



Medellín Statement on Tourism and Air Transport for Development

We, the representatives of Member States and private sector entities, attending the Joint World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) / International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) High-Level Forum on Tourism and Air Transport for Development, held concurrently with the 21st session of the UNWTO General Assembly in Medellín, Colombia, gathered to discuss and strengthen the path of cooperation of tourism and air transport by addressing today's challenges related to policy convergence, connectivity, competitiveness and travel facilitation with a view to harnessing the full potential of these sectors to create jobs, drive inclusive growth and foster sustainable development and in support of the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),

Recalling the special [Joint Statement](#) between ICAO and UNWTO, signed on 18 March 2013, which acknowledged the intention of both UN Agencies to work toward issues of common priority, particularly visa facilitation, impact of taxation, the modernization of air transport regulation and the development of convergent rules on the protection of passengers, tourists and tourism service providers,

Recalling the [Luanda Declaration on Tourism and Air Transport Connectivity](#) of 29 April 2014, which pointed out the need to address critical issues related to bridging air transport and tourism policies while reaffirming the need for developing programmes of interregional cooperation between bodies responsible for tourism and air transport so as to improve and strengthen the basic conditions for the sustainable development of tourism,

Recalling the [Statement on the Development of Air Transport in North America, Central America, the Caribbean and South America](#) of 9 October 2014, which, while recognizing the essential role of international air transport and its contribution to the expansion of trade and tourism, called for a strengthening of cooperation between the aviation and tourism sectors to maximize synergies and promote sustainable development,

Recalling the [Declaration on the Sustainable Development of Air Transport in Africa](#) of 27 March 2015, which highlighted that air transport connects African States to regional and global markets, therefore enhancing tourism, and identified regulatory and operational solutions for the sustainable development of air transport, its industry and services in Africa,

Bearing in mind [UN General Assembly resolution 69/233](#) of 19 December 2014 on the *Promotion of sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environment protection*, which recognizes that “sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, represents an important driver of sustainable economic growth and decent job creation, that it can have a positive impact on income generation and education, and thus on the fight against poverty and hunger, and that it can contribute directly to achieving the internationally agreed development goals”,

Bearing in mind [UN General Assembly resolution 66/288](#) of 27 July 2012, and the outcome document entitled “The Future We Want”, which emphasizes that “well-designed and managed tourism can make a significant contribution to the three dimensions of sustainable development, has close linkages to other sectors, and can create decent jobs and generate trade opportunities”,

Aware that actions geared towards achieving sustainable tourism are key in regional policies and strategies for fostering integration among Member States, and that this will contribute to boosting trade, transportation and the strengthening of ties and mutual understanding within and between regions,

Recognizing the interwoven relationship between air transport and tourism and highlighting the crucial role of transport in sustaining and promoting economic and social development in developed and developing countries alike, while respecting the environment,

Recognizing the importance of robust indicators to monitor progress towards achieving the SDGs and in policy formulation,

Recalling that UNWTO and ICAO are actively working together within the framework of the UN coordination mechanism of statistical activities in monitoring progress towards the SDGs,

Affirming that the formulation of policies to increase air connectivity is a key catalyst in promoting sustainable tourism and economic development,

Cognizant of the increasing need for reliable and efficient and affordable transport linkages between source markets and destinations to foster international and interregional trade, tourism and economic cooperation,

Affirming the need to protect consumers of tourism and air transport products and services, and the desirability of fostering convergence and compatibility in consumer protection regimes worldwide,

Aware that the economic, social, technological and safety aspects of tourism and air transport policies give rise to new challenges and opportunities for all countries and regions,

Recognizing the opportunity of this joint UNWTO/ICAO High-Level Forum on Tourism and Air Transport for Development, aimed at addressing the challenges of tourism and air transport sectors, strengthening the common path and cooperation and fostering strategies of inclusive economic growth and sustainable development,

Declare the following:

