UNWTO Commission for East Asia & the Pacific
UNWTO Commission for South Asia
Thirty-fourth Joint Meeting
Item 5 of the provisional agenda

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UNWTO IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC
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UNWTO’s activities in Asia and the Pacific region since the 33rd CAP-CSA Joint Meeting held in September 2021, have been carried out within the context of the post-pandemic period. This has been characterised by the roll-out of vaccinations, gradual improvement in the COVID-19 infection cases and tentative attempts by Member States to reopen their borders to international tourism.

But the resurgence of variants of the virus in January 2022 caused some countries – particularly those in Asia and the Pacific region to increase or re-introduce travel restrictions, resulting in the largest decrease in international arrivals over 2019 (-93%). And as the pandemic has brought about a readjustment of the format of our programme of work, some of our activities have been delivered virtually, others in a hybrid manner and a few others in person.

This document is a summary of these activities in the region from October 2021 to May 2022. The first part focuses on the activities carried out by the UNWTO Secretariat, and the second part covers those of the UNWTO Regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific (RSOAP) in Nara, Japan.

PART I: UNWTO EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

15th Executive Training Programme (Hybrid, Maldives, 5-8 October 2021)

The 15th Asia-Pacific Executive Training Programme on Tourism Policy and Strategy was organized by the UNWTO in a hybrid format for the first time in the Maldives with the sponsorship of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of the Republic of Korea.

The theme for this 15th edition of the Training Programme was Domestic Tourism as a National and International Long-term Tourism Strategy – a pressing topic for destinations across the globe currently taking tentative steps to restart tourism.

Its overall objectives were to deepen participants’ understanding of the effects of the spread of COVID-19 on domestic tourism; how to foster domestic tourism to help drive economic recovery in destinations; and how tourism leaders can stimulate domestic demand and expand supply for services in accordance with the SDGs.

It was attended by 53 representatives from 25 Member States, 11 of whom attended in person.

15th UNWTO/PATA Forum on Tourism Trends and Outlook (Hybrid, Guilin, China,15-17 October 2021)

The 15th UNWTO/PATA Forum on Tourism Trends and Outlook was organized in collaboration with Hong Kong Polytechnic University and Guilin Municipal Tourism Bureau under the theme of Tourism for Rural Development.

Within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Forum aimed at analysing the challenges and opportunities facing the tourism industry with a focus on tourism fostering rural development; exchanging views on and preparing for the transition and transformation of tourism into a more sustainable, resilient and ethical growth; and sharing best practices and strategies on tourism recovery with an emphasis on the promotion of domestic travel, staycation and community-based tourism.
**Online Bilateral Meeting with Timor-Leste (27 October 2021)**

Within the framework of the pandemic, UNWTO has been organising a series of online bilateral meetings with particularly Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to provide them with a platform for discussions on their challenges and to make recommendations to mitigate the impact of the crisis. This is part of the Organization’s efforts to support its members to navigate the post-pandemic period and to restart tourism.

Six of these online bilateral meetings took place during the first semester of 2021 with Bangladesh, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Pakistan, Samoa and Sri Lanka on topics including product development and marketing strategy, tourism investment, UNWTO COVID-19 tourism recovery technical assistance package, domestic tourism, etc. The bilateral meeting with Timor-Leste focused on community tourism development and basic infrastructure development in tourism.

**UNWTO Regional Conference on the Empowerment of Women in Tourism in Asia and the Pacific (Hybrid, 17-18 November 2021)**

The UNWTO Regional Conference on the Empowerment of Women in Tourism in Asia and the Pacific was organized jointly with the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture of Malaysia. It was the first event on the topic organized by UNWTO in the region.

The 2 main aims of this regional conference were to evaluate the extent to which COVID-19 has contributed to worsening the socio-economic situation of women among the tourism workforce in the Asia and the Pacific region; and to facilitate a policy dialogue to raise awareness and shape better policies that create opportunities for women to benefit from tourism development.

It brought together more than 500 key virtual participants in addition to some 100 local in-person stakeholders including UNWTO experts, government policymakers, UN Women representatives, high-level representatives of women’s associations and NGOs, as well as leading academics in tourism in the region.

**12th IFTM-UNWTO Training Programme (Virtual, 6, 7 & 9 December 2021)**

The 12th edition of IFTM was delivered online by Macao Institute for Tourism Studies (IFTM) in collaboration with UNWTO, under the theme of *Solutions for Sustainable Tourism Development and Destination Branding in Times of Crisis and Beyond*. It was aimed at addressing and examining both the short and long-term solutions to the COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on tourism.

Over a 3-day period and under 3 different topics including sustainable tourism development, strategic destination marketing and destination branding, the training programme was specifically designed for decision-makers in tourism ministries and administrations of ASEAN countries, namely: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam.

**UNWTO Workshop on Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism for Asia and the Pacific (Virtual, 14 December 2021 & 29 March 2022)**

The UNWTO Workshop on Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism for Asia and the Pacific was organized in collaboration with the Philippines Department of Tourism and with the support of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of the Republic of Korea.

