

FOR DECISION

Agenda item 19
**Place and dates of the twenty-fifth
session of the General Assembly**

A/24/19 rev.2
Madrid, 30 November 2021
Original: English

Executive summary

The Secretary-General has received official communications submitting the candidatures of Egypt, Portugal and Uzbekistan to host the twenty-fifth session of the General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization in 2023.

On 28 October 2021, the Secretariat received a communication from the Minister of Tourism and Antiquities of Egypt informing of the withdrawal of the candidature of Egypt to host the twenty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

In a letter dated 22 October 2021, the Kingdom of Morocco communicated to the Secretariat that the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic did not allow for the holding of the 24th session of the General Assembly in Marrakesh in 2021 on the agreed dates of 30 November to 3 December. In the same letter, Morocco requested to hold the 25th session of the General Assembly in Marrakesh in 2023. On 30 November 2021, it withdrew this request.

The General Assembly is requested to decide on the venue of its twenty-fifth session.

Action by the General Assembly

DRAFT RESOLUTION¹

The General Assembly,

Having regard to Article 10 of the Statutes and Article 1 of its Rules of Procedure,

Having taken cognizance of the three candidatures submitted, respectively, by the Governments of Egypt, Portugal and Uzbekistan,

Taking into account the withdrawal of the Government of Egypt,

Having taking cognizance of the request of the Kingdom of Morocco to host the next General Assembly, and its subsequent withdrawal of such request,

1. *Thanks* these Governments warmly for their respective invitations;

Having carried out a vote by secret ballot,

2. *Decides* that its twenty-fifth session will be held in in 2023;

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

Having examined the report of the Secretariat on the practice for the conclusion of a host country agreement,

3. *Recalls* that acceptance by the State of the standard conditions laid out in the model agreement is a preliminary requirement for the submission of a valid candidacy to host a General Assembly session; and
4. *Requests* States to undertake in writing that they observe the legal framework for the holding of UNWTO meetings away from headquarters and provide the conditions established in the model agreement for the hosting of the General Assembly in accordance with resolution 631(XX).

I. Procedure for fixing the place and dates of General Assembly sessions

1. The Articles of the Organization's Statutes and the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly concerning the place and dates of General Assembly sessions are reproduced below for information:
 - (a) **Article 8(2) of the Statutes:**

"Meetings of the Assembly and the Council shall be held at the Headquarters of the Organization unless the respective organs decide otherwise."
 - (b) **Article 10 of the Statutes:**

"The Assembly shall meet in ordinary session every two years and, as well, in extraordinary session when circumstances require. Extraordinary sessions may be convened at the request of the Council or of a majority of Full Members of the Organization."
 - (c) **Rule 1 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly:**

"1. The Secretary-General shall convene the Assembly in ordinary session every two years at the Organization's Headquarters.

2. The Assembly may meet at another place if it so decides, provided the host country reimburses the extra expenses involved in holding the session.

3. The date of the session shall be fixed by the Assembly or by the Council, if so empowered and notified to the Members of the Organization not less than seven months before it is due to be held."
2. Despite the wording of Article 8(2) of the Statutes, in the practice the Assembly does not meet at the headquarters of the Organization. Through resolution 631(XX), the Assembly recognized that the practice of geographical rotation of its sessions has greatly contributed to promote the role of tourism and of the Organization around the world, and adopted the guidelines for the selection of venues of sessions of the General Assembly (hereinafter "the Guidelines") as described in document [A/20/5\(II\)\(i\)](#).

II. Fixing the venue of the 25th session of the General Assembly

3. Pursuant to the Guidelines, in order for a candidature to be eligible the State concerned must fulfil the following requirements before the General Assembly adopts the resolution concerning the place of its next session:
 - (a) Inform the Secretary-General four months before the Assembly that is required to decide on the venue of the session in question,
 - (b) Receive the sponsorship of at least 10% of the Member States, and
 - (c) Undertake in writing to observe the standard conditions laid out in the model agreement.
4. The standard requirements and conditions laid out in the model agreement shall be the subject of an agreement between the government of the host State and the Organization.
5. The model agreement is based on the legal framework governing the holding of UNWTO meetings away from Headquarters, which is primarily determined by Article 32 of the Statutes, the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies and its Annex XVIII, as well as relevant resolutions by the General Assembly², and is aligned with the policy of the United Nations in this regard.
6. Failure to apply any of the standards and principles included in the template agreement may expose delegates of Member States and other participants to, *inter alia*, difficulties issuing

² A/RES/136(V), A/RES/489(XVI), A/RES/631(XX) and A/RES/662(XXI)

visas or refusal to enter into the host country, documentation and media materials destined for the meeting being refused free entry or being searched, customs duties being requested, and non-respect by national authorities of official immunity from legal process (e.g. arrest and detention, commencement of lawsuits). It may also expose the Organization to legal and financial liability.

