

**Thematic discussion on
“Protect our heritage: social, cultural and environmental sustainability”**

I. Background and Objectives

1. Over the past decades, international tourist arrivals have more than doubled, from 609 million in 1998 to 1.4 billion in 2018.
2. Tourism’s capacity to create and distribute wealth, reduce poverty, generate jobs, and advance the change towards more sustainable consumption and production patterns has been recognized with the inclusion of the sector as a target in three of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, namely SDGs 8, 12 and 14.
3. Recent tourism growth has brought increased concern and awareness of the impact of the sector on social, cultural and environmental resources steaming the urgency of defining and implementing policies and strategies that ensure the contribution of tourism to the SDGs.
4. In view of the above and in line with the Management Vision and Priorities (document CE/108/5(b) rev.1) approved by the Executive Council, the thematic debate aims to:
 - (a) Discuss how to advance the contribution of tourism in achieving the SDG’s: the role of UNWTO, governments and the private sector;
 - (b) Share policies on how to manage tourism congestion and promote tourism dispersal policies that engage communities, minimize the negative impacts of the sector on natural and cultural resources and promote benefits for all;
 - (c) Exchange experiences on how to implement evidence based policies and management: systems: measuring tourism sustainability at local and national level; and
 - (d) Present initiatives that promote social inclusion, accessibility and gender equality in tourism.

II. Guidelines for discussion

5. Each topic of debate will be introduced by a speaker according to the programme of the thematic debate.
6. For the purpose of a fruitful and engaging discussion, the Secretariat invites delegations to focus their interventions in one of the topics above and answer the following questions.
 - (a) What is the role of the tourism sector (government and private sector) in your country in regards to the 2030 Agenda?
 - (b) Is congestion management a challenge for your destination? What measures have you taken/plan to take?
 - (c) What are the mechanisms in place in your country to measure the impact of tourism in terms of social and environmental impact?

- (d) What are your existing specific policies and initiatives director to promote social inclusion, community engagement, gender equality and accessibility?
7. The debate will be moderated by a chair and each intervention should not exceed a time limit of 5 minutes.
