge will have a more regional focus.
- Other innovation challenges: 4 additional calls for solutions were carried out in collaboration with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and other relevant partners.
- **UNWTO Tourism Tech Adventures:** 8 online forums gathered over 13,000 participants. For 2021, it is planned to have on-site events to empower global and regional innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems.
- **UNWTO Innovation Network:** With 18% growth in the number of active stakeholders, the network reached more than 8,700 members which are keen to continue working to support startups and projects in all regions.
- **UNWTO Tourism Online Academy:** With more than 9000 students, the platform has experienced remarkable growth after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. UNWTO is working closely with Cornell University, Externado de Colombia University, PolyU University, Northwestern University and Les Roches to upload the courses during this year. Creating the content of the 4 brand-new UNWTO courses (tourism branding and communications, international tourism law, destination marketing and tourism products, statistics) is also a priority by the end of 2021. A marketing plan to exponentially extend the international reach of the platform will be also implemented. In addition, different packages of scholarships will be allocated to our Member States.
- **UNWTO Acceleration Programme:** Following the first edition for Africa, the last edition was held in December 2020 for the Middle East Region. This programme will continue in 2021 to deliver benefits to our Member States regarding training and capacity building for governments and entrepreneurs.
- **UNWTO Jobs Factory:** A matchmaking platform involving talents and recruiters from all over the world to minimize the loss of jobs due to COVID-19 impact. The goal is to have the platform ready by the end of April 2021.
- **Investments promotion:** Reaching out to multilateral cooperation to develop potential economic recovery projects based on ongoing initiatives - **International Finance Corporation (IFC)**, **Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)** and the **African Development Bank (AfDB)**.
- **Partnering with the International Finance Corporation (IFC), a member of the World Bank Group:** This partnership aims to ensure the tourism sector's long-term recovery by providing insights and experience in resourcing sustainable buildings and green finance. This initiative starting on 4 June consists of technical training programmes focused on **skills for sustainable investments** through resource efficiency and accreditations tools including platforms and certifications, **identification of potential aggregators** across the hotel value chain (investors, owners, operators, franchisees) in order to collaborate in the implementation of sustainability

measures, and **facilitation of sustainable investment mechanisms** by enabling strong environmental, social and governance (ESG) standards and brand reputation to access to green finance opportunities and innovate sources of financing including green bonds, green securitizations and green credit facilities.

UNWTO Academy, Youth and Talent Development

- **Dedicated online resources website:** Considering the COVID-19 situation, the UNWTO Academy has created a dedicated website 'Courses, Webinars and Digital Resources' that compiles different online Education and Training units on different topics, created and offered by UNWTO or Partner Institutions and Experts. Under the slogan "By studying from home today, we can acquire skills for tomorrow", this catalogue of online training initiatives is constantly updated with the contribution of UNWTO TedQual Certified institutions, UNWTO Affiliate Members, and other collaborating institutions and organizations. This new website also includes access to the UNWTO Online Academy, the e-library and articles & publications written and offered by partners on a broad range of subject areas.

<https://www.unwto.org/academy/courses-webinars-resources>

- **Webinars:** In this digital, online new normal, the UNWTO Academy has been organizing a series of webinars offered to the Member States and tourism professionals on a number of subjects regarding the impact of COVID-19 and on other relevant subjects offered by globally recognized experts.

<https://www.unwto.org/academy/unwto-live-webinars>

The UNWTO Academy is currently creating a series of new specific webinars that will be available to the Member States on demand.

UNWTO Students' League:

- The UNWTO World Tourism Students League constitutes an innovative **environment to empower and motivate tourism students** by giving them **real-time experience working on creating and presenting innovative sustainable solutions** for the challenges that the sector is facing nowadays. This powerful 360° tool enables, on the one hand, public and private sector stakeholders **foster talent development** and **obtain innovative sustainable solutions** for the challenges they face.
And on the other hand, this tool **bridges the gap between students' education and training** and the **realities of our sector** and therefore not only gives students more insight on our sector and on the possible job avenues that exist but also **enables these young people** to then enter the labour market as **highly qualified and skilled professionals** capable of adapting to any situation that may arise.
 - In 2020, 62 Teams from different universities around the world **participated in the 1st Global UNWTO Students' League**, working on challenges on Inclusion, Product Diversification, Post-COVID monitoring solutions and social media strategies for the private sector.
 - In 2021, UNWTO has launched the **2021 Global UNWTO Students' League**, composed of 2 Challenges, 1 **Challenge on Rural Development** and **Challenge on Plastics Pollution**.



With the aim to reach out to younger ages and introduce them to our amazing sector and therefore the Challenges this year have been created for 4 age/study categories, from 11- to 29-year-old students

<https://www.unwto.org/students-league>

First Global Youth Tourism Summit (GYTS):

- 1st Global Youth Tourism Summit (GYTS), to take place in August 2021 in Giffoni Valle Piana, Italy is organized by the UNWTO in partnership with Giffoni Opportunity. The GYTS is a global platform of international events where children and youth will be able to develop, share and discuss their innovative ideas, vision and proposals for the future of sustainable tourism within the global framework of the UN Agenda 2030 and 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- The event will bring together children, youth, UN and government officials, representatives of the tourism industry, globally recognized celebrities, experts and other major stakeholders. We are proud to announce that the Italian Government will place this event in the framework of the Italian Presidency of G20.

<https://www.unwto.org/gyts>

Towards an International Code for the Protection of Tourists

- Pursuant to decision 4(CXII) adopted by the Executive Council at its 112th session, the Secretary-General invited all Full Members of the Organization to be part of the Committee for the development of an International Code for the Protection of Tourists. The mandate of the Committee is to draw from the work produced by the Organization – in particular the draft “UNWTO Convention on the Protection of Tourists and on the Rights and Obligations of Tourism Service Providers” as endorsed by resolution 686(XXII) – and develop a proposal for an International Code that includes minimum standards in emergency situations and consumer rights of tourists in the post-COVID-19 scenario.
- The Committee is currently composed of almost one hundred Full Members, including 17 from the Americas region, and features five non-member States as well as a wide range of representatives from the international public and private sectors, such as the European Commission, the Commonwealth, ICAO, UNCTAD, IATA, IFTTA, Allianz Group and Expedia. Additionally, the Committee is supported by independent experts with internationally recognized legal expertise.
- The Committee has approved Chapter Two of the Code titled “Assistance to international tourists in emergency situations”, which sets out a series of recommendations addressed to States on prevention and information as well as assistance and repatriation of international tourists in emergency situations, including but not limited to pandemics.
- At the seventh meeting held on 10 June 2021, the Committee discussed Chapter Three “Tourist Protection in Contracts” setting out minimum standards in the protection of tourists as consumers in particular in emergency situations.
- The Committee will submit a report to the 24th session of the General Assembly for approval.



