



## Executive Council

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### Communication of the Chair

#### Message of the Chair of the 105th UNWTO Executive Council Honourable Abulfas Garayev, Minister of Culture and Tourism, Azerbaijan

Your Excellency, Mr. Secretary-General,  
Dear Members of the Executive Council,  
Honourable Ministers, Ambassadors,

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you all to the 105th session of the Executive Council of UNWTO, in this beautiful country--one of the top international tourism destinations--and in the capital of world tourism, Madrid, which hosts the headquarters of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Government of Spain for hosting us.

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you know, the United Nations 70th General Assembly has designated 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development. This is a unique opportunity to raise awareness of the contribution of sustainable tourism to development among public and private sector decision makers and the public, while mobilizing all stakeholders to work together in making tourism a catalyst for positive change.

This is a historic year and this session is witnessing history and I trust that with our good work, we can be part of world tourism history. On this note, I would like to thank the Secretariat of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and personally the Secretary-General, for the great initiative and for all the work that made it possible to happen.

I call upon all the Member States to support the Secretariat on this matter by all possible and available means and in order to promote tourism's role in the following five key areas:

- (1) Inclusive and 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.

Dear Friends,

I wish good luck to all the candidates for the post of Secretary-General. Let the best win, but please note, whoever wins will need to continue strengthening the work and the visibility of UNWTO on the global platform as the world's top tourism organization, and trust me, after what the current Secretary-General has done for UNWTO, it will not be easy to keep up to his accomplishments. On a personal note, and on behalf of the Executive Council, I wish to thank you, honourable Mr. Rifai for all your professional and personal efforts, for your dedication in the last decade and for setting the new milestone in UNWTO's history which we shall not forget.

Last but not least, I wish to encourage all of you to make your utmost contributions to the debates and discussions of this meeting as this will go a long way in strengthening this Organization and call on you to follow the Rules of Procedure in a fair manner, which I will do my best to ensure, in my capacity as the Chair of this meeting.

And of course, I also call on you to take the time to enjoy beautiful Madrid.

**Travel, Enjoy, Respect!**