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Report of the Secretary-General

Part I: Programme of Work

(c) UNWTO in the United Nations system

Addendum 1: International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, 2017

I. Introduction

1. The present document follows the previous report made to the 98th session of the Executive Council and the report A/21/8(l)(c) being submitted to the General Assembly at its 21st session, which include references to the launching of an International Year on Tourism in 2017.
2. This addendum informs the General Assembly of the “Draft Plan for the Observance of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, 2017”.
3. The “Draft Plan for the Observance of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, 2017” is enclosed in the Annex.

II. Actions to be taken by the General Assembly

4. The General Assembly is invited:
 - (a) To support the efforts of the Secretariat to achieve the adoption of the UN General Assembly resolution on proclaiming 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development;
 - (b) To acknowledge the efforts of Austria, Colombia, Egypt, Indonesia, Morocco, Republic of Korea and Rwanda, at the initiative of Samoa, in taking up this endeavour at the UN General Assembly in New York.
 - (c) To encourage all Member States and the Secretariat, as well as other relevant international organizations, including the UN system, civil society and all other stakeholders, to contribute to the adoption and subsequent successful implementation of the related activities of the International Year;



(d) To request the Secretariat to form a Steering Group composed of the Chairs of the UNWTO Regional Commissions, UNWTO Affiliate Members as well as other relevant stakeholders with the objective of supporting the design and implementation of activities of the International Year once adopted by the UN General Assembly; and

(e) To request the Secretariat to mobilize key actors, in close collaboration with the envisaged Steering Group, for the overall observance and implementation of the International Year as outlined in the Annex entitled "Draft Plan for the Observance of the International Year on Sustainable Tourism for Development, 2017".

Annex. Draft Plan for the Observance of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, 2017

1. Introduction

Over the past decades, tourism has experienced significant growth and diversification, having become one of the fastest-growing socio-economic sectors in the world. Its important contribution to national development strategies and the global development agenda has gained increased recognition. However, sustainable tourism has not been fully mainstreamed into national and international policy discussions. Thus, coordinated and extensive efforts need to be undertaken to raise awareness among policymakers and the public of the vital role sustainable tourism can play in all three dimensions of sustainable development — economic, social and environmental — as well as in achieving the objectives of the post-2015 development agenda. Increased awareness and better understanding of tourism's contribution to sustainable development, poverty eradication and growth should consequently lead to a greater support from national stakeholders and the international community.

According to UNWTO's forecasts, international tourist arrivals reached more than 1.1 billion in 2014 and are expected to add up to 1.8 billion by 2030. Additionally, more than 6 billion domestic tourism trips took place last year. Tourism, thus, accounts for 10% of global GDP, generates 30% of the world's trade in services and provides for one in eleven jobs worldwide. Tourism has become of particular relevance for Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) where it creates opportunities to improve the livelihoods of millions. Representing 8% of total exports of LDCs and 9% of all exports of SIDS, tourism is often one of the few sectors in which members of these groups have a strong competitive advantage in the global market. Moreover, LLDCs have seen an average annual growth of 9% in terms of international tourist arrivals from 1995–2012, which is more than twice the global average.

Yet these big numbers represent more than just economic strength – they reflect tourism's vast potential and increasing capacity to address some of the world's most pressing challenges, including economic growth, inclusive development, resource management, biodiversity conservation and environmental preservation. Built around the millions of cross-cultural encounters happening every day around the world, tourism is also a gateway to greater understanding of the world beyond our borders, the first step in building peace between communities and nations.

The UN system and other international organizations and fora, including the G20, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) are increasingly aware of sustainable tourism's contribution to common goals, which has led to tourism being incorporated in key documents and global processes, including,

- the *Istanbul Program of Action (IPoA)* of the LDC-IV Conference (2011), in which development partners are encouraged to “Support the least developed countries' efforts to develop a sustainable tourism sector”.
- UNEP's *Green Economy Report* (2011), which includes a chapter on tourism, showing “...how green investment in this sector can contribute to economically viable and robust growth, decent work creation and poverty alleviation, while improving resource efficiency and minimizing environmental degradation”.
- UNWTO/UNEP *Tourism in the Green Economy – Background Report* (2012), which is an extended version of the Tourism Chapter of the Green Economy Report.