Sustainability - One Planet Vision for a Responsible Recovery of the Tourism Sector from COVID-19

- In June 2020, UNWTO released the [One Planet Vision for a Responsible Recovery of the Tourism Sector from COVID-19](#), calling for a recovery which is founded on sustainability, to better balance the needs of people, planet and prosperity and underpin the resilience of the tourism sector.
- The One Planet Vision reflects the collective views of the members of the One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme and is structured around six lines of action to guide a responsible tourism, namely: public health, social inclusion, biodiversity conservation, climate action, circular economy and governance and finance. The One Planet Vision is available in [Arabic](#), [Chinese](#), [Russian](#), [English](#), [French](#) and [Spanish](#).
- The repository [Transforming Vision into Action – A Repository of Inspiring Initiatives Tools and Strategic Thinking](#) was launched in December 2020 to feature frontrunning initiatives from Member States, private sector and civil society to build tourism back better. The repository currently includes a total of 19 articles in English, Spanish and French (7 op-ed; 4 policy and governance; 6 guidelines and tools; 4 on the ground initiatives) and additional articles are uploaded on a regular basis.

Integrating circularity in the tourism value chain

- The COVID-19 crisis has raised awareness of the importance of local supply chains and the need to rethink how goods and services are produced and consumed, both key elements of a circular economy. The [One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme](#) has been supporting the integration of circularity in the tourism value chain through two major work streams: the Global Tourism Plastics Initiative (launched January 2020) and the Global Roadmap on Food Loss and Waste Reduction (planned launch, early 2022).
- The [Global Tourism Plastics Initiative](#) provides tourism stakeholder with a common framework to advance towards a circular economy of plastics in tourism. At present, 61 tourism organizations have become signatories to the initiative and made commitments to eliminate single-use and problematic plastics, integrate reuse models and collaborate with suppliers and waste managers to minimize plastic pollution from tourism.
- In July 2020, the Initiative released [Recommendations for the Tourism Sector to Continue Taking Action on Plastic Pollution during COVID-19 Recovery](#) to address the increased demand for disposable plastic items as a result of the pandemic. The Recommendations on Plastics and COVID-19 are available in [Arabic](#), [Chinese](#), [Russian](#), [English](#), [French](#) and [Spanish](#).

Supporting climate action in tourism for resilience

- According to the latest research by UNWTO/ITF released in December 2019 during an [official side-event at UNFCCC COP25](#), emissions from tourism were forecast to increase by at least 25% by 2030 making it difficult for the tourism sector to remain aligned with international climate goals. As emissions from tourism operations could rapidly rebound once tourism operations restart as part of the recovery from COVID-19, the need to scale up climate action in tourism remains of utmost importance.
- Despite the impacts of COVID-19 in the tourism sector, there is a growing consensus among tourism stakeholders as to how the future resilience of tourism will depend on the sector's ability to



embrace a resource efficient, low-carbon pathway. Within the framework of the [One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme](#) and supported by Tourism Declares, since January 2020, a total of 193 tourism organizations, have agreed to develop climate action plans within 12 months, share their commitments and progress publicly, cut carbon emissions, and advocate for change.

- UNWTO is committed to accelerate progress towards low-carbon tourism development by strengthening the measurement and disclosure of CO₂ emissions in tourism, accelerating the decarbonization of tourism operations and engaging the tourism sector in carbon removal. A Global Mapping of Climate Action in Tourism is being launched in June 2021 to capture and scale up ongoing efforts. The results of the mapping will be presented at UNFCCC COP26.

Strengthening biodiversity action in the tourism sector for the benefit of people and planet

- UNWTO is currently preparing a report on sustainable tourism and sustainable development in Central America for the 76th session of the UN General Assembly, which among others will address how the countries of the region are faring during and post the COVID-19 pandemic with associated limitations and restrictions. This is particularly relevant with the context of the upcoming UN Biodiversity Conference (CBD COP 15) in October 2021, where UN member countries prepare to adopt a post-2020 global biodiversity framework in the face of the threats to biodiversity which are growing at an unprecedented rate.
- As it becomes clear that the ambitious goals of this global framework can only be met by mainstreaming nature into all economic sectors, the report under preparation and its subsequent draft resolution represent key opportunities for designing new approaches to better respond to pressing global challenges such as biodiversity loss, through coherent government policies and the integration and alignment of a wide range of economic sectors, including tourism, based on the premise of the indivisible relationship between people's well-being and the well-being of nature.

Ethics Culture and Social Responsibility

Inclusive Recovery

The new UNWTO thematic series ***Inclusive Recovery Guides*** provide recommendations focusing on traditionally marginalized groups, namely women, youth, persons with disabilities and indigenous communities. Since May 2020, UNWTO has issued recommendations, in collaboration with relevant partners (UNESCO, UN Women, OECD, Disabled Peoples' Organizations (DPOs), indigenous leaders), to help governments, destinations and companies craft an inclusive response within the tourism sector. UNWTO released thus far the following policy documents within the series **UNWTO Inclusive Recovery Guide – Sociocultural Impacts of COVID-19**:

- ***Issue 1: Persons with Disabilities*** (launched on the **International Day of Persons with Disabilities**, 3 December 2020),
- ***Issue 2: Cultural Tourism*** (published in the context of the **2021 International Year of Creative Economy for Sustainable Development**, in February 2021),
- ***Issue 3: Women in Tourism*** (launched on the **International Women's Day**, 8 March 2021)
- ***Issue 4: Indigenous Communities*** (issued in May 2021)

