The hiatus in international travel gave us the opportunity to rethink tourism. This time of reflection showed that the sector needs to put sustainability, peace, innovation, quality jobs and the empowerment of women and youth at the forefront. Likewise, tourism reached and managed to maintain a prominent editorial presence in general media outlets and in leading information platforms around the world. These priorities, framed in the current digital environment, also require rethinking how the sector communicates.

“New Narratives in Tourism” will show how tourism adapts its image, messages and communication channels to the demands of an audience that is more technological, demanding and committed. The event provides a platform for governments, tourism authorities and private entities to exchange experiences and ideas on how communication can convey the message of a more innovative, sustainable and people-centred tourism sector, through the integration of novel tools and concepts.

Leading experts from the field of communication will present participants with the keys to redesigning their brands and adapting their image to ensure their relevance in the world of digital communication, which in turn impacts everything from consumer perception, the private sector and international governance.

**Background**

More than 900 million tourists made international trips in 2022—twice as many as in 2021. All regions of the world experienced increases and tourism is enjoying more public, political and media recognition than ever before. In May last year, the United Nations General Assembly held for the first time in its history a debate dedicated to tourism, highlighting its critical role for economic recovery and inclusive growth. In 2023, based on a UN resolution supported by more than 100 countries, consideration will be given to introducing sector-related issues into annual debates or thematic sessions of the UN General Assembly.
Tourism is also high on the agenda of governments and international organizations. In addition, the general public is increasingly aware that the impact of the travel sector goes far beyond being a mere recreational or cultural activity. Increasingly, people are recognizing its importance as a generator of decent jobs and a creator of opportunities.

Objectives and expected results

With its content, debates and practical examples, the Thematic Session aims to be a useful tool for tourism authorities and professionals so that their communication strategies can show the sector’s evolution towards resilience and solidarity, and to gain recognition of the contribution of these initiatives towards a more sustainable and inclusive economy. The event will provide keys to solving some of the issues shared by many actors in the sector, including:

• How to ensure relevant editorial positioning of tourism;

• What is needed for tourism to be talked about outside the realm of travel;

• How to redesign a destination’s image to reflect the evolution towards sustainable and innovative initiatives;

• What tools are offered by the market for users to convey their commitment to tourism for development; and

• How to update a destination’s image without sacrificing its essence, while at the same time incorporating new priorities.