News Release
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UN Adopts a New Global Standard to Measure the Sustainability of Tourism

**New York City, USA, 5 March 2024** – A groundbreaking statistical framework, developed under the leadership of UN Tourism, has been adopted by all 193 UN member states.

The Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism (MST) thus becomes the internationally agreed reference framework for measuring the economic, social and environmental aspects of tourism.

The adoption by the UN Statistical Commission at its 55th session (27 February – 1 March 2024) marks a historical milestone towards harnessing the full potential of the sector, providing a solution to the pressing need for a harmonized methodology to effectively assess the sustainability of tourism.

“Tourism is a powerful force for positive change when managed responsibly and sustainably,” says Zurab Pololikashvili, UN Tourism Secretary General. “The adoption of the Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism marks a paradigm shift, going beyond GDP by enabling the measurement of what matters most to people and planet.”

**Collaborative effort**

This achievement is the fruit of a seven-year UN process led by Austria and Spain as co-chairs of the UN Tourism Committee on Statistics, with Saudi Arabia and Seychelles as co-vice chairs. Under auspices of the Committee, the Framework was developed thanks to the extraordinary work of the multistakeholder Expert Group on Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism composed of 40+ countries and 30+ international and regional organizations including the UN Statistics Division, the International Labour Organization (ILO), subnational authorities and observatories, academia and others.

The work involved technical guidance from an Editorial Board chaired first by the Philippines and then by Canada, as well as extensive engagement and consultation with input from numerous pilots in countries.

The Statistical Commission expressed an overwhelmingly enthusiastic support with 34 countries, 3 world regions and international organizations taking active part in the deliberations: Antigua and Barbuda, Austria, Benin on behalf of the African Group, Cabo Verde, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Finland on behalf of the
European Statistical System, Greece, Jamaica, India, Indonesia, Kuwait, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Morocco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Saudi Arabia on behalf of the Gulf Cooperation Council, Slovenia, Spain, Tajikistan, Tanzania, United Arab Emirates, United States of America, the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities and ILO.

Looking ahead, the Commission also welcomed the future development of an implementation programme, including a compilation guide, and called on the international donor community to support the financing for measuring the sustainability of tourism.

Established in 1947, the UN Statistical Commission gathers Chief Statisticians from Member States and international organizations, and is the highest decision-making body for international statistical activities. The last time that the Commission adopted a statistical standard for tourism was in 2008, when the International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics and the Tourism Satellite Account framework were presented.

**Closing the gap between policy and statistics**

In the margins of the United Nations Statistical Commission, Austria, Spain and UN Tourism co-organized the high-level side event “Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism: Closing the gap between policy and statistics”, in collaboration with the UN Committee for Economic-Environmental Accounting. Austria and Spain shared their vision on the importance of the Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism for evidence-based policy and decisions, while acknowledging its significance in upholding the relevance of statistical systems worldwide and the links to key topics like data governance and stewardship.

Mexico, the Philippines and Canada reflected on their pioneering experiences with implementing the framework, showcasing the power of integrating data from different domains and sources to distil more holistic and meaningful information on tourism.

The event raised awareness of the Statistical Framework for MST and functioned as an informative preamble to the UN Statistical Commission’s formal deliberations.

**Related links:**

- 55th Session of the United Nations Statistical Commission (all documents)
- Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism as presented to the 55th Session of the United Nations Statistical Commission
- Videos of the 55th Session of the United Nations Statistical Commission, item 4a on tourism statistics: [part 1](from 02:30:00) – [part 2](
- Side Event “Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism: Closing the gap between tourism policy and statistics”
- Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism (MST) programme of work
- MST Governance