- In July 2020, UNWTO released, in collaboration with its DPO partners, the European Network for Accessible Tourism (ENAT) and ONCE Foundation, a set of practical guidelines to address the emerging accessibility issues. [Reopening tourism for travellers with disabilities: How to provide safety without imposing unnecessary obstacles](#) called for adjusting the new protocols in light of the partial tourism opening. UNWTO also launched [“Accessibility Champions”](#) to collect good practices of accommodating customers with disabilities and seniors. The international recognition **“Accessible Tourism Destination”** has been put on hold.
- UNWTO carried out an awareness-raising campaign on its [Recommendations on Sustainable Development of Indigenous Tourism](#), drafted in collaboration with indigenous leaders and entrepreneurs. The World Committee on Tourism Ethics (WCTE) validated the Recommendations which were later endorsed by the UNWTO General Assembly in 2019. UNWTO started collecting in 2020 good practices of indigenous tourism put in practice by communities, with the support of administrations, destinations and the private sector. A **Compendium of Good Practices** is expected in 2021.
- **Weaving the Recovery – Indigenous Women in Tourism** was selected as one of the 10 most promising projects in global governance among the 850 projects presented at the **Paris Peace Forum 2020**. UNWTO and indigenous leaders have joined forces to foster Indigenous women’s empowerment through a people-centred development model, based on indigenous traditional textiles, fair trade and responsible tourism. The pilot countries are Mexico, Guatemala and Peru.

Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics

- The Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics, adopted by the General Assembly at its 23rd session on 12 September 2019 in Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation, is open for ratification, acceptance, approval or accession by all States. Following the closure of signature of the Convention on 15 October 2020 in accordance with its Article 18, States wishing to be bound by it shall deposit an instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession with the UNWTO Secretary-General.
- Indonesia has become the only signatory of the Convention. No instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession has been received by the UNWTO Secretary-General to date.
- All depositary functions are discharged by the UNWTO Depositary Section (treatydepository@unwto.org) under the coordination of the Office of the Legal Counsel. More information may be found through the following link: <https://www.unwto.org/unwto-framework-convention-on-tourism-ethics>.
- The **World Committee on Tourism Ethics** reviewed in 2020 the **Tips for a Responsible Traveller**, by introducing new points on consumers’ behaviour reflecting the latest health and safety precautions and other issues which may pose challenges prior, during and after travel.
- At the forthcoming 24th UNWTO General Assembly, **four of the membership positions of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics will be elected**. The UNWTO Secretariat will issue the call for expressions of interest in spring 2021, with details on how to nominate candidates for the committee. Full, Associate and Affiliate Members are encouraged to nominate candidates or membership of the committee.
- The 113th UNWTO Executive Council endorsed the [UNWTO Action Plan on Women in Tourism](#). The Action Plan is based on the findings and recommendations of the [Global Report on Women](#)

[in Tourism, Second Edition](#), and provides Member States with a series of concrete actions to boost tourism's contribution to [SDG 5](#). **Member States and Affiliate Members are strongly encouraged to endorse and implement the Action Plan.**

- In December 2020 UNWTO published the ***Regional Report on Women in Tourism in the Middle East*** with the kind support of the Ministry of Tourism of Saudi Arabia to mark the country's G20 presidency. The report complements the Global Report on Women in Tourism, Second Edition, with an **extensive in-depth analysis of tourism's contribution to SDG 5 in the Middle East**, highlighting the challenges faced and providing sector and regional-specific recommendations for advancing towards gender-equality.

Statistics

Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism

- The [Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism](#) (MST) programme is expanding the field of tourism statistics beyond the measurement of volumes and economic impacts to include also social and environmental aspects. It is a response to requests from UNWTO Member States and other stakeholders for guidance on measuring the complex phenomenon of sustainability in tourism. Led by the multidisciplinary Working Group of Experts on MST, under the auspices of the UNWTO Committee on Statistics and supported by the UN, MST will help to better understand the status of tourism sustainability and monitor progress. This is especially relevant in the era of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- The MST programme involves the development of a statistical framework, reaching international consensus and UN approval of this framework, its implementation in countries, and compilation of the resulting data into international datasets.
- In September 2020, in the context of the UNWTO Executive Council held in Georgia, UNWTO released the publication "[Experiences from pilot studies in Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism: a synopsis for policy-makers](#)" showcasing the results of eleven pilot studies, including Saudi Arabia.
- At the 2021 session of the UN Statistical Commission, the highest decision-making body in global statistics, UNWTO reported on the [progress and way forward with MST](#) and gathered +500 participants in the [High-Level Discussion on Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism side event](#)

Tourism data and SDG indicators

- UNWTO maintains the most comprehensive international database available on the tourism sector with data on inbound, outbound and domestic tourism, tourism industries and employment as well as key macroeconomic indicators. This database feeds various channels of data dissemination including the UNWTO Dashboard, Barometer and eLibrary.
- As part of World Statistics Day celebrations in October 2020, the UNWTO Statistics [website](#) was redesigned and a new product released: the [Country Fact Sheets](#) showing key data from the UNWTO statistical database through graphs and figures.

- The three UN reports on [“How COVID-19 is changing the world: a statistical perspective”](#) all include a chapter on Tourism.
- UNWTO collects data from countries all over world on the two tourism-related indicators included in the UN Global Indicator Framework. The data for SDG: 8.9.1 (Tourism Direct GDP) and 12.b.1 (Implementation of tools to measure sustainable tourism) can be found on the [UNWTO website](#), as well as in the [UN Global SDG Indicators Database](#). For the first time, global and regional aggregates on Tourism Direct GDP have been computed and disseminated through the UN SDG Report, among other channels.

Capacity development

- UNWTO continues its capacity building activities on basic tourism statistics, Tourism Satellite Account and MST. In August 2020, a webinar was held by UNWTO on the “Deep impact of COVID-19 on tourism from a Statistical Perspective” in the Middle East. The MST had a central role and experiences from Saudi Arabia on this matter were shared.
- A tourism statistics workshop was held jointly with the Caribbean Tourism Organization for countries in this region in February 2021.
- To guide countries in dealing with the novel measurement issues that have arisen with the pandemic and to support the continued monitoring and assessment of tourism through statistics, UNWTO published [“Conceptual Guidance on Tourism Statistics in the COVID-19 Context”](#).