7. Any State willing to host the General Assembly should, before submitting its candidature, become familiar with the standard requirements set out in the model agreement.
8. Unfortunately, the Secretariat often encounters some reluctance to apply the conditions required by the General Assembly for the host of its sessions as well as pressure to deviate from the policy established by it and from the consistent policy of the United Nations in this regard. As a result, lengthy negotiations are undertaken, often with the support of the Secretariat of the United Nations, to ensure that the General Assembly instructions are respected by countries having been elected to host the General Assembly of the Organization.
9. In order to avoid these situations, which may even jeopardize the proper organization of the session of the Assembly, the Secretariat has developed a model letter for States concerned to incorporate into their candidatures whereby they undertake to observe the legal framework for the holding of UNWTO meetings away from Headquarters and to provide the provisions established in the model agreement for the hosting the General Assembly pursuant to the Guidelines.
10. Should the host country not be in a position to provide the necessary conditions for the hosting of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General, in line with his delegated authority pursuant to paragraph (i) of the Guidelines, will adopt any measure as necessary to ensure the proper holding of the session.

III. List of venues of the previous sessions

11. It is recalled that, since its inception, UNWTO has held its General Assembly at the following venues:

First session	(1975)	Madrid (Spain)
Second session	(1977)	Torremolinos (Spain)
Third session	(1979)	Torremolinos (Spain)
Fourth session	(1981)	Rome (Italy)
Fifth session	(1983)	New Delhi (India)
Sixth session	(1985)	Sofia (Bulgaria)
Seventh session	(1987)	Madrid (Spain)
Eighth session	(1989)	Paris (France)
Ninth session	(1991)	Buenos Aires (Argentina)
Tenth session	(1993)	Bali (Indonesia)
Eleventh session	(1995)	Cairo (Egypt)
Twelfth session	(1997)	Istanbul (Turkey)
Thirteenth session	(1999)	Santiago (Chile)
Fourteenth session	(2001)	Seoul (Republic of Korea)/Osaka (Japan)
Fifteenth session	(2003)	Beijing (China)
Sixteenth session	(2005)	Dakar (Senegal)
Seventeenth session	(2007)	Cartagena de Indias (Colombia)
Eighteenth session	(2009)	Astana (Kazakhstan)
Nineteenth session	(2011)	Gyeongju (Republic of Korea)
Twentieth session	(2013)	Victoria Falls (Zambia and Zimbabwe)
Twenty-first session	(2015)	Medellín (Colombia)
Twenty-second session	(2017)	Chengdu (China)
Twenty-third session	(2019)	Saint Petersburg (Russian Federation)

IV. Candidatures received for the twenty-fifth session

12. On 15 June 2021, the Secretariat informed all Member States through a Note Verbal of the receipt of the following candidatures:

(a) Uzbekistan (Samarkand)³

(b) Portugal⁴

13. The Secretary-General has transmitted to the aforementioned States the standard requirements for their candidatures to be eligible and has shared, in particular, the model agreement, as acceptance of the conditions laid out therein is a preliminary condition for the submission of a valid candidacy pursuant to the Guidelines.
14. The 66th Regional Commission for Europe welcomed the submission of the candidatures of Uzbekistan and Portugal to host the 25th session of the General Assembly in 2023, and as such, both candidatures meet all the requirements of the guidelines for the selection of venues of sessions of the General Assembly.
15. On 11 August 2021, the Secretariat informed all Member States through a Note Verbale of the receipt of the candidature of Egypt⁵.
16. On 1 November 2021, the Secretariat informed all Member States through a Note Verbale of the withdraw of the candidature of Egypt.
17. On a letter dated on 22 October 2021, the Kingdom of Morocco communicated to the Secretariat that the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic did not allow for the holding of the 24th session of the General Assembly in Marrakesh in 2021 on the agreed dates of 30 November to 3 December. In the same letter, Morocco requested to hold the 25th session of the General Assembly in Marrakesh in 2023⁶.
18. However, on 30 November 2021, the Kingdom of Morocco verbally notified the Secretariat that it was withdrawing this request.

