

24th UNWTO General Assembly

Spain to Become Centre of World Tourism for Three Days

More than 500 delegates from around the world, including Ministers of Tourism of UNWTO Member States, international organizations, as well as leaders from the private sector and civil society, will participate in the meeting of the supreme governing body of this specialized agency of the United Nations.

Madrid, Spain, 25 November 2021. - On 1 to 3 December, Madrid will host the 24th General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), where the future of a strategic sector for many countries after the pandemic will be analysed, bearing in mind the commitment to a more inclusive and sustainable tourism.

Innovation, education and rural development

In line with the UNWTO's core priorities, the General Assembly will focus on building for the future through innovation, education and tourism for rural development.

In Madrid, the official headquarters of the UNWTO, the organization will launch its new initiative "Digital Futures Programme for SMEs", designed to help small tourism businesses take advantage of the benefits of innovation.

Likewise, the winners of the first edition of the UNWTO initiative "Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO" will be announced, recognizing the best examples of rural destinations that embrace tourism as a pillar of growth and opportunity, while the UNWTO 2021 Students' League will celebrate the future of the sector.

UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili will present his report to the Members, outlining how the Organization has led the global tourism response to the unprecedented crisis caused by COVID-19, in particular by providing vital support for jobs and businesses and ensuring harmonized standards and protocols to restore confidence in travel. The report will also set out plans for a more inclusive and resilient future, including the revision of the UNWTO 2030 Agenda for Africa and the first International Code for the Protection of Tourists, also designed to restore confidence in travel.

The Secretary-General thanked the Spanish Government for offering to host the event, after the Kingdom of Morocco was forced to relinquish hosting it due to public health

considerations. "In difficult circumstances, Spain has stepped forward to host this important General Assembly. In the UNWTO's host city, Madrid, world tourism will come together to chart a future in which our sector can develop its unique potential as a pillar of growth. inclusive and opportunities for all," said the Secretary-General Pololikashvili.

The Minister of Industry, Commerce and Tourism of Spain, **Reyes Maroto**, said: "It is an honour to be able to hold this Assembly in a country that is the host of the UNWTO and whose influence in tourism is so important. We value the role that the tourism of the future will play, marked by respect for the environment and a commitment to new tourism attractions beyond "sun-and-sand". Spain is a leading country in world tourism and wants to continue to be so after the pandemic. We were pioneers in implementing the COVID Certificate and now our country is considered a safe destination. We will continue working to maintain high levels of quality and diversity in our tourism."

Statutory meetings and elections

On the eve of the 24th session of the General Assembly, the Plenary Session of the Affiliate Members of the UNWTO will be held. At the session, private companies, destination management organizations, and representatives of civil society and academia will share initiatives for the recovery of tourism and ideas for sustainable growth. They are also expected to approve the revised legal framework for Affiliate Members, which will continue to promote UNWTO's transition to a more agile, dynamic and responsive organization.

On that day, the UNWTO's Programme and Budget Committee will meet to underline the Secretariat's commitment to transparency.

At the The 24th General Assembly, the Members will also be asked to confirm the appointment of Secretary-General Pololikashvili for a second term, following the recommendation of the UNWTO Executive Council held earlier in the year. Likewise, the Members will also vote to decide on the themes of the 2022 and 2023 World Tourism Day celebrations, and the host country of the 25th General Assembly in 2023.

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