Committee on Statistics

- The Committee had its first meeting with the new composition of elected members on 2 December 2020, in virtual format. The new board was elected, and Saudi Arabia was elected as Co-Vice Chair of the Committee.

2.5.Position tourism as a global policy priority, contributing to the 2030 Development Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

- The Secretariat continues its active role in the UN Chief Executives Board (CEB) and its Executive Bodies and related networks, by strengthening the importance and recognition of tourism governance at the global level and the providing the Organization with opportunities to scale up its delivery capacity as well as to lead by example in the UN work for COVID-19. The following provides sample of some of the key activities undertaken with the UN system:
 - [UNSG Policy Brief: COVID-19 and Transforming Tourism](#) (August 2020) – a joint collaboration of 11 UN partner organizations
 - OP-ED UNWTO Secretary-General and ITC Executive Director for Tourism Recovery in SIDS
 - [UN Chronicle article on tourism and COVID-19](#) (September 2020) – authored by the UNWTO Secretary-General
 - [Tourism and Digitalization in the Decade of Action](#) (October 2020) – contribution to UNCTAD’s UNGIS Dialogue on the Role of Digitalization in the Decade of Action

- [ICAO Strategic Working Group – Council Aviation Recovery Task Force \(CARTIII\)](#) (January 2020) – active member
 - [WHO Smart Vaccination Certificate \(SVC\) Working Group](#) (January 2020) – active member
 - [Commonwealth Policy Brief Tourism and COVID-19: Mapping a Way Forward for Small States](#) (February 2020) – forthcoming joint event between UNWTO and the Commonwealth
- In response of the 8th UNWTO Global Tourism Crisis Committee (GTCC) recommendation for a coordinated approach for resuming safe travel, the Secretariat has engaged with two key global initiatives in order to resume safe travel: (a) OECD Blueprint Framework for Safer International Travel during the COVID-19 Pandemic, multilateral scope - currently covering 34 OECD countries, to be available mid-April; (b) ICAO's Council Aviation Task Force (CART) and new CART III Guidelines.
The deep inter-dependency of Travel and Tourism requires a policy dialogue between tourism, health and civil aviation authorities to resume safely, in order to unlock the travel and tourism positive socio-economic impact on economies and societies for the benefit of people and their prosperity, while safeguarding health.
The work developed jointly by UNWTO with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and World Health Organization (WHO) is supporting the ICAO's Council Aviation Task Force (CART) and new [CART III Guidelines](#), which provide an agreed Risk Mitigation Framework for resuming safe travel and States' tourism recovery. Implementation of ICAO CART III recommendations to restart safe travel is regulated through ICAO Public Health Corridors (PHC) on bilateral or multilateral level.
 - We are at the beginning of the United Nations "Decade of Action". With just 10 years remaining to fulfil the 2030 Agenda and its Global Goals. UNWTO is making sure tourism is at the heart of the conversation through its global advocacy efforts in the development and trade agendas. In practice, UNWTO has organized discussions with the World Trade Organization (WTO) on Tourism Financing for the 2030 Agenda aiming at scaling up International Aid flows for Tourism Financing for the 2030 Agenda and has partnered with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in an initiative that builds on both the G20 Declaration of T20 Ministers in Japan, as well as UNWTO leadership in the 2030 Agenda to strengthen Tourism Governance.
 - In order to accelerate and scale up the achievement of the SDGs through tourism, UNWTO is engaged in several work streams in the public domain and with its tourism stakeholders, including the Affiliate Members. In order to widely share with and inspire policy makers and businesses, the Tourism4SDGs.org platform has been tweaked and enhanced to include a focus area for COVID-19 related actions in order to allow users to not only access a wide range of resources, add their own initiatives, findings and projects, motivate discussion and collaboration, and share content related to tourism and sustainable development, but also to share and incorporate initiatives that address the COVID-19 response. The space also provides a roadmap for the tourism sector towards 2030, to build a smarter, competitive, inclusive and sustainable sector for the people and planet. The work aims at mainstreaming tourism to contribute to SDG 17 of the 2030 Agenda. Other functionalities in the platform for measuring tourism impact on the ground for tourism projects are currently ongoing.

G20

- At the request of the Italian Presidency of the G20, and in partnership with the G20 Tourism Working Group, UNWTO has developed the [Recommendations for the Transition to a Green Travel and Tourism Economy](#). They were identified as a key resource for advancing progress in the policy area of “Green Transformation” of the world’s leading economies. The Recommendations present the main lines of action and showcase front running initiatives of tourism businesses and destinations leading the way in achieving greater sustainability while also outlining steps that can help tourism recover from the worst crisis in its history safely and responsibly. UNWTO will continue to work with the Italian G20 Presidency as well as the previous and forthcoming presidencies, Saudi Arabia, and Indonesia, in advancing the contribution of tourism to the G20 sustainability and inclusion objectives.

European Institutions

- During the period 2020-2021, UNWTO’s cooperation with the various institutions of the European Union has further evolved and strengthened, especially during the times of the COVID-19 pandemic which required additional coordination efforts at European and international level. The Secretary-General carried out various high-level visits to Brussels to directly discuss with the representatives of European Institutions and key tourism stakeholders how to resume travel, restart tourism and support recovery efforts in these uncertain times. While at the level of Vice-President the Secretary-General also received the highest-level European Union delegation to date in its HQs. Moreover, the representatives of the European Commission got actively engaged into the work of the Global Tourism Crisis Committee and provided their critical insights and crucial inputs to its work and its policy recommendations.
- Indications of strong commitment from the European Commission and recognition of UNWTO’s pivotal role in addressing the crisis and to work towards their own set of measures to support the sector in Europe. UNWTO is proud to have a strong ally such as the European Commission and to continue its relentless work for advocacy and awareness on the importance of tourism and bring forward UNWTO’s support for the EU’s initiatives in the area of coordinated response to the COVID-19 pandemic’s effects and for the bridging activity between Europe as such and the rest of the world.

