

Agenda item 7

**Report of the Executive Council to the  
General Assembly (111th-113th  
sessions)**

A/24/7

Madrid, 28 August 2021

Original: English

**Executive summary**

As the statutory provisions indicate, the Executive Council is required to report to the General Assembly on its activities, dealing both with the decisions it has taken in implementation of General Assembly resolutions and with the administrative and technical decisions taken between Assembly sessions. Since the twenty-third session of the General Assembly, the Executive Council has held its 111th, 112th and 113th ordinary sessions.

The Council endorsed the Management Vision presented by the Secretary-General for 2018-2019, took note of the new organizational structure, examined the financial report for the years ended 31 December 2017 and 2018, and for the period ended 31 March 2019, thanked the Secretary-General for ensuring the financial stability of the Organization within one year of his mandate and recommended the General Assembly to approve them. The Council also endorsed the draft Programme of Work and Budget of the Organization for the period 2020-2021. At its 110th session the Council also welcomed the fact that United States of America is exploring possibilities to re-join the Organization.

It also called upon Member States to do everything in their power to ratify all amendments to the Statutes and the Financing Rules, with particular regard to the aim of the establishing Chinese as an official language of UNWTO. It also elected new members of its subsidiary bodies and approved several amendments to the UNWTO Staff Rules.

**Action by the General Assembly**

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**DRAFT RESOLUTION<sup>1</sup>**

*The General Assembly,*

*Having examined* the report,

1. *Takes note* of the information presented concerning the Council's activities, and in particular the decisions of its 111th, 112th and 113th ordinary sessions;
2. *Takes cognizance* of the major matters considered by the Council such as the implementation of the programme of work for 2019-2020 and the draft programme of work for 2021-2022, the financial situation and human resources of the Organization, and, notably, the considerable efforts in response to the COVID-19 crisis;
3. *Pays tribute* to the dedication and competence demonstrated by its Chairs, Kenya in 2020 and Chile in 2021; and

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<sup>1</sup> This is a draft resolution. For the final decision adopted by the Assembly, please refer to the Resolutions document issued at the end of the session.

4. *Thanks* the Vice-Chairs, Italy and Cabo Verde in 2020, and Senegal and Saudi Arabia in 2021, for the quality of the work they carried out in the exercise of their functions.

## **I. Introduction**

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1. As the Article 19(a) and Article 20 of the Organization's Statutes indicate, the Executive Council is required to report to the General Assembly on its activities, dealing both with the decisions it has taken in implementation of General Assembly resolutions and with the administrative and technical decisions it has taken between Assembly sessions.
2. This document reports on matters covered in decisions already taken by the Council in the fulfilment of the functions enumerated in the two aforementioned statutory provisions and Rule 29 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Council since the twenty-third session of the General Assembly held in Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation, on 9-13 September 2019.

## **II. Sessions of the Council**

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3. Since the twenty-third session of the General Assembly, the Executive Council has held three ordinary sessions, whose dates and venues were as follows:
  - 111th session, 13 September 2019 in Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation
  - 112th session, 15-17 September 2020 in Tbilisi, Georgia
  - 113th session, 18-19 January 2021 in Madrid, Spain
4. In light of the concerns regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and the worldwide restrictions on travel, gatherings and movement of people, the Secretariat of the Organization in consultation with the Chair of the Executive Council, took the decision to postpone the 112th session of the Executive Council, initially scheduled on 10-12 June 2020 in Tbilisi, Georgia, to 15-17 September 2020.
5. In line with the practice adopted by the United Nations and other specialized agencies, the Chair of the Executive Council in 2020 also agreed on the Secretary-General's recommendation to adopt a set of exceptional arrangements and special procedures governing the conduct of virtual and in-person sessions of the Council during the COVID-19 pandemic in order to ensure business continuity and to facilitate the timely organization and conduct of proceedings.
6. In light of the United Nations mandate to promote environmental sustainability, the sessions of the Council were paperless and the review and adoption of the decisions were immediately taken after the examination of each agenda item.
7. At these four ordinary sessions already held, the Executive Council adopted a total of 27 decisions:
  - 111th session: 4 decisions
  - 112th session: 15 decisions
  - 113th session: 8 decisions

## **III. Functions entrusted by the General Assembly to the Executive Council**

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8. This section covers the follow-up actions carried out by the Executive Council with a view to the implementation of explicit mandates and recommendations issued by the General Assembly.

