UNWTO Gears Up to Host World’s Top Tourism Authorities at Crucial General Assembly

Madrid, Spain, 10 October 2023 - With one week to go until the start of its 25th General Assembly, sector leaders have joined international organizations in commending UNWTO’s role in guiding tourism through crisis and into recovery and transformation.

High-level delegates and Ministers from more than 150 countries are expected in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, for the 25th session of the General Assembly (18-19 October). Held every two years, the supreme governing body of UNWTO will once again bring Member States from every global region together to debate and advance the Organization’s Programme of Work and address the biggest challenges facing tourism right now.

Leaders Welcome the Assembly

Ahead of the event, key figures from leading international organizations, including from across the United Nations, have expressed their recognition of UNWTO’s role and affirmed their interest in the upcoming General Assembly.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres, says: “Tourism brings progress. As one of the biggest sectors in the global economy, it has great power to bridge cultures, generate new opportunities and promote sustainable development. But tourism is also impacted by interlinked global challenges. I know that we can count on the UN World Tourism Organization to carry this vision forward and together, build a better future, for people and planet.”

Rebeca Grynspan, Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), said: “The significance of tourism as a tool for economic development cannot be overstated... The Member States of UNWTO are admirably working to transform tourism and build a more resilient and sustainable sector. (UNCTAD) will continue to work closely with UNWTO around our shared goals and vision.”

Juan Carlos Salazar, Secretary-General of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) says: “Thanks to new technologies and our shared commitments to innovation, collaboration and entrepreneurship, UNWTO and ICAO will continue to leverage the full potential of global tourism growth to empower young people with high-value jobs and to lead other industry sectors by example, focused on people, planet and prosperity.”
European Commission Vice-President Margaritis Schinas, says: “Tourism in Europe and around the world has rebounded strongly from the devastating effects of COVID-19. However, amidst this discovery we must not forget the lessons of the pandemic nor ignore the global challenges our economies and societies continue to face... there is no better place to do so than the uniquely diverse gathering of global tourism leaders across the public, private, non-profit, and academic sectors, that personify the UNWTO General Assembly.”

Advancing UNWTO Programme of Work

The General Assembly will see Member States discuss debate and approve the UNWTO Programme of Work. UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili will also present his Report to all Members, highlighting how core priorities have been advanced over the past two years, with a special focus on tourism investments, education and innovation.

Within the framework of the General Assembly, UNWTO will also convene several of its key statutory bodies and bring together sector leaders for thematic events focused on its main priorities for the sector right now:

- The **UNWTO Executive Council** will meet for its 119th (17 October) and 120th (20 October) sessions. The Council’s task is to take all necessary measures, in consultation with the Secretary-General, for the implementation of its own decisions and recommendations of the Assembly and report thereon to the Assembly.

- The **UNWTO Regional Commission for Europe** (16 October) will welcome Member States from the world’s top regional destination by international arrival numbers, placing the focus on innovation, jobs and youth empowerment.

- The **Plenary of Affiliate Members** (16 October) will bring together representatives from the private sector, civil society and academia.

- The **Investment Forum** (17 October) and **Education Forum** (19 October) will feature high-level dialogue around key UNWTO priorities, strengthening public-private partnerships around shared goals.

- UNWTO’s **Best Tourism Villages 2023** will be named in Samarkand, highlighting the best examples of tourism for rural development.

Related Links

25th Session of the UNWTO General Assembly