

## UNWTO Commission for the Americas

Sixty-seventh meeting  
Punta del Este, Uruguay, 19 May 2022, 10:00hrs – 17:00hrs  
Provisional agenda item 4

CAM/67/4  
Madrid, April 2022  
Original: English

### UNWTO in the Americas

#### 1. Political and economic situation of the region (Needs and future perspectives)

- Higher levels of inequality within and between countries are emerging as a longer-term consequence of the pandemic. For most Latin American and Caribbean developing countries, a full recovery of GDP per capita will remain elusive. The gap between what they will achieve and what they would have achieved without the pandemic will persist well into 2023.
- Growth impetus generally has been weaker in most developing countries and economies in transition. While higher commodity prices have helped commodity exporting countries at large, rising food and energy prices have triggered rapid inflation, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean. Recovery has been especially slow in tourism-dependent economies, notably in the small island developing States which is the case of the Caribbean region.

#### 2. Statistical data per region and sub region

- Based on the latest available data, global international tourist arrivals more than doubled (+130%) in January 2022 compared to 2021 - the 18 million more visitors recorded worldwide in the first month of this year equals the total increase for the whole of 2021.
- While these figures confirm the positive trend already underway last year, the pace of recovery in January was impacted by the emergences of the Omicron variant and the re-introduction of travel restrictions in several destinations. Following the 71% decline of 2021, international arrivals in January 2022 remained 67% below pre-pandemic levels.
- All regions enjoyed a significant rebound in January 2022, though from low levels recorded at the start of 2021. Europe (+199%) and the Americas (+97%) continued to post the strongest results, with international arrivals still around half pre-pandemic levels (-53% and -52%, respectively).
- The Caribbean (-38%) and Southern and Mediterranean Europe (-41%) have shown the fastest rates of recovery towards 2019 levels. Indeed, several islands in the Caribbean and Asia and the Pacific, together with some small European and Central American destinations recorded the best results compared to 2019: Curaçao (-20%), El Salvador (-19%), Dominican Republic (-11%), etc.
- Among major destinations Turkey and Mexico saw declines of 16% and 24% respectively as compared to 2019.

- After the unprecedented drop of 2020 and 2021, international tourism is expected to continue its gradual recovery in 2022.
- The war in Ukraine poses new challenges to the global economic environment and risks hampering the return of confidence in global travel. The US and the Asian source markets, which have started to open up, could be particularly impacted especially regarding travel to Europe, as these markets are historically more risk averse.

### **3.. The future of tourism in the region: UNWTO involvement**

#### Employment and gender divide

- Uneven recovery of employment and income across different population groups is increasing inequalities within countries. In particular, the crisis has exacerbated the gender divide, especially in developing countries, where women experienced a sharper decline in employment and labour force participation than men. More broadly, an inclusive and sustainable recovery will require putting gender considerations at the heart of social protection and labour market policies.
- The sectors of economic activity in which employment declined most were precisely those with a high proportion of women, such as paid domestic work, retail trade, hotels and tourism, although the size of the sectoral differences varied between countries. While the construction and transport sectors have also seen declines in female employment, women still only account for a very low proportion of workers there. At the same time, employment is forecast to increase in several high-skilled service sectors where women are less represented. These structural differences will tend to increase gender inequalities in the labour market in the absence of active employment policies for women.

#### **Main areas of cooperation in the region through UNWTO key programmatic priorities**

- A. Make tourism smarter: innovation and the digital transformation:** by driving digitalization in tourism and creating an innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem among regional Member States, thus UNWTO will maximize the potential of the sector in terms of economic growth, job creation and sustainable development.

#### **How we do that?**

- a. Helping Member States to develop their innovation programmes and new technologies to empower their national tourism ecosystem, and
- b. Supporting Member States on creating Specific Regional Innovation Challenges to provide technology-driven solutions to tourism.

