UNWTO Commission for the Americas
Sixty-third meeting
Asunción, Paraguay, 13 April 2018
Provisional agenda item 3

Report of the Secretary-General

Introduction

1. The present report to the 63rd Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for the Americas addresses the following subjects:

   A. International Tourism in 2017 and Prospects 2018
   B. Priorities and Management Vision
   C. Implementation of the Programme of Work
   D. Administrative and Financial Matters

A. International Tourism in 2017 and prospects 2018

1. International tourist arrivals worldwide increased 7% in 2017. This represents the strongest results in seven years. Results reflect the sustained growth of demand in many destinations and a firm recovery in those that suffered decreases in previous years. The global economic upswing and the robust outbound demand from many traditional and emerging source markets explain such positive outcome.

2. By regions, Europe recorded extraordinary results (+8%), Africa consolidated its 2016 rebound with an 8% increase and Asia and the Pacific recorded 6% growth. The Middle East grew 5% and the Americas 3%.

3. The Americas (+3%) welcomed 207 million international tourist arrivals in 2017, with most destinations enjoying positive results. South America (+7%) led growth, followed by Central America and the Caribbean (both +4%), with the latter showing clear signs of recovery in the aftermath of hurricanes Irma and Maria. In North America (+2%), robust results in Mexico and Canada contrasted with a decrease in the United States, the region’s largest destination.

4. As for outbound tourism as measured by international tourism expenditure, available data for 2017 indicates a positive performance in most of the ten leading source markets in the world: China (+7%), the USA and Canada (both +9%), Australia and Italy (both +6%), the Republic of Korea (+12%) Germany and the UK (both +3%).
5. The current strong momentum is expected to continue in 2018, though at a more sustainable pace. Based on current trends, economic prospects and the outlook by the UNWTO Panel of Experts, UNWTO projects international tourist arrivals worldwide to grow at a rate of 4%-5% in 2018.

6. The Americas is expected to grow by 3.5%-4.5%.

B. Priorities and Management Vision

7. Tourism’s sustained growth brings immense opportunities for economic welfare and development. Yet, it also brings in many challenges. Adapting our sector to the challenges of safety and security, to constant market changes, to digitalization and the limits of our natural resources should be priorities in our action.

8. In this vein, I propose to address the following priorities which will be detailed in the document Priorities and Management Vision to be presented at the 108th session of the Executive Council:

- Innovation and digital transformation
- Investments
- Education and job creation
- Safe and seamless travel
- Social and environmental sustainability

C. Implementation of the Programme of Work 2017

9. This report presents a summary of the activities carried out by the Organization from July 2017 to March 2018 as per the document that will be presented in detail to the 108th session of the Executive Council (CE/108/5(c)).

Research: UNWTO advanced research with the publication of the following reports: UNWTO World Tourism Barometer (4 editions), European Union Short-term Tourism Trends, UNWTO/WCTF City Tourism Performance, EU Tourism Trends, Penetrating the Chinese Outbound Market, Asia Tourism Trends, Handbook on Marketing Transnational Tourism Themes and Routes, Maximizing the Benefits of Mega-Events, Tourism and Cultural Synergies, Tourism and SDGs – Good Practices in the Americas, and Tourism and the SDGs- Journey to 2030.

Events: A series of events were held during this period covering topics such as rural tourism, talent development, future of work, transnational themes and routes, urban tourism, investment in Africa (INVESTOUR), snow and mountain tourism, wine tourism, trends and outlook in Asia, “overtourism”, religious tourism and pilgrimages, jobs and inclusive growth, tourism and culture, the future of energy, tourism and wildlife, and child protection.

New Initiatives: The UNWTO.QUEST-DMO Certification System was presented to Membership and a pilot project was developed in Punta del Este, Uruguay.

Technical Cooperation: 38 technical cooperation projects in 30 different countries have been under implementation during the period covered by this report (See annex I in document CE/108/5(c)).

Education and Training: a series of training courses and capacity building workshops were delivered on themes such as crisis communication, marketing, e-marketing, statistics and satellite account or the silk road tourism development.
Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics: The 22nd session of the UNWTO General Assembly (Chengdu, China, September 2017) approved the English version of the Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics as well as its Optional Protocol and requested the Secretariat to take all necessary steps for the adoption of the Framework Convention as approved by the General Assembly in all the official languages of the Organization. Consequently, the Secretariat has translated the text and will proceed to share the Arabic, French, Russian and Spanish versions with the Member States for their comments and validation with a view to the future adoption of the Convention in all the official languages as requested by resolution 707 (XXII).