2.6. Increase resources and strengthen UNWTO’s capacity through partnerships - UNWTO and International Financial Institutions and International Organizations

- UNWTO is currently undertaking a major step in assessing the endogenous changes required in order to strengthen UNWTO’s institutional framework to be aligned with the multilateral and bilateral development partners’ requirements. Close monitoring and planning were introduced for extrabudgetary flows, indicating that International Finance Institutions (IFIs) are currently providing the biggest percentage of extrabudgetary resources to support projects on the ground for Members.
- With the aim of supporting Members States (MS) to recover quicker from the COVID-19 pandemic and have access to current resources, regular, comprehensive, and ongoing research on regional or global actions by International Organizations and International Financial Institutions (IFIs), has been undertaken and been shared with MS.



- UNWTO is also exploring new financial frameworks and architecture in line with UNWTO Program of Work approved for 2020-21 and its Strategic Objective 4. “Increase resources and strengthen UNWTO’s capacity through partnerships” of the Programme of Work for 2020-2021 (https://webunwto.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2020-01/ce110_5_a_draft_programme_of_work_and_budget_for_2020-2021_en.pdf).
- UNWTO is currently strengthening and expanding its relations with IFIs through the negotiation of global framework agreements which will scale up and facilitate further joint delivery. Among the main results have been the signature of a MoU (October 2019) and of a framework agreement (May 2020) with the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development, leading to already securing funding for recovery efforts for several Member States, and nearly finalized negotiations for the signature of a framework agreement with the World Bank Group.
- UNWTO has been successfully including tourism within the UN system response for socio-economic recovery, forging a strong partnership with the United Nations Development system at large.
- UNWTO will launch a women’s empowerment programme in four developing countries in 2021 in collaboration with the German Agency for International Development (GIZ) and UN Women. The programme, based on the recommendations of the UNWTO Action Plan on Women in Tourism, will provide institutional support to governments, businesses and civil society to ensure a gender-responsive recovery for the tourism sector.
- UNWTO’s capacity to respond to the current crisis within its own mandate, has been enhanced through specific partnerships with sister agencies, such as UNESCO and UN Women, as well as with OECD, so as to ensure that no-one is left behind in the tourism sector’s recovery.

Technical Assistance

COVID-19 Tourism Recovery Technical Assistance Package

- In the COVID-19 aftermath, countries have to face a new reality of the tourism and travel industry and make every possible effort to shape the sector accordingly. It is advisable that countries try to make optimum utilization of available resources, knowledge and experience to put the sector back on the rails. In order to assist Member States to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism sector and develop an approach to recovery, UNWTO has developed a “COVID-19 Tourism Recovery Technical Assistance Package”. The Package is structured around three main pillars: 1) Economic Recovery; 2) Marketing and Promotion; and 3) Institutional Strengthening and Building Resilience.
- The Tourism Recovery Package includes a comprehensive list of technical assistance activities, including both activities of a longer duration and with a wide scope, such as the development of new strategies, and activities of a relatively short duration with a specific focus, such as advice and training on selected topics. Depending on the situation in a country, Member States may need different technical assistance activities at various stages of the COVID-19 mitigation and recovery process. In consultation with individual Member States, tailor-made packages can be prepared with one or more technical assistance activities for the short and medium term.
- In mid-May 2020, UNWTO sent the Technical Assistance Package to all Member States, and within one week responses were received from over 10 countries from all regions of the world, expressing interest in the Package. The budget for implementing technical assistance activities would have to be provided either directly by Member States or through external donors. UNWTO is

actively liaising with development agencies to mobilize resources, and first commitments have been made by agencies to provide funding.

<https://www.unwto.org/news/unwto-releases-a-covid-19-technical-assistance-package-for-tourism-recovery>

- The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) partnered with UNWTO to implement this technical assistance package in 13 countries including Croatia, Egypt, Georgia, Greece, Jordan, Montenegro, Morocco, Tunisia, Turkey and Uzbekistan in a first stage, and three additional countries for a second stage.
- In addition, at the invitation of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and in collaboration with the Organization of American States (OAS), UNWTO provided its technical assistance and support in the development of harmonized Biosafety Protocols in the Tourism Sector for Latin America and Caribbean Countries.
- UNWTO is also currently partnering with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in implementing COVID-safety protocols and establishing a travel bubble between Almaty (Kazakhstan) and Bishkek (Kyrgyz Republic).
- In collaboration with UNDP, UNWTO will provide technical assistance to undertake a socio-economic impact assessment of COVID-19's impact on Zambia's tourism sector.
- To date, UNWTO has a portfolio of approximately 50 projects currently under implementation or in final stages of conceptualization for a budget of approximately USD 9 million.

Establishment of a UNWTO Regional Office for the Middle East in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

- The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has informed the Secretary-General of its intention to establish a UNWTO Regional Office for the Middle East in Riyadh to strengthen the cooperation and support of the UNWTO for the Middle East Region for a period of fifteen years.
- By its decision CE/DEC/5(CXII), the UNWTO Executive Council endorsed the proposal of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on the establishment of a UNWTO Regional Office in Riyadh; and requested the Secretary-General to conclude the necessary procedures and signature of the Host Country Agreement for the establishment of the Regional Office and submit a progress report to the next session of the Executive Council.
- The Agreement between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the World Tourism Organization, on the establishment of the UNWTO Regional Office for the Middle East in Riyadh was signed in Tbilisi, Georgia, on 17 September 2020 within the 112th session of the Executive Council, in line with the conditions and criteria for external entities adopted by the General Assembly at its 21st session through resolution 656(XXI).
- With the approval by the Council of Ministers on 21 April 2021, the Agreement has entered into force as of that date in accordance with its Article 10.2.
- Fully financed by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia through a voluntary contribution, the UNWTO Regional Office for the Middle East was 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.

- For more information, please refer to the document CE/112/3(c) Establishment of a UNWTO Regional Office for the Middle East and the corresponding decision CE/DEC/5(CXII).

UNWTO Affiliate Members

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.

- Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 crisis AMD has permanently interacted with our network of Affiliate Members through the interactive [platform AM Connected](#) to collect mitigation and recovery initiatives and protocols. Many of them were reflected in several products that the UNWTO has been developing during this period, such as the UNWTO Global Guidelines to Restart Tourism.
- Call for Proposals for the Programme of Work 2021 (POW 2021), launched in October 2020, prior to the [42nd UNWTO Plenary Session of the Affiliate Members](#). Currently those projects and activities, already included in the PoW 2021, are being designed and implemented.
- Strengthening partnership between the Affiliate Membership and Member States by delivering AMs products tailored made to the Member States, as part of the UNWTO package offered to the Member States (Training on tourism recovery and finding solution and building trust, help destinations to build communication strategies in the “new normality”, etc.)

2. Organizing dedicated activities aimed to offer to our Affiliate Members opportunities to showcase their relevant projects and products.

- Thematic Sessions: Recovering Tourism. Rebuilding Trust. Reinforcing Partnership, [42nd UNWTO Plenary Session of Affiliate Members](#), 6 November 2020
- [Virtual Corner of the Affiliate Members](#), a dedicated space in the UNWTO webpage showcasing initiatives implemented by our Affiliate Members

3. Expanding and reinforcing the Affiliate Membership: the evolution of the Affiliate Membership was encouraging despite the context: since September 2020 to date, we have registered 36 (29 + 7) new Affiliate Members. Among them, 2 were from the Middle East region, where the number of AMs is now 24 representing 4% of the total.

4. Building better value for Members, through:

- Sharing UNWTO activities and resources with the Affiliate Members. AMD has kept the AMs permanently informed and updated, through the modern dedicated platform [AM Connected](#), sharing with them the latest documents and online activities organized by the UNWTO.
- Increased presence of relevant AMs on the main UNWTO activities, statutory meetings such as regional commissions.

- Holding regularly bilateral and multilateral meetings with the AMs, in different thematic and regional formats (including meetings of the Board, Working Groups etc.).
- Signing memorandums of understanding to strengthen collaboration and partnerships with our Affiliate Members:
 - June 2020: MoU with Global ReformBnB Forum
 - August 2020: MoU with Estudis d'Hoteleria i Turisme CETT, S.A. (CETT-UB)
 - September 2020: MoU with the International Air Transport Association (IATA)
 - May 2021 (TBC): MoU with Grupo Xcaret
 - May 2021 (TBC): MoU with CEAPI (Consejo Empresarial Alianza por Iberoamérica)
 - May 2021 (TBC): MoU with Grupo Ciudades Patrimonio de la Humanidad
 - May 2021 (TBC): MoU with Allianz Partners
- Launch of a survey in February 2021 to assess the level of satisfaction of the Affiliate Members with the services offered. Currently, individual interviews are being carried out to further understand the AMs needs and areas for improvement.

5. Modernizing management of the Affiliate Membership network

- Consolidation and expansion of the facilities offered by the dedicate interactive platform AM Connected.
- Launching the process of an Integral Reform of the Legal Framework of Affiliate Members, to be ratified at the 24th UNWTO General Assembly, including the creation of the Committee for Affiliate Members and ensuring a modern and adapted framework for the Affiliate Membership. The Working Group for the Reform of the UNWTO Affiliate Membership, counts on the participation and support of 14 Member States. 3 of them are from the Middle East: Egypt, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia.

6. Implementing joint projects and organizing events with our Affiliate Members in 2021:

Events

- FITUR 2021, 19-23 May, Madrid (Spain): activities for our Affiliate Members such as the [Affiliate Members Corner](#) and an [Expert Meeting on Accessible Tourism](#)
- International Conference on Tourism and the Audio-visual Industry, September 2021, Madrid: organized by the AMD in collaboration with the AM EGEDA
- World Sports Tourism Congress, 25-26 November 2021, Lloret de Mar (Spain): organized in collaboration with the AM Catalan Tourism Board
- 43rd Affiliate Members Plenary Session, 25-29 October, Marrakech, Morocco
- Global Report on Cultural Affinity and Screen Tourism: the AMD is working with NETFLIX on a joint publication outlining the value of the audio-visual industry as a driver for tourism.
- Publication "Accessibility and Inclusive Tourism Development in Nature Areas – Compendium of Best Practices", developed as part of the activities of the Working Group on Accessible Tourism, that will be launched at FITUR 2021



- Dashboard on [COVID 19: Travel Restrictions and Health related Travel Requirements](#): the AMD worked with the AM International Air Transport Association (IATA), on the development of a dashboard on travel restrictions and status of the destinations related to the COVID-19 launched at the end of April
- 1st International Astrotourism Conference in Évora, Portugal, 8-11 September, organized by Affiliate Member Starlight Foundation.

Communications

Outreach and results 2020-21

UNWTO's external communications, managed by the Communications Department (COMM), has been at the **forefront of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic**.

Against a backdrop of uncertainty and conflicting messages about tourism, COMM set the narrative with a **clear, consistent, and unhurried communications** strategy. This allowed to establish a **new 'tourism for development' narrative** based on outcomes, people-centred, and with a strong visual focus. Mainstreaming this narrative in **top-tier media** positioned UNWTO like never before as a **trusted single source of tourism intelligence**.

The **dedicated COVID-19 landing page** on UNWTO.org which evolved alongside the crisis, reflected UNWTO's output growth in quantity and depth around the pandemic, as well as the Organization's leadership.

This contributed to firmly establish UNWTO as the UN tourism agency, with several dedicated messages by the **UN Secretary-General**, António Guterres, both in support of tourism and commending UNWTO for its leadership role.

