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UNWTO input to the 2020 Session of the High-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF) and Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) under the theme:
Accelerated action and transformative pathways, realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) is the United Nations (UN) Specialized agency responsible for the promotion of tourism as a driver of economic growth, inclusive development and environmental sustainability and offers leadership and support to the sector in advancing knowledge and tourism policies worldwide. The Organization's programme of work is guided by the principles of its Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (GCET, 1999), a key document for guiding the development of tourism and serves as a frame of reference for the different stakeholders in the tourism sector in promoting and developing tourism with a view "to contributing to economic development, international understanding, peace, prosperity and universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion".

UNWTO advocates for tourism as a key driver of socio-economic growth and development and supports the development and implementation of sustainable tourism policies and practices which makes optimal use of environmental resources, respects the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities and provides socio-economic benefits for all.

The 2020 Session of the High-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF), organized under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), will be addressing the theme of "*Accelerated action and transformative pathways, realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development*". During these turbulent times of the Coronavirus (COVID-19), the collective decisions and actions of the UN system and the global community towards the delivering on the 2030 Agenda and the decade of action have become ever more relevant and important.

Tourism's numbers are impressive, with 1.5 billion international arrivals in 2019, contributing to a value of over about 1.5 billion USD to the global economy or 7% global exports. Prior to 2020, the sector had enjoyed more than a decade of solid, consistent growth, with international arrivals rising by an average of 4% a year. While it is too early to quantify the full cost of the pandemic on the sector, it is clear that this sudden and unprecedented fall in demand and supply will have a significant impact, hampering economic development throughout the entire tourism value chain and its SME's and placing millions of jobs at risk, most notably those held by some of the most vulnerable members of our societies. But it is also a sector that is one of the most resilient and can play a major role in contributing to the sustainability and recovery.

UNWTO has undertaken a number of initiatives and programmes highlighted below which help to illustrate the importance of tourism as a key contributor to serve as force for good in protecting and conserving our people, planet and economy for the next decade and beyond:

- **COVID19 mitigation actions [SDG 3, 8, 9, 11, 12]:** The current COVID-19 crisis has impacted on travel and tourism like no other event in history before. It nevertheless offers a rare opportunity for reflection and recalibration to grow again, and to grow better for planet and people. UNWTO has been monitoring travel restrictions and facilitation measures for several years. Recently, together with other UN sister agencies and stakeholders, UNWTO has released a set of recommendations that are designed to support governments, the private sector and the international community in navigating the unparalleled social and economic emergency that is COVID-19 (more [here](#)).
- **UNWTO Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics [ALL SDGs + SDG 17]:** The UNWTO Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics was adopted by the [Twenty-third session of the UNWTO General Assembly](#) by A/RES/722(XXIII). It is an instrument that aims at promoting responsible policies and practices as well as implementing the principles of the [Global Code of Ethics for Tourism \(GCET\)](#). Whereas the latter is a soft voluntary instrument for both public and private sectors, the Convention is an international legally-binding instrument addressed to the public sector.
- **Global Report on Women and Tourism, Second Edition & Action Plan [SDG 5]:** The [Global Report on Women in Tourism, Second Edition](#), compiled in collaboration with UN Women, GIZ, World Bank Group and Amadeus, provides an in-depth quantitative and qualitative analysis of the situation for women in the tourism sector and provides a series of recommendations based on the findings. The accompanying Action Plan provides tourism stakeholders with a series of concrete measures they can take to improve the situation for women in the sector. The report outlines tourism's contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals in particular SDG5.
- **One Planet Network [SDG 12]:** [One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme \(STP\)](#) is a multi-stakeholder partnership that promotes networking among likeminded organizations and brings together existing and new initiatives focused on decoupling tourism's growth from the increased use of natural resources. The STP has the overall objective to enhance the sustainable development impacts of the tourism sector by 2030, by developing, promoting and scaling up sustainable consumption and production practices that boost the efficient use of natural resources while producing less waste and addressing the challenges of climate change and biodiversity. It is recognized as an implementation mechanism for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 12, with potential to advance other connected goals such as SDG13, SDG14 and SDG15 on climate and marine and terrestrial resources respectively.
- **Accessible Tourism for All [SDG 10-Inequalities]:** Make tourism infrastructure, products and service accessible to everyone, with or without any specific access requirement or disability. Within the framework of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CPRD) implementation, UNWTO's mandate is to raise awareness, produce guidelines, recommendations, indicators and technical standards on [Accessible Tourism for All](#). The UNWTO accessibility agenda is closely linked to SDGs 4, 10, 11 and 17, as it empowers the social and economic inclusion of persons with disabilities among others. **Recommendations on Sustainable Development of Indigenous Tourism¹:** These Recommendations aim to encourage tourism enterprises to develop their operations responsibly and sustainably, while enabling those indigenous communities that wish to open up to tourism to take full grasp of opportunities that come along, following a thorough consultation process. The Recommendations also target tourists that visit indigenous communities, and further contribute to SDG 8 and SDG 11.



- **Urban Tourism [SDG 11]:** Tourism can make an important contribution to the New Urban Agenda and the achievement of the SDG 11 on 'Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Alongside rapid urbanization, the growth of the tourism sector in recent years, driven by affordable transport, increased mobility, travel facilitation, new technologies such as digital platforms for property renting and hospitality services, and a growing middle class, has made cities increasingly popular tourism destinations. Creating policies that provide guidance to the sector on how to more effectively develop and manage urban tourism is crucial to the long-term sustainability and development of the tourism sector and urban settings.
- **Tourism for the Sustainable Development Goals (T4SDGs) Platform (SDG 17):** an innovative online tool providing the global community a space to co-create and engage to realize the 2030 Agenda through tourism. The Tourism for SDGs Platform's key features – Learn, Share and Act – should inspire stakeholders and provide a dialogue for building a smarter, more competitive, inclusive and sustainable sector. Additionally, a new dedicated space within the platform has been created to share initiatives from the tourism sector related to addressing the COVID-19 response.

ⁱ Annex I: Recommendations of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics on Sustainable Development of Indigenous Tourism – https://webunwto.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2019-10/a23_11_report_world_committee_tourism_ethics_en.pdf