

Executive Director, UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Yury Fedotov: Statement on World Tourism Day 27 September 2017

VIENNA, 27 September (UN Information Service) - Tourism's contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the theme of this year's World Tourism Day. The day offers a welcome opportunity to highlight tourism as a dynamic industry delivering development and growth and employing one in 11 people globally.

Companies, in the tourism sector, also generate sustainable businesses, and through their supply chains, encourage transparency, good governance and greater accountability. There is no doubt that tourism can be a genuine force for good in a world of many challenges.

With over one billion people travelling annually, tourism also has a critical role to play in tackling illicit drugs, transnational organized crime, corruption and terrorism. No one denies that, in a busy world, holidays are a time for rest and enjoyment, but I also make a plea for vigilance and alertness.

Criminals are using our transport systems as a delivery mechanism for misery and torment. Luggage may contain depleted wildlife species, illicit drugs or priceless cultural heritage. The child next to you could be a trafficking victim, while people providing services at holiday destinations may have been coerced or threatened.

By being observant and attentive, tourists can help catch the traffickers, save victims and prevent untold harm to wildlife, forests and culture. Every one of these crimes hinders sustainable development, damages communities and strips out badly needed resources from vulnerable societies.

On World Tourism Day, I call on everyone travelling to remain watchful: you could be the difference between a young girl's life of slavery, or her freedom; or an animal's slide into extinction or its survival. Together our global vigilance can help end these devastating crimes and contribute to a better world.

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