United Nations General Assembly
High-Level Thematic Event on Tourism

Tuesday, 16 April 2024, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
General Assembly Hall, UN Headquarters, New York

Concept Note

As part of the Sustainability Week, the High-level Thematic Event on Tourism will be convened by the President of the General Assembly for the seventy-eighth session, in cooperation with UN Tourism, and in accordance with General Assembly resolution 77/178 entitled “Promotion of sustainable and resilient tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environmental protection”, as well as resolution 77/269 entitled “Global Tourism Resilience Day”.

As one of the largest sectors in the world, tourism is a major driver of economic growth, and social and cultural development, as well as an important contributor of decent job creation and entrepreneurship for all. For many developing countries, the tourism sector is a major source of employment, foreign currency earnings and tax revenues. In small island developing states (SIDS), tourism accounts for nearly 35% of all exports, reaching in some cases as much as 80% of national exports. It can be a great source of income to national economies and help eradicate poverty by creating employment opportunities, improve economic livelihoods in local communities, and facilitating socio-economic progress. It can also advance the empowerment of women, and other disadvantaged groups including indigenous communities, as well as generate economic opportunities for youth and people living in remote areas, while preserving tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

The year 2023 marked the midway point on the journey for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals. However, the current poly-crisis have hampered the world’s capacity to deliver on its commitments. While tourism is explicitly included in targets under SDGs 8, 12, and 14, as one of the world’s largest economic sectors, it can significantly contribute to fulfilling all 17 Goals.

According to the UN Tourism, measuring the sustainability of tourism will improve policy action for sustainable development, and promote one common statistical language, which can be compared across countries and economic sectors, as well as ensure tourism is factored into national and international development frameworks. The Statistical Framework for Measuring Sustainability of Tourism (SF-MST), the sustainability indicators, form the foundation of a global approach towards evidence-based policies of sustainability of the global tourism sector.