### **Establishment of a UNWTO Regional Office for the Middle East**

9. At its 112th session the Executive Council endorsed the initiative of Saudi Arabia submitted by the Minister of Tourism of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, H.E. Mr. Ahmed

bin Aqil Alkhateeb, to establish a UNWTO Regional Office for the Middle East in Riyadh with a view to strengthening the cooperation and support of the UNWTO for the Middle East Region (CE/DEC/5(CXII)).

**Recommendation by the Executive Council to the General Assembly of a nominee for the post of Secretary-General for the period 2022-2025**

10. The 113th Executive Council carried out the process to recommend a nominee for the post of Secretary-General for the period 2022-2025 in accordance with the rules and procedures, and, noting that H.E. Shaikha Mai bint Mohammed Al Khalifa (Kingdom of Bahrain) received 8 votes, and that Mr. Zurab Pololikashvili (Georgia) received 25 votes, recommended to the General Assembly that Mr. Zurab Pololikashvili be appointed Secretary-General of the Organization for a term of office from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2025 (CE/DEC/4(CXII)).

**World Tourism Day**

11. The 113th Executive Council proposed to the General Assembly the following themes for the World Tourism Day: 2022: "Rethinking Tourism", and 2023: "Tourism and Green Investments" (CE/DEC/7(CXIII)).

**IV. Regular functions of the Executive Council**

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**Election of its Chair and Vice-Chairs**

12. At its 111th session, the Council elected Kenya as Chair of the Council for 2020 and Chile as Chair of the Council for 2021. The Council also elected Italy as first Vice-Chair for 2020 and Senegal for 2021, and Cabo Verde as second Vice-Chair for 2020 and Saudi Arabia for 2021 (CE/DEC/3(CXI)).

**Subsidiary bodies of the Executive Council**

13. At its 111th session, the Executive Council elected new members of its subsidiary bodies.
- (a) The Executive Council members elected to the Programme and Budget Committee (PBC) were India and Zimbabwe until the 24th session of the General Assembly. It endorsed Flanders as the representative of the Associate Members and FITUR, Chair of the Board of Affiliate Members (CE/DEC/2(CXI)).
- (b) The Council elected the following Members to the Committee for the Review of Applications for Affiliate Membership for the period 2019-2023: Côte D'Ivoire, Jamaica, China, Iran, Azerbaijan and Saudi Arabia, and FITUR as representative of the Affiliate Members (CE/DEC/2(CXI)).
14. Until the 25th session of the General Assembly:
- (i) For the Committee on Statistics, the Council elected Morocco and Seychelles, Jamaica and Paraguay, Philippines, Nepal, Austria and Republic of Moldova, Saudi Arabia, Macao, China, as representative of the Associate Members and FITUR as representative of the Affiliate Members (CE/DEC/2(CXI)).
- (ii) For the Committee on Tourism and Competitiveness (CTC), the Council elected Kenya and Senegal, Bahamas and Brazil, Fiji, India, Israel and Republic of Moldova, Bahrain, Macao SAR till 2021 as representative of the Associate Members and FITUR as representative of the Affiliate Members (CE/DEC/2(CXI)).
- (iii) For the Committee on Tourism and Sustainability (CTS), the Council elected Algeria and Angola, Honduras and El Salvador, Philippines, Bhutan, Croatia and Serbia, Egypt, Flanders as representative of the Associate Members till 2021 and FITUR as representative of the Affiliate Members (CE/DEC/2(CXI)).
- (iv) For the Committee for the Review of Applications for Affiliate Membership, the Council elected Côte D'Ivoire, Jamaica, China, Iran, Azerbaijan, Saudi Arabia and FITUR as representative of the Affiliate Members (CE/DEC/2(CXI)).

