UNWTO Welcomes Members of the Americas to Ecuador

Quito, Ecuador, 28 June 2023 - Tourism leaders from across the Americas committed to a more ethical, inclusive tourism as the sector bounces back to drive economic recovery across the region. The 68th meeting of the UNWTO Regional Commission for the Americas brought together high-level delegations from 20 countries.

The meeting saw participants work together around shared priorities, with a focus on jobs and education, boosting investment in the sector and advancing sustainability and climate action efforts.

The Americas: Strong demand drives tourism recovery

According to UNWTO data, tourism in the Americas has experienced rapid recovery from the impacts of the pandemic.

- International arrivals to destinations across the Americas reached 86% of pre-pandemic levels at the end of the first quarter of 2023. International seat capacity on planes in the region is also close to pre-pandemic levels, at 97%.

- Several destinations in the region are already above pre-pandemic levels in terms of international arrivals, including Saint Maarten (+51%), El Salvador (+26%), Colombia (+18%), the Virgin Islands and the United States (+17%), Guatemala (+14%), Honduras (+13%) and the Dominican Republic (+11%).

- Strong demand from the United States outbound market has been key to driving recovery.

UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili said: “For the Americas, tourism's recovery has been rapid and remarkable. Our Regional Commission meeting has made clear a shared commitment to make the most of this recovery by building a stronger, more resilient and more sustainable sector that delivers real benefits for many millions of people right across the region.”
High-Level Support as Regional Commission Meets

On the eve of the Regional Commission meeting, UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili met with the President of Ecuador, Guillermo Lasso, reflecting his Government's strong support for tourism as a key pillar of sustainable economic development, both in the country and across the region. Also participating in the Commission meeting were Ministers and Vice-Ministers of Tourism from 15 countries. Key achievements of the Commission Meeting included:

- **Legal Protection for Tourists:** Chile, Costa Rica, Haiti and Honduras all announced they will adhere to the UNWTO International Code for the Protection of Tourists. This landmark legal first is designed to provide comprehensive and harmonized legal protection for tourists, thereby boosting confidence in travel and making the responsibilities of different tourism stakeholders more transparent. From the region, Ecuador, Guatemala, Paraguay and Uruguay have already adhered to the Code.

- **Tourism Law:** UNWTO announced plans to establish a first UNWTO Observatory on Tourism Law for Latin America and the Caribbean

- **Tourism Education and Youth Empowerment:** Member States were updated on UNWTO’s progress in one of its priority areas, with achievements in the region including UNWTO Academy courses held in Argentina and Mexico, collaboration on specialist tourism courses with the Universidad Anáhuac in Mexico.

- **Tourism Investments:** UNWTO has produced Investments Guides for Dominican Republic, Colombia and Paraguay, with seven more focused on countries in the region set to follow. In Quito, UNWTO also hosted a special Investments Seminar and announced the next step in its collaboration with CAF, the Investment Bank of Latin America.

- **Collaboration:** UNWTO signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Honduras around tourism for sustainable development.

Looking Ahead

In line with UNWTO’s statutory obligations, Members from the Americas agreed:

- **Argentina and Paraguay** will serve as Vice-Presidents for the UNWTO General Assembly, set to be held in October.

- The **Dominican Republic** will serve as President of the Regional Commission for the Americas for 2023-2025. **Argentina and Paraguay** will serve as Vice-Presidents for the same period.

- **Colombia and Jamaica** will serve on the UNWTO Executive Council for 2023-2027.

- The 69th Regional Commission meeting will be held in **Cuba** in 2024. **Peru** will then host the 70th meeting in 2025.
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UNWTO Regional Department for the Americas

68th Meeting of the UNWTO Regional Commission for the Americas

Tourism Doing Business - Business Investing