

Tourism Commits to Water Action Agenda at 2023 UN Water Conference

New York, U.S.A, 23 March 2023 – *UNWTO emphasized tourism's commitment to contributing to the acceleration of SDG6 on Water and Sanitation.*

At the United Nations 2023 Water Conference, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) provided substantial inputs, underscoring the role of tourism in safeguarding water resources and contributing to the acceleration of Sustainable Development Goal 6, to “Ensure access to water and sanitation for all”, and to the wider 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Emphasising the sector-wide determination to do more, UNWTO joined tourism stakeholders in committing to the Water Action Agenda, a major outcome document of the UN 2023 Water Conference and collection of all water-related voluntary commitments.

In New York, UNWTO was joined by the Government of Austria to host a special high-level side event on “Tourism and Water: Challenges and Opportunities”. Bringing together the partners of the recently-launched Alliance for a Nature Positive Approach to Tourism, UNWTO, the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) and the Sustainable Hospitality Alliance (SHA), the event outlined the tourism sector’s significant water footprint and its reliance on clean and reliable oceans and water supplies. “Tourism and Water: Challenges and Opportunities” noted the sector’s impact on water, including negative impacts from consumption and wastage as well as pollution, while underscoring the progress being made in advancing action plans to ensure sustainable water management at all levels of the tourism value chain.

Participants were provided with an overview of the initiatives being undertaken by UNWTO and partners under the umbrella of the One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme, most notably the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism, the Global Tourism Plastics Initiative and the Global Roadmap for Food Waste Reduction in Tourism, emphasizing the interconnectedness of the challenges of climate change, pollution and water scarcity and the requirement of timely and regular monitoring efforts.

Towards harmonized sustainability data

A global effort is underway towards a Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism to fill the gap for harmonized data at international, national and subnational levels, with Austria chairing the UNWTO Expert Group leading this process. UNWTO Executive Director, Ms. Zoritsa Urosevic, said “Water permeates all of tourism activity. As the world meets ever-complex challenges, we must not lose sight that we still have common goals. We need harmonized data to ensure that tourism action on the ground really responds to our shared vision”. Against this backdrop, the [International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories \(INSTO\)](#), was presented as leading the way in assessing the progress being made at the destination level as well as the challenges still to be overcome, including sourcing better data.

Mr. Norbert Totschnig, Federal Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Regions and Water Management of Austria highlighted that “tourism can not only bring prosperity, but it can also be a driver to improve water quality and availability in regions. Efforts are required to manage water efficiently, to keep our rivers, lakes and the sea clean”. Also during the side event, WTTC presented new data on global and national water consumption, while the Sustainable Hospitality Alliance presented its water stewardship initiatives, including the Hotel Water Measurement Initiative, and the updated Destination Water Risk Index.

Related Links

[UN 2023 Water Conference](#)

[Water Action Agenda](#)

[UNWTO SDGs](#)

[One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme](#)

[UNWTO Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism](#)

[UNWTO International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories](#)

[World Travel and Tourism Council](#)

[Sustainable Hospitality Alliance](#)