15. Since the 23rd session of the General Assembly, the Council has decided to provisionally admit a total of 36 applicants to affiliate membership, pending ratification by the General Assembly at its twenty-fourth session:
- 112th session: 29 applicants
  - 113th session: 7 applicants

## **V. Secretary-General's reports on the activities of the Organization**

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### **Programme of work**

16. With regard to the general programme of work, the Council took note of activities summarized in the Secretary-General's reports (CE/DEC/4(CXII) and CE/DEC/3(CXIII)) and took the following decisions.
17. The Council approved the establishment of a Working Group with the mission of preparing a proposal for an integral reform of the existing Rules of Procedures of the Affiliate Members and to set the basis of the creation and operation of a Committee for Affiliate Members (CE/DEC/4(CXII)).
18. It approved the modus operandi and composition of the Technical Committee on Tourism Online Education (CE/DEC/4(CXII)).
19. In the same decision, it approved the terms of reference of the Committee for the development of an International Code for the Protection of Tourists.
20. At its 112th session the Executive Council also commended the efforts of the Secretary-General in pursuing stronger collaboration with the European Institutions and achieving the explicit inclusion of tourism in the context of the EU GREEN DEAL.
21. At its 113th session the Executive Council took note of the developments regarding the decision of the General Assembly to withdraw temporarily from the UNSDG in the unprecedented situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and requested the Secretary-General to update it on progress made at its twenty-fourth session (CE/DEC/3(CXIII)).

### **Administrative and statutory matters**

22. The Council received the Secretary-General's reports on administrative and statutory matters dealing with subjects such as the Organization's financial situation and membership.
23. At its 112th and 113th sessions, the Council examined the UNWTO financial report and audited Financial Statements containing updated information as of 30 June 2020 and 30 September 2020, respectively. It took note of the submission of the interim provisional unaudited UNWTO Statement of Financial Position and recommended to the General Assembly the endorsement of the Executive Council decisions CE/DEC/4(CX) and CE/DEC/6(CXII) on the approval of the UNWTO Financial Report and Audited Financial Statements for the years ended 31 December 2018 and 2019 respectively and the approval of the closing of the UNWTO Audited Financial Statements of the twenty-second financial period (2018-2019), the budgetary cash balance of the Regular Budget and Working Capital Fund situation for the same period (CE/DEC/6(CXII) and CE/DEC/3(CXIII)).
24. At its 112th session the Executive Council approved the amendments to the Detailed Financial Rules VI.32 (c) (CE/DEC/6(CXII)).
25. It encouraged Members to present their candidatures as the External Auditor to carry out the external auditing of the Organization for the period 2022-2023 for the external audit of the UNWTO Financial Statements for the years ended 31 December 2021 and 2022 (CE/DEC/3(CXIII)).
26. The Council approved the Secretary-General's proposal to utilize the 2019 RB budgetary cash surplus amounting to EUR 1,932,645, and the Regular Budget appropriation

transfers recommended by the Programme and Budget Committee members through a written consultation in accordance with Financial Regulation 5.3(a) and 5.3(b) (CE/DEC/6(CXII)).

#### **Human resources**

27. At its 112th and 113th sessions, the Council took note of the reports on the Human Resources situation of the Organization (CE/DEC/7(CXII) and CE/DEC/3(CXIII)).
28. The Executive Council endorsed the reclassification of the post of Chief, Human Resources Department, from P.5 to P.4. (CE/DEC/7(CXII)).
29. It endorsed the exception to Staff Regulation 28, on mandatory age of retirement for submission to and approval by the General Assembly (CE/DEC/7(CXII)).
30. The Executive Council encouraged the Member States to send concrete proposals to the Secretariat for the financing of Junior Professional Officers (CE/DEC/7(CXII)).

#### **Other matters**

31. The Executive Council requested the Secretary-General to continue closely monitoring the impact of COVID-19 on international tourism as well as supporting the Member States and the sector at large in their efforts to improve their tourism intelligence systems as a means to accelerate recovery and to build resilience as well as evidence-based tourism planning and management.

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