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³ Candidature submitted by the H.E. the Deputy Prime Minister of Uzbekistan, Aziz Abdukhakimov, and received at the Secretariat on 15 September 2020 through note verbal.

⁴ Candidature submitted by the H.E. Ms. Rita Marques, Secretary of State of Tourism, and received at the Secretariat on 13 May 2021 through note verbal issued by the Embassy of Portugal in Spain.

⁵ Candidature submitted by the H.E. Mr. Khaled El-Enany Minister of Tourism and Antiquities, and received at the Secretariat on 7 July 2021 through a letter. Withdrawal letter submitted on 28 October 2021.

Annex I: Portugal's candidature letter to host the 25th session of UNWTO General Assembly



(sent by mail)

Mr. Zurab Pololikashvili
Secretary-General
UN World Tourism Organization

Dear Secretary General,

One of the lessons that result from the pandemic and its impacts on the tourism sector is the need for destinations to diversify the supply of tourism products and demand from new source markets. It is true that this was already seen before the pandemic, but now it has become crucial for the reactivation of travel and tourism.

In Portugal we have the 2027 Strategy for the development of tourism and in this context we dedicate great importance to the development and structuring of tourism products, acting upon the main trends of international demand.

We also developed the Tourism + Sustainable Strategy 2020-2023, which we want to be a boost to make Portugal one of the most sustainable destinations in the world, so that by 2050 we can contribute to a fully decarbonized sector that meets all the UN SDGs.

Considering this important agenda and its 2023 target, on behalf of the Portuguese Government I hereby express our desire to host the 25th UNWTO General Assembly in 2023 and thus help the Organization to send a clear and absolute message about the importance of sustainable, economic, environmental and social development in the tourism sector.

Portugal has never hosted a UNWTO General Assembly and the last time the meeting took place in Western Europe was in 1989 in France, i.e. about 33 years ago. Also aiming the amend of this scenery we would be more than honoured to welcome UNWTO GA in 2023.

With my best regards and warmest consideration

Rita
Marques

Assinado de forma
digital por Rita
Marques
Dados: 2021.03.15
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Rita Marques
Secretary of State for Tourism

Annex II: Uzbekistan's candidature letter to host the 25th session of the UNWTO General Assembly

**O'ZBEKISTON RESPUBLIKASI
TURIZMNI RIVOJLANTIRISH
DAVLAT QO'MITASI**



**THE STATE COMMITTEE OF
THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN
FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT**

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2020 y. " " № 01-29/4241 « 15 » 09 2020r.

Mr. Zurab Pololikashvili
Secretary-General of
UNWTO

Dear Zurab Pololikashvili,

On behalf of the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Tourism Development, let me express my deepest appreciation to UNWTO for the personally invitation to participate in the Executive Council membership 112th session in Tbilisi, Georgia.

I congratulate UNWTO on the successful organization of the event after a long break.

Uzbekistan always tries to take an active participation in every event of the organization. We would have wished to be part of the event and discuss cooperation issues between Uzbekistan and UNWTO, but due to the pandemic situation and urgent coordination of the government support for tourism sector the delegation from Uzbekistan will not be able to join the session.

The outbreak of COVID-19 has impacted countries in varying degrees. Member states started easing travel restrictions, they will overcome the current global challenge with the support of coordinated recommendations adopted by the UNWTO.

As you know, Uzbekistan is now undergoing large-scale transformations in all sectors, as well as in tourism sphere and as their logical continuation, further development of cooperation between Uzbekistan and Member States of the CEU. In order to enhance the role of Uzbekistan in the development of international tourism, we are pleased to announce Uzbekistan's candidacy for Executive council membership for 2021-2025, as well as our willingness to join the official bidding to host the 25th Session of the General assembly in 2023 in Samarkand, Uzbekistan.

