Tourism and Rural Development

How local experiences build the image and value of a destination

3 June 2022, Yerevan, Armenia

(Venue: Marriott Hotel Yerevan)

Rationale
The World Tourism Organization of the United Nations (UNWTO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) are partnering up in this special side event, to be held back-to-back with the 67th UNWTO Commission for Europe, with the full support of the Government of Armenia, in exploring ways in which tourism can promote the development of rural areas and communities in the post COVID times.

The event will build on

- 2020 UNWTO Year of Tourism and Rural Development and UNWTO extensive work dedicated to gastronomy & wine tourism, tourism as a tool for rural and the Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO initiative
- Local Action initiatives and building rural tourism
- FAO 1,000 Digital Village Initiative, Hand-in-Hand initiative (HiH) and Globally Important Agricultural Heritages Sites (GIAHS)

In this context, the event will address the following core issues:

- How can tourism act as a catalyser for rural development enabling wider economic growth in the countries around the world, for example, by accelerating infrastructure development, connectivity in non-urban areas (water, better roads, etc.) and digital infrastructure.
- New travel trends and opportunities for the development of local experiences linking tourism and agriculture – a focus on gastronomy and wine tourism
- Globally Important Agricultural Heritages Sites (GIAHS), Geographical Indications (GIs) and the tourism value chain.
- How can FAO and UNWTO partner to develop tourism strategies that advance the links between agriculture and tourism to promote rural development.
- What kind of role can local initiatives and participation play in the development.
**Preliminary Programme**

09:00 – 10:00  
**Registration**

10:00 – 10:30  
**Opening Session and Welcome Remarks**
- Vahan Kerobyan, Minister of Economy of the Republic of Armenia
- Raimund Jehle, Regional Programme Leader for Europe and Central Asia, FAO
- Zurab Pololikashvili, Secretary-General, UNWTO

10:30 – 10:45  
**Setting the Scene**

Alessandra Priante, Director, Regional Department for of Europe, UNWTO

10:45 – 11:30  
**High Level Debate: Policies for Tourism and Rural Development**

Moderator: Sandra Carvao, Director, Market Intelligence and Competitiveness, UNWTO
- Arman Khojoyan, Deputy Minister of Economy of the Republic of Armenia
- Sisian Boghossian, Chairperson of the Tourism Committee of the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Armenia
- Sofia Zacharaki, Deputy Minister, Ministry Tourism, Greece
- Bakhtiyor Ibragimov, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Heritage, Uzbekistan
- Annita Demetriadou, Director of Tourism, Deputy Ministry of Tourism, Cyprus
- Richard Kaempf, Head, Tourism Affairs, State Secretariat for Economic Affairs, Switzerland
- Andrea Wiktorin, Ambassador of the EU Delegation in Armenia

11:30 – 11:45  
**Coffee Break**

11:45 – 12:00  
**Keynote – Changing Values, Changing Lifestyles**  
Tripadvisor (TBC)

12.00-13.00  
**Gastronomy and Wine Tourism – New Experiences, New Stories, Higher Value**

Moderator: David Mora, Coordinator of Gastronomy Tourism Master, Basque Culinary Center (BBC)
• Hasmik Kocharyan, Project Manager LEAD Project, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Office in Armenia
• Irfan Baloch, Director, Development Agenda Coordination Division, Regional and National Development Sector, World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)
• Hayarpi Shahinyan, International Projects Expert, Vine and Wine Foundation of Armenia
• Ruzanna Tsaturyan, Researcher at Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography NAS RA, Food Anthropologist
• Nordic Food in Future Tourism (TBC)

13:00 – 13:15  Closing Remarks
13:15 – 14:45  Lunch

14:45 – 16:45  Masterclass - Tourism, Gastronomy and Wine: Learning to Build Innovative Local Products

David Mora, Coordinator of Gastronomy Tourism Master, Basque Culinary Center (BBC)

Inspired by the BCC Master on Gastronomy Tourism, this Masterclass will take participants through the key steps in developing innovative local products pairing gastronomy and wine.

Interactive in nature it will provide all those joining with new tools and inspiration for developing new and innovative products that add value and raise visitors’ satisfaction and positive experiences.

16:45 – 17:00  Closing Remarks