1. Tourism and air transport are key sectors for sustainable and resilient growth and development, particularly for Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS).
2. Tourism and air transport can play a pivotal role in creating employment opportunities, both directly and indirectly through their linkages to local economic activities, raising income at both household and national levels, improving the balance of payments and driving economic growth. Their importance in promoting economic cooperation, trade and cultural exchange, both at the regional and international levels make them fundamental for the sustainable development of all States.
3. Tourism and air transport development must contribute to building economic links that bridge the gaps between developed and developing countries by enhancing cooperation, especially in infrastructure development, human resources, promotion and marketing.
4. Tourism development is to be carried out on the basis of careful, strategic planning with the broad involvement and active participation of all stakeholders, in a way that not only increases revenues at the national and local levels, improves the quality of life and well-being of the population by expanding business opportunities, increasing employment and fully capitalizing on scientific and technological advances, but also with increasing efforts to address both sectors environmental impacts.
5. Enhancing evidence-based decision-making is of primary importance, especially with relation to the use and management of resources - including biodiversity -, benefits and impacts of tourism and air transport at destinations.

6. Governments should actively support the development of indicators by UNWTO and ICAO to assist States in monitoring progress towards the SDGs.
7. Governments should avoid unnecessary regulations and burdens in their policy implementation and take special steps to optimize connectivity and implement coordinated and holistic measures towards tourism and air transport development. They should also assess the benefits of tourism and air transport against different development opportunities, resources used and values created.
8. Governments should seek convergence and compatibility when formulating consumer protection regimes, giving due regard to relevant international instruments, including the ICAO core principles on consumer protection.
9. Cooperation among all major stakeholders—governments at the national, subnational and local level, international organizations, the private sector, and communities—is vital for achieving the objectives of sustainable tourism. Therefore, a coordinated effort of all stakeholders is needed in order to promote, with the support of the media, greater understanding of the value of partnerships as an implementation tool towards fostering sustainable growth and development and in support of the SDGs.
10. Domestic tourism helps to achieve a better distribution of benefits, employment and wealth throughout the national territory. It is closely linked and interdependent with other sectors of the social and economic life of each country and air transport is increasingly important for domestic tourism growth in many countries around the world. Therefore, the development of domestic tourism should form an integral part of strategic development planning that contributes to strengthening resilience and sustainable development at the national and local levels.
11. Under a gradual and balanced liberalization of air services, regional and global air links would be expanded and connectivity would be increased. Competitiveness would improve, foreign direct investment would increase, and economic development would accelerate. Governments should therefore actively pursue the continuous liberalization of international air transport to the benefit of all stakeholders and the economy at large guided by the need to ensure respect for the highest levels of safety and security and the principle of fair and equal opportunity for all States and their stakeholders.
12. Travel facilitation is of great importance for the development of present-day tourism and Member States should pursue their efforts to implement the provisions of previous declarations and recommendations, especially those encouraging travel facilitation and, when appropriate, lend their support to UNWTO and ICAO in this regard.
13. Facilitation, wherever feasible, of travel formalities and procedures in respect of entry and exit points, customs, currency, safety and security as well as health regulations, is crucial in order for the tourism and air transport sectors to sustain their resilient growth and yield their development potential.
14. Improving transport conditions, especially air transport, should be ensured by vigorously promoting the introduction of measures that enable seamless, safe and secure domestic and international travel, such as the *ICAO Traveller Identification Programme* (ICAO TRIP) as well as INTERPOL's *Stolen and Lost Travel Documents Database* (SLTD), so as to maximize the holistic approach to identification management at borders while ensuring travellers' safety and the resilience of tourism development.
15. Considering the importance and role of infrastructure to support the necessary development of airports and intermodal transportation infrastructure to meet the demand for air services, due consideration should be given to practices for attracting public and private capital in the most cost-effective manner.
16. Governments and the aviation industry should avoid imposing unjustified taxes, charges and other levies on international aviation which may have negative impacts on the competitiveness of the air transport and tourism industries and national economies.

17. Governments, with the support and participation of relevant stakeholders, should engage in pertinent national, regional, international and multilateral processes in order to advance and implement the above-mentioned objectives.

We, the representatives of Member States and private sector entities, hereby extend our sincere gratitude to our host, the Government of Colombia, for its warm hospitality and support for the organization of this UNWTO/ICAO High-Level Forum, as well as for its contribution to advancing the agenda of tourism and air transport development.

Medellín, 14 September, 2015