

Agenda item 5

**Status report on the establishment of  
UNWTO Regional and Thematic Offices**

CE/118/5  
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**Executive summary**

Negotiations with the Governments of Argentina, Brazil and Morocco on the conclusion of host country agreements on the establishment of Regional Offices, as approved by the 115th session of the Executive Council subject to the ratification of the General Assembly, are ongoing.

To broadly ensure the further consultative process and discussion as requested by the Executive Council in its decision 8(CXVII), the Secretariat proposes the creation of a special Working Group, subsidiary to the Executive Council and composed of Member States, to report to the 119th session of the Executive Council.

**DRAFT DECISION<sup>1</sup>**

**Agenda item 5**

Status report on the establishment of  
UNWTO Regional and Thematic Offices  
(document CE/118/5)

*The Executive Council,*

*Having examined* the report on the status of the establishment of Regional and Thematic Offices,

1. *Thanks* the Members that have provided their comments on the legal and operational framework for the establishment of the Regional and Thematic Offices;
2. *Decides* to establish a Working Group, composed of Member States and supported by the Secretariat, that will further discuss the input received and provide a progress report to the next session of the Executive Council and for consideration by the 25th session of the General Assembly; and
3. *Welcomes* the progress on the establishment of Regional Offices in Argentina, Brazil and Morocco.

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<sup>1</sup>This is a draft decision. For the final decision adopted by the Council, please refer to the Decisions document issued at the end of the session.

## I. Legal and operational framework for the establishment of UNWTO Regional and Thematic Offices

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1. The 117th session of the UNWTO Executive Council held in Marrakesh, Morocco, on 24 November 2022 requested the Secretary-General through decision 8(CXVII):
  - (a) To ensure a further consultative process by including the subject for discussion in the agendas of the six UNWTO Commission meetings to be held in 2023 (with all the feedback received); and
  - (b) To submit the amended version of the document to the 118th session of the UNWTO Executive Council to be held in 2023 in Dominican Republic.
2. Given that all the Regional Commission Meetings are scheduled to take place in June and July this year after the 118th session of the Executive Council, it has not been possible to include the subject for discussion in the agendas of the Commission meetings and to submit an amended version of the document.
3. In consultation with the Members of the different Commissions and in agreement with the Commission Chairs, at the beginning of April, the Secretariat, through the Regional Departments, sent a request to the Member States for their extensive feedback on the report.
4. As of the date of this document, only the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Kingdom of Morocco and the People's Republic of China have provided their feedback on the document. The comments received are mainly of a legal nature related to the provision of privileges and immunities, various aspects of rules and procedures, and human resources issues.
5. In addition, the comments include suggestions regarding thematic areas within the scope of work of the regional and thematic offices, their creation and procedure for final approval, as well as the consultation process with the Member States, particularly the Regional Commission meetings. A few other Member States have expressed readiness to provide substantive feedback within an extended deadline.
6. To broadly ensure further consultative process and discussion as requested by the Executive Council in its decision 8(CXVII), the Secretariat proposes the creation of a special Working Group subsidiary to the Executive Council composed of Member States, supported by the Secretariat, that will further discuss and present a progress report to the 119th session of the Executive Council, for its consideration by the 25th session of the UNWTO General Assembly.
7. To this effect and upon approval of such proposal by the Council, the Secretariat will invite all Member States to indicate their interest in participating in the Working Group and to designate their representatives in the Working Group.

## II. Progress in the implementation of Executive Council decision 5(CXV)

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8. The 115th session of the Executive Council, in its [decision 5\(CXV\)](#), approved, subject to the ratification of the General Assembly, the establishment of Regional Offices in Brazil, Morocco and Argentina provided that they are in compliance with the legal and operational framework governing Regional and Thematic Offices adopted by the General Assembly through resolution 740(XXIV) (hereinafter "the Framework Governing UNWTO Offices").
9. Negotiations with the Governments of Argentina, Brazil and Morocco on the corresponding host country agreements on the establishment of UNWTO Regional Offices in the respective territories of these Member States are ongoing.
10. The Secretariat will continue reporting to the Council on the progress made on the drafting and negotiation process of the host country agreements for Regional Offices pursuant to decision 5(CXV).

### III. Status of the Regional Office in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

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11. As indicated in [CE/116/4\(a\)](#), pursuant to the agreement signed between UNWTO and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on the opening of a Regional Office in the Middle East, the Organization undertook an evaluation of the human resources requirements for the Regional Office.
12. Since its opening, 21 members of personnel have been deployed to the Regional Office, providing daily support to the activities in matters pertaining to the Programme of Work and operations, and administration, as follows:
  - (a) 2 staff members were deployed in May and September 2021;
  - (b) 3 staff members were deployed between June and July 2022;
  - (c) 16 service contract holders and experts have been gradually deployed between May 2022 and May 2023.
13. Additional personnel will be deployed in the shortest term to support the implementation of the Programme of Work, including 1 staff member, 4 service contract holders and the Director of the Regional Office who will lead institutional relations and activities in the region, and oversee the day-to-day management of the operations of the Regional Office to continue to foster the vision and leadership required to implement its mandate.
14. Following a comprehensive review, the Organization has secured the appropriate application of policies at the Regional Office, particularly in the areas of salaries and entitlements, medical and accident insurance, working hours and public holidays, learning and development, and health and well-being, among others. The Organization actively participates in various high-level working groups focused at discussing the conditions of service and other relevant matters for Riyadh-based personnel, including to ensure the application of privileges and immunities to all personnel deployed to the Regional Office.
15. The Organization has also engaged in various outreach programmes related to talent development, particularly aimed at young graduates.
16. Member States are invited to avail of the Official on Loan and Junior Professional Officer mechanisms, to ensure additional human resources for the Regional Office, particularly in view of the rising demands and limited resources.

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