



2017
INTERNATIONAL YEAR
OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM
FOR DEVELOPMENT



Global Conference on Jobs and Inclusive Growth: Partnerships for Sustainable Tourism

Opening remarks by

Taleb Rifai, UNWTO Secretary-General

(as prepared for delivery)

Prime Minister

Minister Bartlett

Luis Almagro Secretary General, OAS

Dear Friends,

Good morning and welcome to our very first Global Conference on Jobs and Inclusive Growth in Tourism.

It is a pleasure to be here and to have Jamaica as our generous host, a country that has long been an important partner to UNWTO and the global tourism and development communities.

Particular thanks to the Special Ambassadors of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development 2017,

Dr. Michael Frenzel is here today representing them

to all our official sponsors and partners, namely those who join us today,

All Nippon Airways, Hilton, PR MediaCo, Ras Al Khaimah,

and the **Government of Colombia (thank you for coming Sandra)**

All of you have made this year possible,

Allow me also to thank the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank for partnering with UNWTO and Jamaica in organizing this Conference as well as Chemonics, WTTC, the George Washington University, the Caribbean Tourism Organization and Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association for their great support to the Conference.

Dear Friends

At the outset of our gathering allow me to express our deepest and most sincere support to all the countries in this region affected by the devastating hurricane Irma.

We are here to show you our full support and walk with you through recovery.

Dear Friends,

Against all odds and despite all challenges,

travel and tourism continues to grow as one of the leading socio-economic sectors in the world today.

In 2016, 1235 million travelers crossed international borders, in one year.

That is almost 1/6 of the people of the world making an international trip every year.

2016 was the seventh consecutive year in a row of above average economic growth.

This year, 2017, is no different, as global growth between January and August continues even stronger at +7%.

Tourism is:

Generating US\$3.2 billion of spending every day globally

Creating 1/10 jobs all over the world

Representing 10% of world GDP

Constituting 30% of world trade in services,

Travel and tourism is today the 3rd largest export industry in the world after chemicals and fuels.

UNWTO's long-term forecasts show that by 2030, the 1.2 billion of today will be 1.8 billion.

Beyond the numbers and the economic benefits, tourism is today bringing us together like never before.

Together with other forces of globalization, travel and tourism is making the new world smaller, more connected and more informed,

and therefore, more involved, more concerned and a more caring world, a better world indeed.

Travel and tourism is today contributing to breaking down barriers and stereotypes, enabling us to experience, enjoy and celebrate the beauty of our rich cultural diversity.

Mark Twain summed it up pretty well when he said:

"travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts."

Travel, dear friends, opens minds, opens eyes and opens hearts.

We become better people when we travel.

Dear Friends,

With growth, however, comes power, and, with power, comes responsibility

With 1.8 billion travelers,

We could end up with

1.8 B opportunities, or 1.8 B disasters

it's all up to us.

How we manage this impressive growth is in our hands.

We need to ensure that the

1.8 B travelers, can and should, when well-managed, translate into,

Opportunities for **inclusive economic growth**

Opportunities for **more and better jobs**, decent jobs

Opportunities to distribute wealth and **share prosperity**

Opportunities to **better know and respect** each other

Opportunities to **protect** our natural and cultural heritage

In short, growth, inclusion and progress are our means to achieve sustainable development.

Because sustainability, my friends, is to sustain LIFE on earth.

Not just to preserve its natural and cultural assets and the foundations of

who we are,

where we live,

and, how we live (in today's context, how and where we work)

but, to do so, and

in the process, elevate LIFE on earth to a higher level of progress and quality for all the people

BECAUSE

It's really all about people

They are at the centre of all challenges

Growth and sustainability,

Progress and sustainability, should go hand in hand

Not either - or,

But a win-win equation

Dear Friends,

In 2015, the international community accomplished three important milestones,

- The 17 SDGs, a roadmap to 2030 (UNGA)
- The Paris agreement on climate change (UNFCCC)
- Dedicate 2017 as “The international year of sustainable tourism for development” (UNGA)

2017 is, therefore, a very special year for us, in the travel and tourism industry, and a unique opportunity for all of us to come together to promote the contributions of travel and tourism, as a grand 21 c human activity, to shape a better future for people and planet.

The question today remains,

How can we use this unique opportunity of the IY 2017, to ignite and enable this transformative force, called Travel & Tourism, to contribute to all 17 SDGs, our agenda for 2030? to contribute to making this world a better place?

Dear friends,

I am certain that part of the answer lies in strong, effective and transparent partnerships.

In today’s globalized world, every challenge is a global challenge.

Strong collaboration and decisive action is required to surmount these global challenges.

And such a global challenge, as ensuring sustainable growth for years to come, calls for common goals, effective global partnerships, and stronger financing for development with means which reflect the real potential of tourism to make this world a better place.

That is the message that we are giving loud and clear this week.

Dear Friends,

This conference is a unique opportunity to deliver on a new framework for global partnership for sustainable development through tourism.

An opportunity to create a new roadmap to make tourism an effective path to a better future for all people, leaving no one behind.

As we do so, lets us always remember our motto for this year

TRAVEL

ENJOY

RESPECT (RESPECT NATURE; CULTURE AND THE OTHER)

Thank you.