Canillo, Andorra, 24 March 2022 - The 11th World Congress on Snow and Mountain Tourism has concluded with a shared commitment to centre innovation and promote investment in green infrastructure and low-impact travel experiences.

Held as part of the UN Year of Sustainable Mountains, the Congress focused on the recovery of tourism and on an approach to the future based on understanding the tourist's needs while also preserving natural and cultural resources. Also on the agenda was ensuring the well-being of mountain communities and addressing issues such as innovation, sustainability and digital transformation.

Tourism as a beacon of hope

During his official visit to Andorra, UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili met with Prime Minister Xavier Esport Zamora and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Ms. Maria Ubach Font, discussing their existing partnership and identifying possibilities for further collaboration in the future. At the Congress, Mr Pololikashvili highlighted the sector's unique ability to provide hope in difficult times. “We can show the world that tourism stands united, that our sector can offer answers and generate the trust that we all need in such difficult times,” he said.

Prime Minister Xavier Esport Zamora said: “The World Congress on Snow and Mountain Tourism, which is held biannually in Andorra, is an excellent forum for debate on the sustainable development of tourism. Our country works intensely with projects to improve the quality of tourist services, diversify the offers and maximize the experience of tourists.”

High-level participation

Over 400 participants from 23 countries gathered in Andorra, which has organized the bi-annual event in partnership with UNWTO since its inception. Among this year’s participants were private and public sector as well as the Ambassadors to Andorra or Spain of Cabo Verde, Bulgaria, France, Guinea-Bissau, Kazakhstan, Spain and Saudi Arabia, a show of the importance and opportunities for cooperation in this area. More than 200 participants also joined online. Speakers included, among others, the Atout France, Andorran Michelin Start Chef Jordi Grau, Slow Food Travel, the Basque Culinary
Centre (BCC), the Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA), Hutttopia, Intrepid Travel, Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency, Cluster Montagne in France and a series of startups.

Minister of Tourism of Andorra, Jordi Torres Falcó concluded: “As we have seen over these two days, only together and building synergies, can we make tourism recovery solid as the future of tourism sustainable in its three pillars – environmental, social and economic.”

A high-level panel on policies for mountain tourism, made up of Jordi Torres Falcó, Minister of Tourism and Telecommunications of Andorra; Dauren Abayev, Minister of Culture and Sports of Kazakhstan; Simon Zajc, Secretary of State, Ministry of Economic Development and Technology of Slovenia; Fernando Valdés; Secretary of State for Tourism of Spain, Sofia Zacharaki, Viceminister of Tourism of Greece and Massimo Garavaglia, Minister of Tourism of Italy (stressed the importance of creating a strong adequate governance that brings together different levels of government and the private sector, addressing climate change and invest in infrastructure.

Alongside this, promoting and growing gastronomy and wellness emerged as key priorities for the future of mountain tourism. Further recommendations from the Congress included the need to monitor tourism in mountains and its impact to better manage resources and waste produced, respecting destinations’ carrying capacity and empower mountain communities.

**Tourism for rural development**

The Summit provided an opportunity for the UNWTO leadership visit Ordino, recently included in the UNWTO Best Tourism Villages Upgrade Programme. Here, Secretary-General Pololikashvili recalled how tourism can be a driver of rural development, promoting the promotion and preservation of local culture and values.

**Related Links:**

11th World Congress on Snow and Mountain Tourism

UNWTO-FAO Report ‘Mountain tourism: Towards a more sustainable path