Executive summary

The report presents all the developments after the 24th session of the General Assembly. It underlines the progress reached and existing challenges that are essential for ensuring systematic and coherent mechanisms of frameworks for the establishment of UNWTO Regional and Thematic Offices.

The paper gives a comprehensive overview of the implementation of the decisions taken at the 116th, 117th, and 118th sessions of the Executive Council and more broadly focuses on the actions undertaken by the UNWTO Secretariat as a follow-up to the 118th session of the Executive Council held in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, on 17 May 2023.

Action by the General Assembly

DRAFT RESOLUTION¹

The General Assembly,

Having examined the progress report on the establishment of UNWTO Regional and Thematic Offices,

1. Takes note of all the progress achieved after the 24th session of the General Assembly and thanks the Secretary-General for all the contributions;

2. Commends the Secretariats active role in improving legal and operational framework for the establishment of UNWTO Regional and Thematic Offices on the basis of the indications provided by the Assembly and elaborating precise distinctions between the functional models of regional and thematic offices as well as all the required proceedings for the consultative and approval process;

3. Appreciates the timely actions undertaken by the Secretariat in finalizing the establishment of the Working Group composed of Member States aiming at supporting the Executive Council in the improvement of the legal and operational framework on the selection and establishment of Regional and Thematic Offices on the basis of the indications provided by the Assembly;

¹ This is a draft resolution. For the final resolution adopted by the Assembly, please refer to the Resolutions document issued at the end of the session.
4. Encourages the Working Group to actively work towards the improvement of the legal and operational framework on the basis of consensus and submit to the 26th session of the General Assembly a substantial progress report;

5. Welcomes all efforts done by the Secretariat in holding discussions and consultations with Member States interested in hosting Regional and Thematic Offices and urges the Secretary-General to continue the ongoing negotiation processes;

6. Reiterates the utmost importance of entirely complying with the legal and operational framework adopted by the General Assembly through resolution 740(XXIV) and with the requirements of the host country agreement, while extensively considering the policies and practices of the United Nations system in case of challenges during the discussion phase between the Secretariat and the Member States related to the establishment of UNWTO Regional and Thematic Offices.

7. Encourages the Secretariat to pursue the consultative and negotiation processes with Argentina, Brazil and Morocco on the establishment of UNWTO Regional Offices and to periodically report any progress made to the Executive Council;

8. Takes note of a proposal of the Government of Uzbekistan (letter dated 23 June 2023) on establishing a “Tourism on the Silk Road” UNWTO Thematic Office in Samarkand;

9. Urges the authorities and the UNWTO Secretariat to complete all the procedures required by resolution 740(XXIV) and by the Executive Council for the approval of the proposal; and

10. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the Executive Council on any developments so that the Council may take any decisions as appropriate, provided that Uzbekistan complies with the legal and operational framework and subject to the ratification of the General Assembly.
I. Key points of progress and development

1. The 24th session of the General Assembly adopted the legal and operational framework for the selection and establishment of Regional/Technical/Thematic Offices.

2. Upon the request of the General Assembly, the Secretariat presented at the 116th session of the Executive Council the improved framework of Regional Offices to address the indications provided by the Assembly; however, the Council requested the Secretariat to further improve the framework in consultation with the Executive Council members. Though the report defined the difference between regional and thematic offices, a few Member States expressed concern about the significance of making clear distinctions of the scope of work of the Offices and the way they should be administered.

3. The 117th session of the Executive Council examined the substantial improvement of the paper. According to the improved version, the report precisely categorizes legal, operational, financial, political and human resources aspects for the establishment of Regional and Thematic Offices. It not only makes a clear distinction between the types of Offices in terms of geographical coverage and functionalities but also sets transparent procedures for the establishment of Offices. These rigorous and transparent procedures employ different phases of consultation and decision-making by the Governing Bodies and their subsidiary organs.

4. In continuation of the decision of the 118th session of the Executive Council, the Secretariat successfully finalized the steps for the establishment of the Working Group composed of Member States aiming at supporting the Executive Council in the improvement of legal and operational framework on the selection and establishment of Regional and Thematic Offices.

5. As of the report’s issuance date, 35 Member States presented their candidatures for the Working Group, namely 6 from Africa, 6 from the Americas, 6 from Asia and the Pacific, 6 from Europe and 11 from the Middle East.

6. The following countries are present in the Working Group by regions: Africa – Benin, Burkina Faso, Morocco, Nigeria, Sudan, United Republic of Tanzania; Americas – Brazil, Colombia, Haiti, Nicaragua, Peru, Uruguay; Asia and the Pacific – Afghanistan, China, Indonesia, Japan, Myanmar, Sri Lanka; Europe – Armenia, Belarus, Lithuania, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Spain; The Middle East – Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates, Yemen.

7. The process on the establishment of Regional Offices in Argentina, Brazil and Morocco is ongoing.

8. The Secretariat received a letter from the Government of Uzbekistan dated 23 June 2023 on their proposal and willingness to establish a “Tourism on the Silk Road” UNWTO Thematic Office in Samarkand.

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