

Jeddah Call to Action: UNWTO Sets Path Towards New Tourism Governance

Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 9 June 2022 - *Public and private leaders have been called on to unite behind the Jeddah Call to Action, a commitment to align with UNWTO's approach to rethink tourism governance at every level to keep adapting to the challenges faced by tourism as a global driver for recovery.*

On the back of the 116th session of its Executive Council, held in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, UNWTO set down a marker for the future of global tourism. With the pandemic having showed the systemic vulnerabilities of the sector, the United Nations specialized agency called for the construction of a new and reimagined system of governance and financing with the aim of building resilience against future shocks while also making tourism more sustainable.

Governance and visibility

In Jeddah, UNWTO continued with its tradition of complementing the important deliberations of its Executive Council with an open discussion on the biggest challenges and opportunities for the sector. The Forum "Tourism Futures – New Governance and Advocacy", featured two distinct sessions - "Towards a New Tourism Governance" and "Raising Tourism's Visibility" outside of the sector.

"Now is the time to think big", said the UNWTO Secretary-General welcoming delegates and speakers. Zurab Pololikashvili stressed the need to "realize tourism's unique potential to drive recovery, provide opportunity and build resilience, through better and stronger governance and focusing on jobs, training and education".

His Excellency Ahmed Al Khateeb, Minister of Tourism for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, commented: "We cannot recover backwards. Now is the time to capitalize on this heightened recognition and to position tourism as an essential pillar of transformation, development and opportunity." The Minister also reiterated the Kingdom's plans to invest US\$100 million in training 100,000 young tourism workers.

Diverse voices around a shared goal

Illustrating the diversity of UNWTO's Membership, the high-level Thematic Debate featured contributions from Ahmed bin Aqil Al Khateeb, Minister of Tourism Saudi Arabia, Siandou Fofana, Minister of Tourism and Recreation Côte d'Ivoire, Carlos

Peguero, Deputy Minister of Tourism, Dominican Republic, Tomohiro Kaneko, Vice Commissioner of the Japanese Tourism Agency, Najib Balala, Minister of Tourism of Kenya, Sofia Zacharaki, Deputy Minister of Tourism, Greece, and Tonči Glavina, State Secretary at the Ministry of Tourism and Sport, Croatia.

Similarly highlighting the broadness of the sector and UNWTO's reach of influence, the Ministers were joined by high-level representatives from business, destinations, media and communications, namely from Euronews, PRM Global, Interbrand, Netcom, Amadeus and the Diriyah Gate Development Authority (DGGA). Referencing the shared desire to get tourism moving again, Jerry Inzerillo, CEO of the DGDA, noted, "We may not share the same ideology, we may not share the same theology, but we share the same biology", highlighting a universal desire to travel and connect with other cultures.

Providing the perspective from the media, Ruth Wright, Head of Tourism and Lifestyle Verticals at Euronews stressed that viewers still demand certainty as the "perception amongst travellers is definitely still that travel is difficult and stressful." As a result, content focused on rules and regulations remains relevant, even as human-led tourism stories becomes more popular. "Travellers are yearning to get back to the day when travel was fun, carefree and full of unexpected surprises," she added.

From Jeddah to the world

With the discussions emphasizing the importance of taking a whole-government approach to tourism policy, with finance and interior ministries also part of the sector's governance, Secretary-General Pololikashvili urged participants and all UNWTO Executive Council members advance this important agenda for positive change.

The Jeddah Call to Action recognizes the vital need for more and better tourism governance, with targeted investments and a focus on building resilience, advancing sustainability and expanding education and training. It forms part of UNWTO's wider work ensuring the recognition of tourism reflects the sector's unique social and economic importance, including through making it a key part of the work of the United Nations and securing the cooperation of governments, international organizations and financial institutions.

Related Links

[Turning point for tourism: UNWTO Executive Council looks beyond recovery](#)

[Executive Council – 116th Session](#)