

Riyadh Declaration

ON THE FUTURE OF TOURISM



Cognizant of the centrality of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,¹ which sets out seventeen Sustainable Development Goals as a shared blueprint for people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership; the UN General Assembly resolution on the promotion of sustainable tourism for poverty eradication and environmental protection;² the UN General Assembly resolution on the promotion of sustainable and resilient tourism;³ and the UN General Assembly resolution on seizing opportunities of safe, secure and trustworthy Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems for sustainable development;⁴

Recalling the UN Tourism General Assembly's endorsement of the Chengdu Declaration on Tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals,⁵ which affirms tourism's contribution to economic, trade, and cultural links between developed and developing countries; the Kyoto Declaration on Tourism and Culture: Investing in Future Generations,⁶ which commits to implementing innovative policies, strengthening capacities for sustainable development, and advancing local community empowerment and responsible tourism; the UN Tourism General Assembly's approval of the International Code for the Protection of Tourists,⁷ which sets standards for assisting and protecting tourists; and the General Assembly's adoption of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism,⁸ which sets out principles for responsible and sustainable tourism development,

Recognizing that rapid technological advancements – including AI and other emerging technologies – are fundamentally transforming the global tourism sector, providing opportunities for growth, innovation and empowerment, such as through the enhancement of visitor experiences, market intelligence and data use, responsive product development, adaptability to dynamic travel trends and optimization of travel and tourism operations. At the same time, such technological advances also risk deepening inequalities between States, regions and destinations with different levels of sectoral development,

Embracing the fact that these technologies will have profound and multifaceted effects on the future of tourism, including challenges such as sustainability and environmental pressures, accessibility, innovation capacity and digital innovation gaps, exposure to crises and resilience challenges, workforce shortages and talent or skills mismatches, cultural and social integration, flow management, unbalanced tourism and uneven distribution of visitors, infrastructure limitations, public safety concerns, and inequitable distribution of tourism benefits,

1. United Nations General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, Resolution A/RES/70/1, 25 September 2015.

2. United Nations General Assembly, *Promotion of sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environment protection*, Resolution A/RES/71/240, 21 December 2016.

3. United Nations General Assembly, *Promotion of sustainable and resilient tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environmental protection*, Resolution A/RES/77/178, 14 December 2022.

4. United Nations General Assembly, *Seizing the opportunities of safe, secure and trustworthy artificial intelligence systems for sustainable development*, Resolution A/RES/78/265, 21 March 2024.

5. United Nations Tourism General Assembly, Resolution A/RES/677(XXII), 16 September 2017.

6. World Tourism Organization and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Kyoto Declaration on Tourism and Culture: Investing in Future Generations*, 13 December 2019.

7. United Nations Tourism General Assembly, Resolution A/RES/732(XXIV), 3 December 2021.

8. United Nations Tourism General Assembly, Resolution A/RES/406(XIII), 1 October 1999.

Therefore, we, the Ministers responsible for tourism of the Member States of UN Tourism, gathered in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in the context of UN Tourism General Assembly 26th Session, acknowledge that the global tourism sector is at a turning point in how people travel, how destinations evolve, and how communities thrive. Consistent with our individual obligations under international and national laws, as well as our national policies and cultural values, we declare that all Member States should:

1. Act immediately to advance and accelerate progress towards a more sustainable tourism sector that balances environmental stewardship, economic vitality, and social wellbeing.
2. Advance and promote the responsible adoption of digital transformation and innovation in the tourism sector by incentivizing investment in digital infrastructure, taking into account different levels of infrastructural development.
3. Strengthen sectoral resilience by advancing risk assessment and preparedness, investing in adaptive infrastructure and systems, and fostering rapid response and recovery mechanisms to ensure continuity and stability in the face of disruptions.
4. Adopt and maintain strong data governance practices that ensure privacy, cybersecurity, data protection for tourists and industry stakeholders, while encouraging safeguards against cybersecurity threats.
5. Develop a robust and relevant decision-making mechanism, based on reliable data to strengthen tourism indicators for all dimensions of sustainability.
6. Address workforce shortages and skills gaps by encouraging investments in tourism education and training, and sharing knowledge amongst all Member States.
7. Promote culturally respectful and socially inclusive tourism by engaging authentically with local communities, safeguarding cultural heritage, and protecting the social fabric of host societies, while preserving cultural identity.
8. Confront the challenges of uneven tourist distribution by promoting innovative policies and strategies to channel tourism flows towards emerging destinations.
9. Improve tourism infrastructure and strengthen public safety by enhancing basic services, transport and connectivity, as well as security and accessibility standards, in the planning and management of destinations.
10. Enable vital tourism economies by taking advantage of technological and AI-driven initiatives to support local entrepreneurship.
11. Cooperate to achieve the goals of the Riyadh Declaration, while being mindful of the diverse policy priorities of Member States.

We direct:

- The Secretary-General, in close consultation with Member States, to prepare a strategic roadmap on the future of tourism and to present it to the Executive Council within 12 months of the adoption of this Riyadh Declaration. Noting that should any financial obligations arise, funding will be through voluntary contributions from interested Member States at no additional cost to UN Tourism's regular budget.
- The Secretary-General to activate the AI Impact on Tourism Report and Recommendation Guide and to prepare a global maturity framework or index for AI and tourism, to help Member States assess their readiness, identify gaps, unlock new opportunities and guide the responsible and safe adoption of AI in the sector, and to present (i) the work done to activate the AI Impact on Tourism Report and Recommendation Guide at the Executive Council's first ordinary session of 2026; and (ii) the global maturity framework for consideration at the Executive Council's first ordinary session of 2026.
- UN Tourism to (i) prepare a report on the Member State adoption and use of the AI Impact on Tourism Report and Recommendation Guide and to prepare a global maturity framework or index for AI and tourism, including recommendations on how to improve both instruments and their utility; and (ii) present this report to the Executive Council at its first ordinary session of 2027.