Please accept, dear Secretary-General, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Kind regards,

Aziz Abdukhakimov

Deputy Prime Minister,
Chairman of The State Committee for Tourism Development

Annex III: Egypt's candidature letter to host the 25th session of the UNWTO General Assembly and withdrawal letter



Cairo July 7, 2021

H.E. Mr. Zurab Pololikashvili
Secretary General
World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

Your Excellency,

Allow me first and foremost to express my sincere respect to your good-self.

I am writing to you in reference to the upcoming 25th Session of the UNWTO General Assembly to be held in 2023, where I would like to bring to your kind attention the desire of Egypt to host the session.

In this regard, I would highly appreciate taking the necessary measures to notify the UNWTO Member States about the Egyptian candidature. I seize the opportunity to assure you and the Member States that the utmost efforts would be exerted to organize a successful event and to offer our guests an unforgettable experience.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr. Khaled El-Enany

Khaled

Minister of Tourism and Antiquities



H.E. Mr. Zurab Pololokashili
Secretary General
The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

Cairo, October 28th, 2021

Excellency,

Thank you for the kind invitation to participate in the 24th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations World Tourism Organization, scheduled to be held in Madrid, November 30th - December 3rd, 2021.

In this context, I would like to inform you that Egypt has decided to withdraw its candidacy to host the 25th General Assembly of the UNWTO in 2023 in favour of Portugal's bid; and we look forward to submit our application to host the 26th session in 2025.

Our commitment to support the organization's outreaches to revive world tourism in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic and its devastating impact on our industry and the world economy at large, continues to be unwavering. It is strongly reflected in our own national strategy to mitigate the pandemic's impact and expand our touristic and archeological map and outreaches. I look forward to present Egypt's experience to the esteemed members of UNWTO during the upcoming General Assembly.

Until then, please accept, your Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Dr. Khaled El-Enany

Minister of Tourism and Antiquities

Annex IV: Morocco's letter on hosting the 25th session of the UNWTO General Assembly

Royaume du Maroc
Ministère du Tourisme, de l'Artisanat,
et de l'Economie Sociale et Solidaire
La Ministre



المملكة المغربية
وزارة السياحة والصناعة التقليدية
والاقتصاد الاجتماعي والتضامني
الوزير

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Monsieur Zurab POLOIKASHVILI
Secrétaire Général de l'Organisation Mondiale du Tourisme
Madrid - Espagne -

22 OCT 2021

Objet : Vingt-quatrième Session de l'Assemblée Générale de l'Organisation Mondiale du Tourisme (OMT).

Réf. : OFSG/2021 du 20 octobre 2021.

Monsieur le Secrétaire Général,

J'ai l'honneur d'accuser réception de votre lettre citée en référence, et je tiens à vous remercier pour votre compréhension concernant les conditions sanitaires ayant amené le Maroc à proposer le report de la 24^{ème} Assemblée Générale de l'Organisation Mondiale du Tourisme à Marrakech, dans un souci de préservation de la sécurité sanitaire aussi bien des participants que de la population.

Toutefois, vu l'intérêt que nous accordons à ce sujet, et eu égard aux engagements et aux efforts consentis conjointement avec vos équipes, depuis que notre pays a été élu en septembre 2019 à Saint Pétersbourg lors de la 23^{ème} session de l'Assemblée par 76 voix pour abriter l'organisation de cet événement planétaire, nous tenons à insister sur notre forte sollicitation à ce que la prochaine édition de l'Assemblée Générale se déroule à Marrakech en 2023.

De même, je demeure confiante d'ici là que le secteur du tourisme retrouvera toute sa dynamique avec l'effort de vaccination qui est consenti à l'échelle mondiale et qui commence à donner ses fruits, et nous vous assurons que nous n'épargnerons aucun effort pour assurer toutes les conditions de réussite pour l'organisation de cette prochaine édition de l'Assemblée Générale.

Nous restons à votre disposition pour approfondir cette question et convenir ensemble des prochaines étapes pour l'intérêt du secteur du tourisme dans le monde.

Je vous prie de croire, Monsieur le Secrétaire Général, en l'expression de ma haute considération.

Fatima Zahra KIMDOU

Ministre du Tourisme, de l'Artisanat
et de l'Economie Sociale et Solidaire

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