- the *G20 Leaders Declaration* (2012), in which the Leaders of the G20 “...recognize the role of travel and tourism as a vehicle for job creation, economic growth and development...”.
- the Outcome Document of the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), *The Future We Want*, in which UN Member States recognize that “...well-designed and managed tourism can make a significant contribution to the three dimensions of sustainable development, and having close linkages to other sectors, create decent jobs and generate trade opportunities...”, and furthermore the 10YFP Sustainable Tourism Programme (10YFP STP), one of the five initial sectoral programmes established under the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns (10YFP), was a key outcome of Rio+20.
- the *4th Global Aid for Trade Review* (2013), which includes presentations of a joint study undertaken by OECD, UNWTO and WTO. The event took stock of tourism as being one of the five key sectors with great potential to stimulate growth by “connecting global firms through tourism value chains”.
- the UNGA Resolution 68/207 on *Sustainable Tourism and Sustainable Development in Central America* (2013) further “encourages giving appropriate consideration to the issue of sustainable tourism in the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda”.
- the *SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway* (2014), recognizing that “...sustainable tourism represents an important driver of sustainable economic growth and decent job creation...”.
- the *Vienna Program of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024* (2014), stating that “Tourism can play an important role in building the economic sector, providing employment and generating foreign exchange” (2014).
- the UNGA Resolution 69/233 on the *Promotion of Sustainable Tourism, including Ecotourism, for Poverty Eradication and Environment Protection* (2014) calls for concerted efforts “to support tourism as a tool in poverty eradication and invites Governments to join the framework of the Global Observatory of Sustainable Tourism of the Organization.

In recognition of its increasingly significant role, tourism features in the **Outcome Document for the UN Summit to Adopt the Post-2015 Development Agenda**, which, inter-alia, incorporates the SDGs, and was agreed upon on 2 August, 2015. Tourism is included under Goal 8 (Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all), target 8.9 (By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products), Goal 12 (Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns), target 12.b (Develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products) as well as Goal 14 (Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development), target 14.7 (By 2030, increase the economic benefits to Small Island developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism).

Likewise, the **Addis Ababa Action Agenda**, formally adopted by the UN General Assembly on 27 July 2015 as the new global framework for financing development post-2015, will serve as the linchpin and drive the implementation of the 17 SDGs. In paragraph 129, Member States agree to “seek to develop

and implement tools to mainstream sustainable development, as well as to monitor sustainable development impacts for different economic activities, including for sustainable tourism”.

2. Why an International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development?

In view of the relevance of tourism in today's globalized world, fifty years after the *International Tourist Year* (1967) and fifteen years since the celebration of the *International Year of Ecotourism* (2002), the *International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development in 2017 (IYSTD 2017)* is an invaluable opportunity to advocate for sustainable tourism as a key tool for development, growth, and promoting international understanding. It can mobilize the sector and the international community to work together in maximizing the contribution of sustainable tourism to a transformative, people-centered and universal development agenda.

The presentation of a proposal to hold the IYSTD 2017 has been supported by the UNWTO's Executive Council at its ninety-eighth session (Santiago de Compostela, Spain, June 2014) and is expected to be endorsed by the upcoming 21st General Assembly session of UNWTO (to be held in Medellín, Colombia, 12–17 September 2015). These deliberations of the Governing Bodies of the UNWTO provide the backdrop for the proposal to have the UN General Assembly to consider at its 70th session the adoption of 2017 as the International Year of Tourism for Sustainable Development.

3. Objectives

- 1) To increase awareness among public and private stakeholders, and particularly tourists themselves, on their participatory role in harnessing tourism's contribution to sustainable development and peace.
- 2) To provide for a better understanding of sustainable tourism and its contribution to economic growth, inclusive development and environmental sustainability in both developing and developed countries.
- 3) To promote policies and business practices, including in tourism-related sectors and economic activities that advance and maximize tourism's contribution to the post-2015 development agenda and the proposed SDGs.

