UNWTO in Brazil to Begin Work on First Regional Office for the Americas

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 18 December 2023 - UNWTO has continued to scale up its support for its Members across the Americas, with plans for a first Regional Office for the region advanced during an official visit to Brazil.

Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili led the UNWTO delegation to Rio de Janeiro and Brasilia (13-17 December), recognizing Brazil’s strong support and commitment to tourism for development. In Brazil, Secretary-General Pololikashvili enjoyed bilateral meetings with President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and with the country’s Minister of Tourism Celso Sabino.

First UNWTO Office for the Americas

At the 25th UNWTO General Assembly (Samarkand, Uzbekistan, 16-20 October), Member States voted to establish a first Regional Office for the Americas in Rio de Janeiro. The office will further enhance UNWTO’s global presence on the ground, adding to a Regional Office for the Middle East in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, a Regional Office in Nara, Japan, and its headquarters in Madrid, Spain.

• Secretary-General Pololikashvili joined Minister of Tourism Celso Sabino and other high-level delegates to visit the location and oversee the first plans for the Regional Office.

• Building on the plans set out at the General Assembly, UNWTO and the Government of Brazil hosted a special ceremony to celebrate the official agreement for the Regional Office.

• The start of the project has been heralded as a major opportunity to enhance Brazil's status as a tourism leader for the Americas as well as one of the leading global destinations.

• The Regional Office for the Americas will focus on strengthening the promotion of investments. One of the first key outputs will be guidelines aimed at boosting green investments, recognizing the importance of biodiversity for tourism in the Americas. The Rio office will also develop a strategy around technical training for youth, allowing them to gain the professional skills they need to grow the sector throughout the region.
UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili said: “The UNWTO Regional Office for the Americas will help guide tourism development not only in Brazil but across the whole region. Rio de Janeiro will be a true hub of leadership and ideas, with a focus on growing and targeting investments into the sector and harnessing tourism’s power for sustainable and inclusive growth.”

**UNWTO talks tourism with President Lula**

Reflecting the recognition of UNWTO’s mission at the very highest political level in Brazil, Secretary-General Pololikashvili was warmly welcomed by President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. Their bilateral talks focused on shared priorities, including growing investments in tourism in both Brazil and across the region, and making the sector a driver of growth and opportunity.

In bilateral talks with Minister of Tourism Celso Sabino, UNWTO emphasized the enormous potential of tourism in the Americas...

**Celebrating Tourism Excellence in Brazil**

During the official visit, the UNWTO delegation joined in celebrations of the best tourism talent and leaders in Brazil. The National Tourism Awards ceremony (Brasilia, 16 December) recognized individuals and initiatives transforming the sector. UNWTO also joined the official opening of National Hall of Tourism.

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