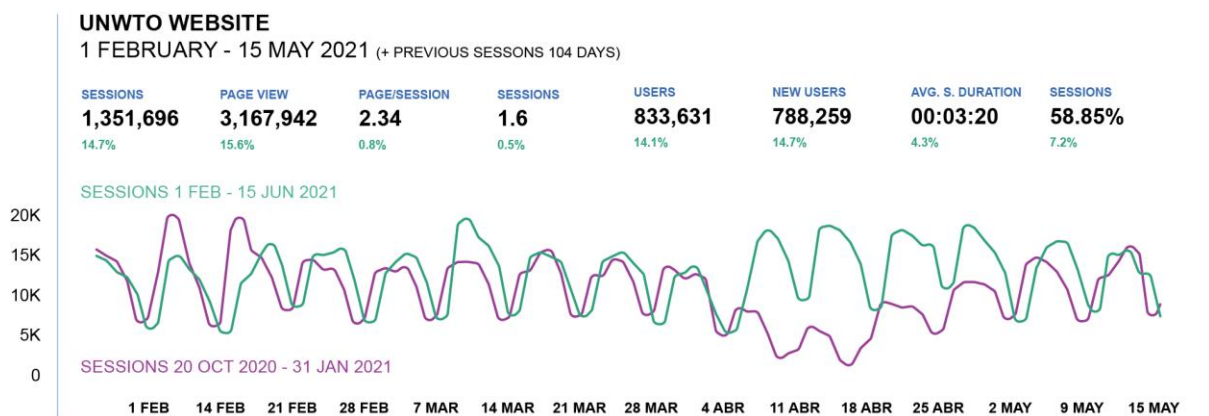
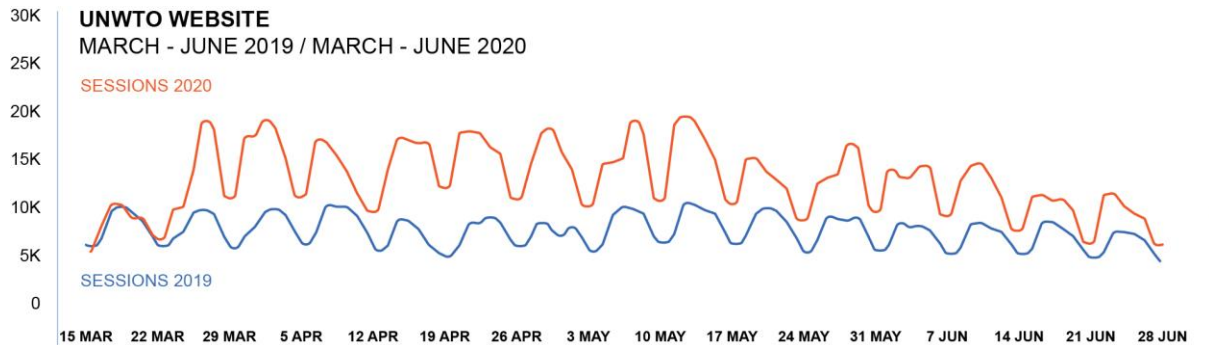
UNWTO's **unprecedented public reach and digital impact**, backed up by unrivalled status and influence, consolidate the success of the **communications strategy** launched in 2018, proving the return on ongoing investment in communications (staffing, digital infrastructure, outreach strategy, analysis):

1. Media impact and social reach

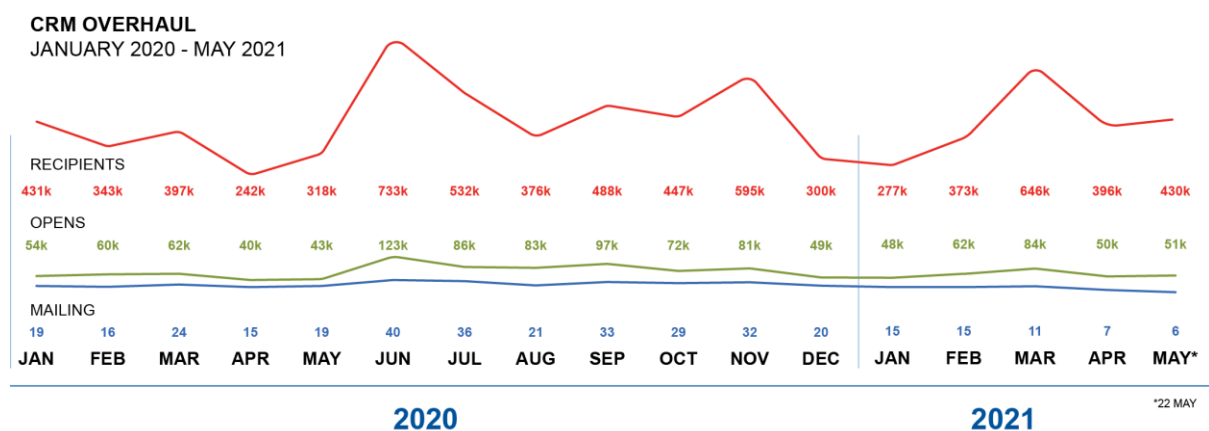
- Advancing **meaningful media relationships** contributed to achieve **unprecedented results** regarding visibility and positive public response.
- The huge jump in media impacts (**+53K mentions reaching 83.2B people**) and constant presence in **top tier outlets, with up to 163 interviews**, generating an advertising value of **+EUR835 million** (the cost of the achieved media presence).
- In a landmark **media relations** success, **CNN International** broadcast the #TravelTomorrow (May to July to 2020) and #RestartTourism December 2020 to January 2021) campaigns to hundreds of millions of households in Africa, Asia & Pacific, Europe, the Middle East and Latin America Europe.
- Combined, **#TravelTomorrow** and **#RestartTourism** averaged **+700 daily mentions** on social and legacy media, generating **+1 billion Twitter impressions** and over **+210k Instagram post mentions**.

2. Digital infrastructure:

- UNWTO website: [Launched in December 2019](#), the new site is now consolidated with +174% growth in referral and +45% direct traffic over 2020 only. It has clearly **outperformed** to the old site (traffic +35%; users +30%; duration of sessions +4%; returning users +100%).



- CRM overhaul: The rolling out of a new CRM and the review and clean-up of the data base achieved a **+100% growth rate** of mailings (**+143 mailings** in three languages reaching **+6 million recipients** with news [releases](#), SG [statements](#), and 46 issues of [UN Tourism News](#)).