4. Envisaged activities

UNWTO will mobilize UNWTO Member and non-Member States, UNWTO Affiliate Members, the private sector, academia, and the civil society, including the billions of tourists travelling every year, to engage in the celebration of the International Year. Once adopted by the UNGA, UNWTO will facilitate the debate on pre-activities throughout 2016 and serve as a focal point for disseminating activities during and beyond the IYSTD 2017. This will be done with the full engagement of UNWTO Member States and other relevant partners through the establishment of a Steering Group.

In this framework, UNWTO envisions the following as possible activities to be included in the celebrations of the IYSTD 2017:

- 1) Creating a multi-stakeholder Steering Group to prepare the overall program of the IYSTD 2017, involving Member and non-Member States of UNWTO, UNWTO Affiliate Members and other partners;

- 2) Using the IYSTD 2017 to promote flagship initiatives of UNWTO and its partners, e.g. the *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism* and the *10YFP Sustainable Tourism Program*;
- 3) Holding a series of conferences and events focused on enhancing the knowledge base and the exchange of good practices on the linkages between sustainable tourism and development;
- 4) Aligning the theme of World Tourism Day (WTD) 2017, *Sustainable Tourism – a tool for development* (for consideration by the UNWTO General Assembly in 2015), so that the activities around WTD are part of and reinforce the objectives of IYSTD 2017;
- 5) Launching a special Award on Tourism for Development to promote the best public and private sector initiatives, state-of-the-art research, and achievements of the IYSTD 2017;
- 6) Encouraging and supporting national initiatives by Member and non-Member States of UNWTO, and its Affiliate Members, for the IYSTD 2017;
- 7) Initiating and encouraging awareness-raising activities and training programs concerning new sets of indicators in sustainable tourism, corresponding to the UN Statistical Commission's recommendations on an indicator framework for the monitoring of the goals and targets of the post-2015 development agenda (scheduled for adoption by ECOSOC in 2016);
- 8) Partnering with other UN agencies, in particular with the members of the Steering Committee on Tourism for Development, and other relevant international and regional organizations, including development finance institutions, to promote joint efforts;
- 9) Seeking engagement of the six UNWTO Regional Commissions (Africa, the Americas, East Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Middle East, and South Asia) and the World Committee of Tourism Ethics;
- 10) Building a strategy for mobilizing additional budgetary resources—financial and non-financial, through partnerships and voluntary contributions—to sustain the IYSTD 2017 program and its objectives; and
- 11) Designing and implementing a communication campaign (logo, website, etc.) to promote the opportunities of sustainable tourism as a key tool for development, including the engagement of tourists.

UNWTO will stimulate and support activities undertaken by:

- 1) **Governments**, through special national committees or focal points responsible for the celebration of the IYSTD 2017, and which could include the following:
 - hosting special events, meetings, conferences
 - developing dedicated communication and advocacy campaigns
 - organizing national awards for best-practice sustainable tourism initiatives and relevant research

- 2) The **private sector**, which could participate in national plans and programs and support the building of new and innovative partnerships.
- 3) **Academia**, e.g. its engagement in research to establish a solid knowledge base regarding the value of sustainable tourism as a means to development and the promotion of international understanding and peace. The establishment of new curricula, research, and lecture series could also be considered, as much as the identification of local and global relevant initiatives.
- 4) **IOs, NGOs and civil society**, particularly by providing advocacy services, lessons learned and expertise based on field experience. They may also strengthen existing networks and regional cooperation efforts to improve channels of communication, and organize or host field visits and media trips to promote their work.
- 5) **Tourists**, as committed citizens to responsible behavior towards the environment, local cultures and host communities, when travelling in their own countries and around the world.

5. About the UNWTO

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) is the United Nations specialized agency for the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism. As the leading international organization in the field of tourism, UNWTO promotes 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. Its membership includes 156 countries, 6 territories, 2 permanent observers and over 450 Affiliate Members, which encompass the private sector, academia and destination management organizations.