UNWTO as an Official Development Assistance (ODA) Agency: UNWTO continues to promote the recognition of the Organization as ODA eligible (meaning Members States can report 89% of its Membership fees as official development assistance).

For the implementation of the activities related to the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development please see Annex I.

D. Administrative and Financial Matters

10. With regards administrative and financial matters, detailed reports will be prepared for the 108 Executive Council, including a plan of income and expenditure for 2018 and the External Auditors report on the accounts for 2017.

11. The plan of income and expenditure for 2018 to be financed from the regular budget shows lower amounts than for 2017 taking into consideration actual level of contributions collected in 2017 and the corresponding treasury deficit incurred by year end. In accordance with the Financial Regulations, this treasury deficit is temporarily covered by the Working Capital Fund.
2017
INTERNATIONAL YEAR
OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM
FOR DEVELOPMENT

UNWTO
Resolution

- 22 December 2015, the United Nations General Assembly at its 70th Session declared 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development (A/RES/70/193).
- The International Year 2017 comes 50 years after the celebration of the International Tourist Year on Tourism - Passport to Peace (1967) and fifteen years after the International Year of Ecotourism, which was celebrated in 2002.

Objectives

1. **Raise awareness** on the contribution of sustainable tourism to development
2. **Mobilize** all stakeholders in making the sector a catalyst for positive change
3. **Foster change** in policies, business practices and consumer behavior in tourism

Lines of action

- Advocacy and awareness-raising
- Knowledge creation and dissemination
- Policymaking
- Capacity-building and education

Supported by a **Steering Committee**: 14 Governments, 8 Affiliate Members, 4 Int. Tourism Associations and NGOs.
Advocacy and Awareness-raising

Website

Travel.Enjoy.Respect Campaign

• Tips for a Responsible Traveller
• Traveller’s competition: 2,400 submissions – 1 winner, 1 trip around the world
• 16 Campaign Supporters: CNN, Iberia, MasterCard, etc.
• Continues during 2018, www.travelenjoyrespect.org

12 IY Special Ambassadors

www.tourism4development.org
Global Celebrations

416 events

Africa: 26
Americas: 111
Asia and Pacific: 68
Europe: 207
Middle East: 4
International/Regional: 3
Policy making and Capacity building

Official IY Events

Inclusive Growth and Employment

✓ UNWTO & ATM Ministerial Round Table on Tourism’s contribution to sustainable and inclusive economic growth and diversification in the MENA region

✓ International Youth Day - Celebrating the Potential of Tourism to Empower Youth, New York, USA

✓ UNWTO/ILO Joint Conference on Decent Work and Socially Responsible Tourism, Madrid, Spain

✓ International Conference on Promoting Sustainable Tourism, A Tool for Inclusive Growth and Community Engagement in Africa, Lusaka, Zambia

✓ UNWTO, Government of Jamaica and World Bank Group, Global Conference on Jobs and Inclusive Growth: Partnerships for Sustainable Tourism, Montego Bay, Jamaica

Urban Tourism

✓ Round Table on Sustainable Urban Tourism, Madrid, Spain

Tourism Measurement

✓ International Conference on Tourism Statistics, Manila, Philippines

Tourism and Technology

✓ International Seminar on New Technologies applied to Tourism, Roatán, Honduras

Tourism and Culture

✓ Second UNWTO/UNESCO World Conference on Tourism and Culture: Fostering Sustainable Development

Tourism Planning and Branding

✓ UNWTO, UNWTO Themis Foundation and the University of Valencia: UNWTO Silk Road Training and Capacity Building Programme – course on “Strategic Tourism Planning and the Silk Road”.

4 Declarations

❖ Manila Call for Action on Measuring Sustainable Tourism

❖ Chengdu Declaration on ‘Tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals’

❖ Montego Bay Declaration on ‘Jobs and Inclusive Growth: Partnerships for Sustainable Tourism’

❖ Lusaka Declaration, Promoting Sustainable Tourism, a Tool for Inclusive Growth and Community Engagement in Africa
1) UNWTO/UNDP publication: Tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals – Journey to 2030

- Serves as a guide to **how the tourism sector can contribute** towards the implementation and achievement of the 17 SDGs.