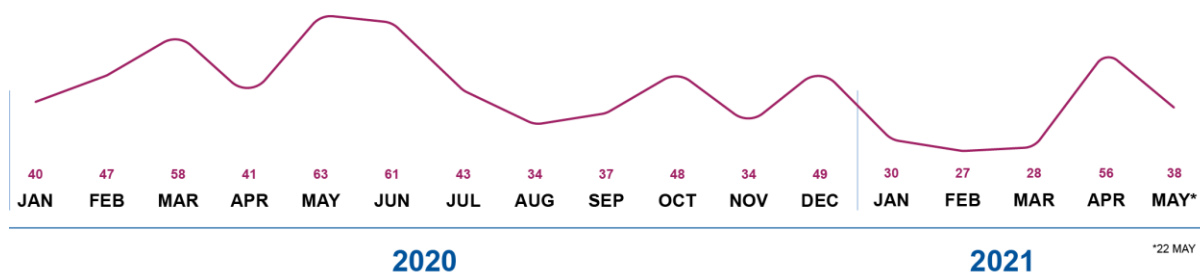


3. Content production & outreach:

- Copywriting pieces: **Over 810 pieces** have been produced, including news releases, SG

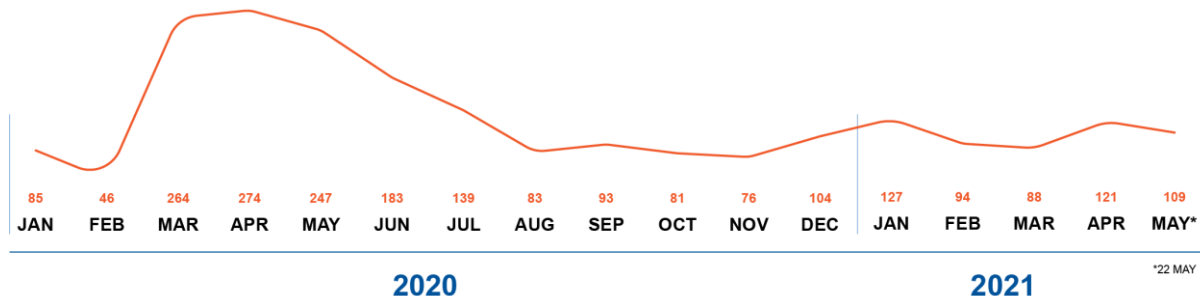
statements, interviews, talking points and copy edits.

STAFF WRITER OUTPUTS JANUARY 2020 - MAY 2021



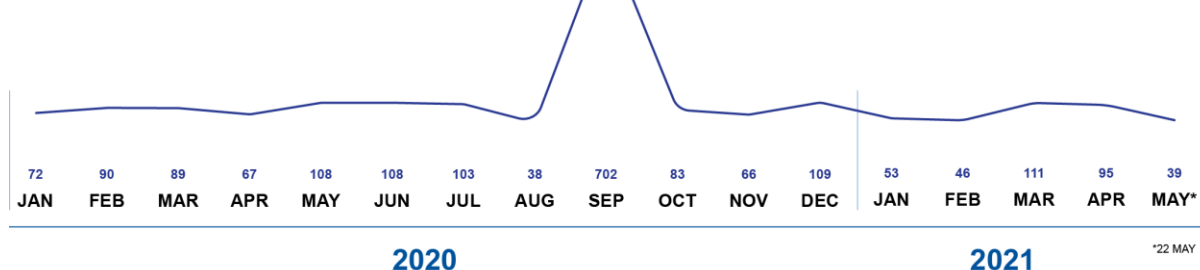
- Visual pieces: A total **2,041 pieces** have been produced since 2020, including reports, newsletters, GIFS and videos, logos, or infographics.

GRAPHIC DESIGN MATERIALS JANUARY 2020 - MAY 2021



- Social Media: A structured and coherent social media approach - increased publication frequency and diversified tone of voice - produced **+1.1k posts**, reaching **+1 billion users** and generating **70k mentions**, winning **+292k** new followers, and registering continued growth across all KPIs on all platforms.
- Website: Over **1.5k new internal pages** were generated since 2020.

WEBSITE NEW PAGES JANUARY 2020 - MAY 2021



Communication vision and priorities 2021

The priorities pivot around '**Communication for Recovery**'. This entails a tourism narrative, including crisis communications, to fit the **rethink and restart of tourism** with sustainability as the driving goal.

The ongoing review and updating of UNWTO's **digital infrastructure** as well as incorporating **innovations** in digital communications, while deepening existing and launching new **partnerships**, are the core of COMM. These will be critical for the visibility of UNWTO's **engagement with members**, as well as reflecting **member support** as a central element to UNWTO's overall mandate and communications as a **strategic element of the Organization's goals**. Highlights include:

- The opening of the first UNWTO **Regional Office for the Middle East** bears relevant visibility potential for UNWTO beyond this region.
- The **24th UNWTO General Assembly** (Marrakech, Morocco, October 2021) will be the first high-level global in-person meeting since the pandemic and can put tourism further in the global spotlight.
- **Campaigns** accompanying building confidence in tourism's contribution to the wider recovery, highlighting solutions and encouraging specific actions.
- **Partnerships** to support awareness raising around tourism's potential and benefits.
- **Personal stories** that show the positive impact of tourism on lives and livelihoods and communications to get target audiences to care, proactively reaching them on platforms they use.

I. Addendum - Proposal to establish a UNWTO Regional Support Office in Brazil

1. Through a letter dated 16 November 2020, the President of Brazil, H.E. Mr. Jair Bolsonaro, informed the Secretary-General of the intention of the Government of Brazil to establish a UNWTO Regional Support Office. A copy of the letter can be disseminated upon a request.
2. During the visit of the Secretary-General to Brazil on 14-19 November 2020, the President of Brazil reaffirmed his government's interest that Brazil hosts the UNWTO Regional Support Office.
3. The Secretariat has shared with designated officials from the Ministry of Tourism a draft Host Country Agreement in line with the conditions and criteria for external entities that are an integral part of the Organization (Category I) adopted by the General Assembly at its 21st session through resolution 656(XXI).
4. After informing and consulting the Commission for the Americas, the Secretariat will submit the proposal for establishing a UNWTO Regional Support Office in Brazil for the consideration by the 24th session of the General Assembly pursuant to Article 12 (j) of the Statutes.

ⁱ Data from a January 2020 - 15 May 2021.

