



## Executive Council

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### Report of the Secretary-General

#### Part I: Current situation and activities

#### (b) Mainstreaming tourism in the global agenda

##### I. Introduction

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1. Promoting tourism's contribution to economic growth, inclusive development and environmental sustainability in the national and international agendas is one of the priorities of the Organization. The support of tourism at the highest level is essential for the development and implementation of policies that support the growth and sustainability of the sector and to ensure that the sector contributes to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
2. With the adoption of the universal SDGs at the end of 2015, the advocacy work of UNWTO has been geared to ensure the support to tourism as an effective tool to contribute to the achievement of the 17 SDGs.
3. The present report highlights the main actions implemented and planned for by the Secretariat to mainstream tourism in the global and national agendas since the report delivered to the 104th session of the Executive Council.

##### II. Mainstreaming tourism in the national and global agendas

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4. To promote the role of tourism in the national agendas, UNWTO continues to advance the **UNWTO/WTTC Open Letter on Travel and Tourism** initiative. Since its inception in 2011, a total of 85 Heads of State and Government have been presented with the Open Letter. The initiative aims to promote the role of the sector at the highest level, foster cross-cutting policy coordination on tourism issues and raise awareness among decision makers of pressing challenges facing the sector. In the period under review (May 2016-April 2017), the Open Letter was presented to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan and President Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir of Sudan.
5. **The Secretariat continues to work to position tourism in the United Nations (UN) system agenda as well as in the agendas of other relevant international and regional organizations (for**



details see document CE/105/5(a)). In this framework, it is worth highlighting:

(a) **Measuring Sustainable Tourism Initiative (MST):** UNWTO has made significant progress on the Measuring Sustainable Tourism (MST) initiative which has been highly welcomed and supported by 48th Session of United Nations Statistical Commission, held between 7 and 10 March 2017. The initiative, being implemented in cooperation with the United Nations Statistics Division, aims to develop a new statistical framework for tourism — integrating the various dimensions of sustainable tourism (economic, environmental and social) across relevant levels (global, national and subnational). Measuring Sustainable Tourism (MST) will be the central focus of the 6th International Conference on Tourism Statistics: Measuring Sustainable Tourism, to be held in Manila, the Philippines, 21-24 June 2017.

(b) As one of its co-leads UNWTO continues to contribute to the progress of the [10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production \(10YFP\)](#), a collaborative platform to bring together and scale up existing initiatives and partnerships to accelerate the shift to sustainable consumption and production. In this context, the International Symposium of the Sustainable Tourism Programme of the 10YFP was held in Morocco on the side-lines of the 22nd Session of the UNFCCC Conference of Parties (COP22) on 11-12 November 2016, to increase awareness of tourism's role and commitment to fight climate change.

(c) **Promoting safe, secure and seamless travel:** In order to advance with the promotion of safe and seamless travel, one of the three priorities approved by the Executive Council for UNWTO work in the period 2016-2017, UNWTO has dedicated the 10th UNWTO Ministers Summit at the World Travel Market (November 2016) to this topic and convened the 1st Meeting of the Tourism and Security Taskforce to take place prior to the 105th EC on 10 May 2017. Simultaneously UNWTO advanced its training programme in this area with capacity building activities and expertise sharing on crisis communications in Sudan (for Africa), Bangladesh (in May for Asia and the Pacific) and Spain (with the European Travel Commission for Europe) and on crisis management in Egypt.

(d) **Tourism in the European Union (EU) Agenda:** UNWTO has been reinforcing its relationship with the EU. During the period under review, UNWTO Secretary-General addressed the EU Committee of the Regions, met the EU Commissioners Elzbieta Bienkowska (Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SME-s), Neven Mimica (International Cooperation and Development), Karmenu Vella (Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries) and Tibor Navracsics (Education, Culture, Youth and Sport) to explore opportunities for collaboration. UNWTO is also undertaking a joint project with the European Commission (DG GROWTH) on 'Enhancing the Understanding of European Tourism'. The project aims to improve the socio-economic knowledge of the tourism sector, enhance the understanding of European tourism and contribute towards economic growth, job creation, thus improving the competitiveness of the sector in Europe. The project includes four components: 1) increased cooperation and capacity building in tourism statistics; 2) assessment of tourism market trends; 3) promotion of cultural tourism through the Western Silk Road and; 4) promoting sustainable, responsible, accessible and ethical tourism. The project is co-financed with COSME funds and will run until February 2018.

(e) **Official opening of the UNWTO Geneva Liaison Office:** UNWTO has officially opened its liaison office in Geneva in January 2017. The Office aims to enhance the support to Member States as well as facilitate the coordination with the United Nations and other multilateral organizations in the context of the 2030 Agenda. The Liaison Office is hosted at the International

Trade Center (ITC). On the occasion, the Secretary-General debriefed the Ambassadors and heads of International Organizations in Geneva on the International Year on Sustainable Tourism 2017, underlining the importance of tourism in the global development and trade agenda.

(f) [International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development 2017](#): see detailed information in document CE/105/3(d)

6. The celebration of **World Tourism Day** is an excellent occasion to raise awareness of key issues affecting the tourism sector. The 2016 World Tourism Day celebrations on the theme “Tourism for All: Promoting Universal Accessibility” was held successfully in Bangkok, Thailand. The 2017 celebrations will take place in Qatar under the theme ‘Sustainable Tourism – a tool for development’.

In accordance with the principle of geographic rotation, **World Tourism Day 2018 will be celebrated in Europe and World Tourism Day 2019 in South Asia**. Considering that both Regional Commissions will hold their meetings following the 105th Executive Council, the proposed host countries will be presented to the 106th Executive Council for consideration and proposal to the 22nd General Assembly.

As per the themes of the celebration, the Secretariat would propose the 105th Executive Council to present to the 22th General Assembly the following themes to celebrate World Tourism Day in 2018 and 2019: **Tourism and the digital transformation (2018) and Tourism and Jobs: a better future for all (2019)**.

### III. Actions to be taken by the Executive Council

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7. The Executive Council is invited:

- (a) To take note of the work of the Secretariat in mainstreaming tourism in the global and national agendas;
- (b) To encourage Member States to strongly engage with and support the celebration of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development 2017 as a unique opportunity to mainstream tourism in the national agendas;
- (c) To express its appreciation to Thailand for successfully hosting the official celebrations of World Tourism Day 2016 and invite members to celebrate World Tourism Day 2017 on the theme “Sustainable Tourism – a tool for development<sup>2</sup> in their countries as well as attend the official celebrations in Qatar;
- (d) To approve the proposed themes for World Tourism Day 2018 and 2019: **Tourism and the digital transformation (2018) and Tourism and Jobs: a better future for all (2019)**; and
- (e) To encourage Member States to embrace the implementation process of the SDGs at the national and international levels.