- Aims **to inspire governments, policymakers and tourism companies** to incorporate relevant aspects of the SDGs into policy and financing frameworks as well as business operations and investments.

- **Recommendations** are based on an analysis of 64 countries’ Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) on the SDGs, as well as eight Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) country roadmaps and the CSR activities of 60 global tourism companies.
2) UNWTO-OAS publication: Tourism and Sustainable Development Goals: Good Practices in the Americas
   • Released in March 2018

3) Global Report on Women in Tourism (2nd edition)
   • Upcoming: to be published in 2019

4) UNWTO/ITF research on “Global CO2 emissions from tourism (transport)”
   • Upcoming: to be published end 2018
5) Global Report on Tourism for Sustainable Development

• Illustrates the importance and potential of **sustainable tourism as an effective means for achieving sustainable development and the SDGs** and highlights necessary **changes in policies, business practices and consumer behaviour**.

• Process: Discussion Paper → Global Consultation → 160 pages of comments and 113 case studies → Flagship Report

Structured around the five central pillars of the IY2017:

1) Sustainable economic growth
2) Social inclusiveness, employment and poverty reduction
3) Resource efficiency, environmental protection and climate change
4) Cultural values, diversity and heritage
5) Mutual understanding, peace and security
Sustainable economic growth

- 10% of the world’s GDP contributed by tourism
- 1.3 billion international arrivals in 2017
- 3.3% annual growth in international arrivals up to 2030
- 1 in 10 jobs worldwide provided by tourism
- 30% of exports in services globally

Key priorities for action:
- Strengthening linkages and opportunities in the tourism value chain
- Creating a more enabling business environment, characterized by stability and supportive policies
- Improving connectivity and facilitating seamless travel
- Investing in technology and innovation
- Measuring tourism trends and impacts
- Capitalizing on, and better managing, tourism’s rapid growth
- Maintaining the sector’s impressive resilience, even in the face of economic downturns
Social inclusiveness, employment and poverty reduction

- Offers prospects for women and youth
  - Almost twice as many women employees as other sectors
  - 50% of global tourism labour force are aged 25 or younger
- 1 in 10 jobs worldwide provided by tourism
- 57% of international tourist arrivals in 2030 will be in emerging economies

Key priorities for action:

- Pursuing greater social inclusiveness through tourism by empowering women and youth, providing tourism opportunities for all and supporting local communities
- Strengthening ‘decent work’ across the tourism sector
- Advancing an ‘inclusive growth’ approach to poverty reduction through sustainable tourism
Resource efficiency, environmental protection and climate change

• Must scale up efforts to monitor, report, and reduce resource consumption and emissions
• Raises financing for conservation of heritage, wildlife and the environment
• Can be a vehicle for protecting and restoring biodiversity
• Committed to reducing 5% of global CO2 emissions

Key priorities for action:

- Improving resource efficiency, particularly among tourism businesses and destinations
- Focusing on environmental protection, ecosystem preservation and biodiversity conservation
- Mitigating the effects of climate change
Cultural values, diversity and heritage

- Revives traditional activities and customs
- Empowers communities and nurtures pride within them
- Promotes cultural diversity and local creativity
- Raises awareness of the value of heritage and its conservation
- Encourages intercultural dialogue

Key priorities for action:

- Championing cultural tourism
- Safeguarding tangible and intangible cultural heritage
- Promoting living culture and the creative industries through tourism, which can revitalize the creative arts, historic buildings and even entire neighbourhoods
Mutual understanding, peace and security

- Breaks down barriers and builds bridges between visitors and hosts
- Provides opportunities for cross-cultural encounters that can build peace
- Provides an incentive for dialogue and reconciliation in post-conflict settings
- A resilient sector that recovers quickly from security threats

Key priorities for action:

- Advancing a culture of peace and global citizenship
- Using tourism as an agent for peace and reconciliation
- Promoting safety and security through tourism
Use the momentum of the IY2017

➢ IY- Report to the UNGA

➢ Development of a Tourism and SDGs Product as partnership scheme

➢ Development of a Tourism and SDG Platform
  • An online co-creation space for public and private sector to share good practices, guidelines, recommendations, toolkits, etc.
  • Launch during UN High-Level Political Forum in New York, July 2018

➢ Special Ambassadors for Tourism and the SDGs and responsible Travel
THANK YOU!