#### Activities:

- Forum on digitalization and Investments (Mexico, 2022)
- UNWTO Innovation Challenge on New Tourism Experiences powered by Procolombia
- UNWTO Innovation Challenge on Digitalization of Routes and Tour operators (Panama)
- UNWTO Innovation Challenge on MICE Tourism (Colombia)
- UNWTO Innovation Challenge on Digitalization (Mexico)
- UNWTO Innovation Challenge on Education (Dominican Republic)

**B. Green investment and entrepreneurship:** foster tourism investment attraction and promotion programmes to facilitate investments at the national and regional levels in collaboration with the private sector, the multilateral cooperation and attract donors and international brands.

Knowledge creation and Policy:

- Tourism Investments guides in Dominican Republic
- Tourism Investments guides in Argentina, Ecuador and Colombia (in progress)
- UNWTO Investment Capacity building online for Ecuador and Dominican Republic

**C. Education and jobs:** Cutting-edge education for tourism players and create more and better jobs: A highly digitalized world demands modern and impactful education. In this regard, UNWTO will lead the brand-new hybrid education model to scale up training and skills development in tourism because we firmly believe that providing quality jobs depends on quality education.

**How we can deliver:**

- On-going training programmes for Member States led by UNWTO Academy
- Forum on Education (Dominican Republic, 2022) in collaboration with Save the Children
- First MOOC in Spanish on tourism challenges by the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile
- Quality assurance: Ted.Qual and QUEST certifications by UNWTO Academy (Dominican Republic)
- UNWTO World Tourism Students League in Haiti and Honduras
- UNWTO Academy course – Argentina + Mexico – September
- Scholarships programme: With the aim of strengthening high quality education in tourism, UNWTO has launched a 692 scholarship programme for the Region, allocating 28 to each of English-speaking Member States for the Massive Online Open Course (MOOC): "Introduction to Tourism - Industry Management". The Spanish-speaking Member States will receive 28 scholarships for the MOOC course in Spanish language: "Branding + Innovation". The Associate Members will receive 24 scholarships. After the Regional Commission is finished, the Regional Department will reach out to each of the corresponding Focal Points with the scholarship package, including instructions and codes on how to redeem them.

**D. Build resilience, foster market intelligence and facilitate travel:**

- Safe destinations and effective **health protocols** and restore confidence among tourists.
- **Fostering market intelligence**, marketing and branding, product development and diversification, fostering new governance models based on PPPs.
- **Promoting tourism** as an effective tool for rural development and inclusion (Webinars during 2021 and 2022 onwards).
- Market Intelligence Webinars for Member States or the general public on tourism trends, digital marketing as well as on specific tourism products, segments and markets, including those focusing on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourism.

- UNWTO International Code for the Protection of Tourists (theme of the Seminar to be held in the framework of this CAM meeting). As of today, two countries of the region have informed the Secretariat their intention to adhere to the ICPT: **Ecuador and Paraguay.**
- Communication and training actions within the BTV project (2021 - 2022 onwards) – The following Member States were awarded in the **Best Tourism Villages 2021 Edition: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Peru and Mexico**
- 2-day training workshops have been organized for the Caribbean sub-region in collaboration with CTO

#### **E. Protect our heritage: social, cultural and environmental sustainability:**

- UNWTO prepares every two years global and regional reports within its mandate, as the UN specialized agency on tourism, for the UN General Assembly (UNGA).
- INSTO Webinars: Expand and consolidate the capacity of its destination members by sharing knowledge and expertise among its members as well as to the UNWTO Member States and Affiliate Members. SDT manages a network of sustainable tourism observatories under the International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories (INSTO) and organizes with them series of Webinars. There are seven observatories in the region (Mexico, Guatemala, Panamá, Brazil, Argentina, and USA & Canada).
- UNWTO, the Government of Panama and the business group NOAH agreed to work together for the implementation of the United Nations Fund for Climate Neutrality of Tourism which represents an innovative financing instrument promoted by UNWTO to respond to threats posed by the climate emergency.

##### **Accessibility:**

- Assist UNWTO MS in applying international standards and drafting policies & strategies on Accessible Tourism for All.

##### **Culture:**

- UNWTO & WINTA Compendium of good practices on indigenous tourism (with World Indigenous Tourism Alliance, to be issued in 2022, based on a survey launched in 2020). Case studies and guidelines from several Latin America countries such as Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Dominican Republic.
- Compendium of case studies on tourism and creative industries in Latin America.

