

Written message on World Tourism Day 2021: “Tourism for Inclusive Growth”

On World Tourism Day, we recognize the power and potential of tourism to advance prosperity and drive inclusive, sustainable development. The tourism sector touches almost every part of our economies and societies, enabling historically marginalized people and those at risk of being left behind to benefit from development that is local and direct.

Tourism continues to suffer enormously under the COVID-19 pandemic: in the first five months of this year, international tourist arrivals decreased by a staggering 95 per cent in parts of the world and forecasts suggest a loss of over \$4 trillion to global GDP by the end of 2021. This is a major shock for developed economies, but for developing countries, it is an emergency.

Climate change is also severely affecting many major tourist destinations, particularly Small Island Developing States where tourism accounts for nearly 30 per cent of economic activity.

With many millions of livelihoods in jeopardy, it is time to rethink, transform, and safely restart tourism. With the right safeguards in place, the tourism sector can provide decent jobs, helping to build resilient, sustainable, gender-equal, inclusive economies and societies that work for everyone. This means targeted action and investment to shift towards green tourism – with high emitting sectors, including air and sea transport and hospitality, moving towards carbon neutrality.

And it means giving everybody a say in how tourism shapes the future of our societies and our planet. Only through inclusive decision-making can we ensure inclusive, sustainable growth, deliver on the promise of the SDGs, and transform tourism to fulfil its potential as an engine for prosperity, a vehicle for integration, a means to protect our planet and biodiversity, and an agent of cultural understanding between peoples.

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UN Secretary-General