The Workshop was aimed at providing a forum for participants to gain a deeper understanding of the international effort towards the Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism (SF-
MST); discussing strategies on strengthening the data support for the compilation of MST indicators; sharing good practices on implementing SF-MST; and raising awareness of the importance of using MST indicators for policy development and the management and promotion of tourism.

It drew participants from National Tourism Offices (NTOs) and National Statistical Offices (NSOs) of the participating countries from Asia and the Pacific, and local officials and industry stakeholders from the Philippines.

13th IFTM-UNWTO Training Programme (Virtual, 24-26 May 2022)

Macao Institute for Tourism Studies (IFTM) organized the 13th edition of this training programme in collaboration with UNWTO. The theme centred on Capacity-building for Sustainable Tourism through Festivals and Events. The focus on these 2 tourism resources is because they constitute a tourism product that can enrich and diversify a destination’s tourism portfolio, thereby creating a unique destination proposition.

And because they encompass a wide spectrum of typologies from cultural festivities and traditional celebrations to sporting events and shopping bonanzas, festivals and events offer an invaluable alternative to tourists, particularly within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic when international travel has been restricted, and destinations are striving to keep their tourism sectors afloat through domestic spending.

Discussions revolved around festivals and events as tourism products; sports events in destinations; and benefits of festivals and events to destinations, drawing the participation of the majority of UNWTO Members from Asia and the Pacific region.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECTS

Women Empowerment and Tourism Recovery Project in Timor-Leste (November 2021 to June 2023)

UNWTO in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism, Commerce and Industry of Timor-Leste and Enhanced Integrated Framework Partners is implementing Women Empowerment and Tourism Recovery Project in Timor-Leste.

The project aims to build capacities and improve the enabling environment for women empowerment in Timor-Leste during the COVID-19 tourism recovery process. This will be achieved through the identification of opportunities, improvement in work conditions; building the capacities of women tourism entrepreneurs and employees in order to lay a sound basis for further business and career development in the tourism sector within the framework of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Technical Assistance on Tourism Impact Assessment of the X-press Pearl Disaster (January-May 2022)

In the aftermath of a fire outbreak onboard cargo ship MV X-Press Pearl carrying containers of various chemicals which led to the pollution of Sri Lanka’s seas and coastline, the Government of Sri Lanka sought UNWTO’s technical assistance to determine the impact of the X-Press Pearl disaster on tourism in Sri Lanka.

To respond to this request, UNWTO worked with Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority with two key objectives: to provide an estimate of the impact of the X-Press Pearl disaster on tourism by developing
an estimate of the range of impact of this disaster on tourism in monetary terms; and to assess the use of Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism (MST) Statistical Framework in the impact analysis. This was achieved through the preparation of a roadmap for the implementation of the MST Statistical Framework within Sri Lanka, and the provision of recommendations on what can be done in the future to better measure the impact of disasters (or pressures) on tourism.

**Provincial Tourism Master Plan for Hubei Province China (2022-2024)**

Upon a request from the Provincial Government of Hubei, UNWTO is carrying out a tourism master plan project to provide greater direction for tourism planning in the framework of COVID-19 Tourism recovery in Hubei Province.

The fields to be covered include marketing and positioning, product planning and management, sustainable tourism development, and spatial planning. The development of the Plan will also cover a number of interventions such as the assessment of tourism products from an international standard perspective; the identification of more niche and higher end markets to target; and co-ordination with a wider range of stakeholders in terms of investment and management among others.


The Government of Sri Lanka requested UNWTO to provide technical assistance on developing Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) for Sri Lanka to improve and strengthen the national tourism statistical system and compilation of the TSA tables.

Owing to the pandemic, project activities have been undertaken online including consultations with the Steering Committee to review the current status of tourism and tourism-related data which is available for the compilation of a TSA; identification of gaps and holding online discussions with the Steering Committee on how the gaps can be addressed; and providing online training and technical assistance in the design and implementation of the various surveys which need to be undertaken so as to obtain primary data to address the data gaps identified.

In December 2021, UNWTO submitted to the Government of Sri Lanka a Mid-term Progress report which summarises the various components of the project to be implemented in two phases of one-year duration each.

**PUBLICATIONS**

**Regional Study on the Empowerment of Women in Tourism in Asia and the Pacific**

Although tourism has provided women with opportunities for empowerment, women’s involvement in tourism has often been limited to low paid jobs in customer service, care and informal work, as well as low management positions. This was exacerbated during and in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This Regional Report is a sequel to the conclusions and recommendations of the UNWTO Regional Conference on the Empowerment of Women in Tourism in Asia and the Pacific which was held in Kuala Lumpur in November 2021. It also derives from the *Global Report on Women in Tourism - Second Edition* (Global Report II) and complements the *Regional Report on Women in Tourism in the Middle East*.