##### **Gender:**

- Centre Stage: UNWTO supports 4 National Tourism Administrations, tourism businesses, NGOs and tourism organizations from Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic and Mexico, as they implement a one-year action plan for women's empowerment. This initiative will strengthen, coordinate and focus work towards gender equality in tourism governmental institutions and businesses as they recover from the pandemic.

- Weaving the Recovery – Indigenous Women in Tourism: UNWTO is formulating a programme to tackle the systematic inequalities faced by Indigenous Women in Guatemala, Mexico and Peru.

### Technical Assistance Projects

- Dominican R.: Technical assistance – JICA funds – finished – Main key areas:
  - Tourism Diversification Strategy of the Dominican Republic
  - International tourism marketing strategy
  - Health and safety diagnosis
  - Diagnosis on support and training needs for tourism SME's
  - Diagnosis, review and evaluation of tourism market intelligence
- Panama: Development of a Smart Tourism Data System – IDB funds
- Jamaica: Support on MST – TBD

### Cooperation with International Organizations

- **Association of Caribbean States (ACS):** MoU – Webinars on:
  - ✓ Encouraging technological adoption and adaptation in the design, delivery and facilitation of visitor experience and simplifying and/or harmonizing travel entry protocols to boost destination access for potential visitors (ACS High-Level Meeting of Tourism Authorities, March 16 – 17 2022, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago).
  - ✓ Fundamentals of the International Code for the Protection of Tourists and Mapping the development and application of legislation and policies for tourist protection (3<sup>rd</sup> Workshop on the Promotion of Safety and Security in the Tourism Industry, November 9-10, 2021).
  - ✓ Experiences, Best Practices and Lessons Learned for the Protection of the Tourism Sector: Addressing Sectoral Vulnerabilities - (14th Business Forum of the Greater Caribbean, November 25<sup>th</sup> 2021, Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago)
- **Banco de Desarrollo de América Latina (CAF):** MoU – on going
- **CARICOM:** Regular collaboration on demand
- **Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO):** Technical workshop on statistics
- **Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC):** Webinar on “Global Services Forum 2021: More resilient and sustainable tourism for the post-pandemic recovery” (23 September 2021)
- **Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA):** MoU - Cooperation on Agriculture (Extended and enhanced cooperation)
- **Organization of American States (OAS):** “Strategies to mitigate the negative effects of Covid-19 on Tourism: Protocols and technological tools” - XXV Inter-American Congress of Ministers and High-Level Authorities of Tourism, October 6<sup>th</sup>, Asunción, Paraguay
- **Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS):** MoU and Action Plan: Statistics, MSMEs support, market intelligence, DMO's strengthening
- **Latin American Economic System (SELA):** MoU – on going
- **The business group NOAH + Panama:** Tourism NetZero Climate Action Agreement

- **Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)** (in collaboration with OAS): specific recommendations aimed at several subsectors and tourist spaces (accommodation, restaurants, local transport, beaches, airports and ports) and also comprises recommendations to manage prevention protocols and specific tools to minimize transmission.
- Other **UN Agencies**: UN RCO Guatemala: Orange economy,

### Next steps for the Americas

The Secretariat through the Regional Department for the Americas will strengthen its activities during the next two years following the **UNWTO key programmatic priorities** approved by the XXIII General Assembly included our Programme of Work 2022 – 2023 with the aim to:

- Foster the development of an inclusive and equitable quality education, promoting at the same time learning opportunities for all, adapting the curricula to the demand from the production system for new skills and fostering investments for educational provisions and access, bearing in mind the importance of guaranteeing a life free of poverty.
- Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
- Promote a structural progressive change towards sustainable development to protect ecosystems and biodiversity.
- Foster strategies for the sustainable use of natural resources and ecosystem services in the region; and *reiterate the call to encourage tourism stakeholders to subscribe the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism.*
- Discuss new partnership models, that strengthen the socio-economic links, reinforce mutual engagement in the promotion, interpretation, protection and safeguarding of culture, encompassing heritage and creative industries, and build up cultural tourism for sustainable development.

### Sources:

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