



General Assembly

Twenty-first session
Medellín, Colombia, 12-17 September 2015
Provisional agenda item 4(a)(I)

A/21/4(a)(I)
Madrid, 4 August 2015
Original: English

Membership of the Organization

(a) Membership status

(I) Full Members

I. Introduction

1. The purpose of this document is to inform the General Assembly on the changes in membership since its twentieth session and to submit to it membership applications that it is called upon to consider pursuant to Article 5 of the Statutes and rules 49 and 50 of the Assembly's Rules of Procedure.

II. Candidatures for membership

2. On 7 February 2014, the Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism of the Government of **Samoa** announced to the Secretariat his country's formal acceptance of the UNWTO Statutes, with a view to joining the Organization as a Full Member. Pursuant to Article 5(3) of the Statutes, this application is submitted to this session of the General Assembly. This State is a Member of the United Nations.

3. On 15 January 2015, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of **Barbados** announced to the Secretariat his country's formal acceptance of the UNWTO Statutes, with a view to joining the Organization as a Full Member. Pursuant to Article 5(3) of the Statutes, this application is submitted to this session of the General Assembly. This State is a Member of the United Nations.

III. Withdrawals

4. Norway notified the Secretariat and the Spanish Government of its intention to withdraw from the Organization. The Secretary-General took all the necessary steps to encourage Norway to reconsider its position, but Norway has maintained its withdrawal.

IV. Contacts with non-member States

5. The Secretary-General and Regional Directors have been in touch with the following countries in



order to inform them of, or to recall, the benefits of UNWTO membership and to encourage them to consider joining or resuming their participation in the Organization.

6. Within the **Europe** region, several meetings were held with representatives of the ministries of foreign affairs, ministries of tourism and other national institutions of Estonia, Finland, Ireland and Sweden. In addition, official visits and other missions to Estonia, Finland, Ireland and Sweden were organized. During these official visits, meetings with representatives of the public and private tourism stakeholders took place and issues of common interest, as well as membership, were discussed.

7. In the **Americas** region, conversations with the US Department of Commerce have continued, as well as with representatives of the private sector, and officials of the US Department of Commerce have participated in various events.

8. There have also been meetings with a number of ministers of the Caribbean region, namely Antigua and Barbuda, St. Kitts and Nevis, Grenada and Guyana. Additionally, meetings with CARICOM, the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), were held to explain to their members the benefits of joining the UNWTO. As a consequence of this, and by resolution of the twentieth General Assembly, a contribution fee scheme was approved granting a special deduction to the Small Island States with a population of under 200,000, which could encourage membership by some of the smaller Caribbean States with less economic resources.

9. As far as **Africa** is concerned, only three countries have not yet joined the UNWTO as full members. These countries are the **Union of the Comoros, Somalia** and **South Sudan**. Different initiatives have been undertaken towards these countries for their membership.

10. In the correspondence addressed to these countries, the Secretariat explained the technical assistance the UNWTO can provide to them, in particular in the field of technical cooperation and other specific areas such as: tourism capacity building, ST-EP Programme, tourism planning, etc. Invitation letters have also been extended to the two countries to participate in the UNWTO activities organized in the region in the framework of the General Programme of Work such as seminars and meetings.

V. Present membership

11. At the date of this document, the total number of Member States of the Organization is 156. Should the General Assembly approve the candidatures of Samoa and Barbados to full membership, the total number would therefore come to 158 Member States.

VI. Actions to be taken by the General Assembly

12. The General Assembly is invited:

- (a) To welcome the decision of Samoa and Barbados to join the Organization and to approve their candidatures;
- (b) To take note with regret of Norway's withdrawal, and to urge Norway to reconsider its decision and to once again to take its place in the Organization; and
- (c) To call upon the member countries of the United Nations that do not yet belong to the UNWTO to join the Organization, and to encourage the Secretary-General to continue his efforts in this regard.