The report has thus been structured with the same conceptual framework and under the same five thematic areas of the above-mentioned reports in its examination of women in tourism in Asia and the
Pacific. The five thematic areas are: employment; entrepreneurship; education and training; leadership, policy and decision-making; and community and civil society.

UNWTO’S PARTICIPATION IN EVENTS IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC REGION

In addition to the events organized by UNWTO in the region during / after the pandemic, officials from the Secretariat have been involved in the following meetings virtually or in person:

- FAO Regional Webinar on Eco/Agri-tourism in the Asia-Pacific region (14 October 2021)
- ITOP International Policy Seminar (Jeju, Republic of Korea 4-5 November 2021) (in-person participation)
- Pacific Island Tourism Research Symposium (Online, SPTO, 30 November – 01 December 2021)
- ICCA (International Congress and Convention Association) Thought Leadership Session: Webinar on the future of business events travel and collaborations: working together to keep our destinations open for business (16 December 2021)
- ASEAN Tourism Forum 2022, (Preah Sihanouk Province, Cambodia, 16-22 January 2022) (in-person participation)
- 2022 Asian Mountain Tourism Promotion Conference (online, Guizhou, China, 22 March 2022)
- WTTC Global Summit (Hybrid, Manila, the Philippines, 20-22 April 2022) (in-person participation)

UPCOMING EVENTS

- World Tourism Industry Conference 2022 (Seoul and Ulsan, Republic of Korea, 23-26 June 2022)
- 5th Tourism EXPO Japan Ministerial Roundtable in collaboration with UNWTO (Tokyo, Japan, 22 September 2022)
- G20 Tourism Ministers Meeting (Bali, Indonesia, 26 September 2022)
- World Tourism Day Celebration (Bali, Indonesia, 27 September 2022)
- World Tourism Conference 2022 (Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia, 28-30 November)
- 7th UNWTO World Forum on Gastronomy Tourism (Nara, Japan, 12-15 December 2022)
- 16th UNWTO Asia/Pacific Executive Training Programme on Tourism Policy and Strategy (Republic of Korea, TBC)
- 14th IFTM-UNWTO Training Programme (Macao, China, December 2022)
- 16th UNWTO/PATA Forum on Tourism Trends and Outlook (Guilin, China, TBC)
- Global Tourism Economy Forum (Online, Macao, China, dates TBC)
- UN Biodiversity Conference (CBD COP 15) (Kunming, China, TBC)
- UNWTO Regional Workshop on Measuring Tourism: TSA and MST in South Asia (TBC)
Symposium on Promoting Sustainable Destination Management though Tourism (Hybrid, Tokyo, 8 December 2021)
The symposium was held to promote the Handbook on Evidence Based Sustainable Tourism Management and was attended by 58 on-site participants and 714 online participants. The Handbook was published in Japanese and officially launched in March 2022.

ONGOING/UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

UNWTO Tourism Stories Pacific: Resilience through Crisis (to be launched in the 3rd quarter of 2022)
The project aimed to showcase stories of people of the Pacific working in tourism who are examples of resiliency during the COVID-19 pandemic. The project resulted in an Ebook and videos featuring 7 stories from Pacific tourism heroes of Fiji, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and Kiribati.

Vietnam Project for Sustainable Tourism Destination Management
The project aims to promote sustainable regional management through tourism in Vietnam. Introductory guidebooks will be produced for the workshop (in the 3rd quarter of 2022) based on the Handbook on Evidence Based Sustainable Tourism Management in preparation for the workshop to be implemented before March 2023.

A publication on UNWTO/APTEC research on Sustainable Tourism Product Development Opportunities in the Pacific Islands (to be launched in the 3rd quarter of 2022)
This research aims to provide knowledge, recommendations and case studies on synergies between tourism growth and tourism product development in the Pacific islands. This is the first UNWTO research on the Pacific Island Countries, featuring 11 destinations with good practices and 10 recommendations for the region.

Webinar on Sustainable Tourism Product Development Opportunities in the Pacific Islands, collaborating with PIC (Pacific Islands Center) (to be held in the 3rd or 4th quarter of 2022)
The seminar will be held to promote the outcomes of UNWTO/APTEC research on Sustainable Tourism Product Development Opportunities in the Pacific Islands.

7th UNWTO World Forum on Gastronomy Tourism (Nara, Japan, 13-15 December 2022)
UNWTO, Japan Tourism Agency (JTA) and Nara prefecture will organize the 7th UNWTO World Forum on Gastronomy Tourism in Nara, Japan. RSOAP is already supporting the organizers by participating in the organizing committee meetings. As a side event, RSOAP and JTA will organize a symposium relevant to the above main forum.

4th Future Tourism Leaders Workshop in Kyoto (to be held in the 1st quarter of 2023)
The workshop will be organized with UNWTO Affiliate member, Kyoto University of Foreign Studies and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and will focus on sustainable tourism. The target audience will be undergraduate and graduate students from Japanese Universities and beyond, as well as young professionals interested in tourism.