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Eradication of poverty and other development issues

Promotion of sustainable and resilient tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environmental protection

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the report of the Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization on the promotion of sustainable and resilient tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environmental protection, submitted in accordance with Assembly resolution [77/178](#).

* [A/79/150](#).



Report of the Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization on the promotion of sustainable and resilient tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environmental protection

Summary

The present report, submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution [77/178](#) on “Promotion of sustainable and resilient tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environmental protection”, contains an update on the progress made since the previous report ([A/77/219](#)) was issued in July 2022.

I. Introduction

1. The Secretary-General was requested to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-ninth session, in collaboration with the World Tourism Organization (UN Tourism) and other relevant United Nations agencies and programmes, a report on the implementation of resolution 77/178 on the promotion of sustainable and resilient tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environmental protection. As the agency responsible for the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism, UN Tourism has prepared the present report.

2. The advances described in the present report are based on inputs from Member States, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), through the secretariat of its 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns. Those inputs are complemented by UN Tourism expertise and experience in sustainable and resilient tourism.

II. Empowering global progress: initiatives driving forward the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

3. Global initiatives for enhancing sustainability and resilience encompass a broad range of efforts aimed at addressing pressing environmental, social and economic challenges facing the world today. As the knowledge partner for India during its term as President of the Group of 20, UN Tourism spearheaded several key initiatives, including the development of the Group of 20 Bali Guidelines¹ and of the Goa road map for Tourism², which is aimed at using tourism to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

4. The statistical framework for measuring the sustainability of tourism was adopted by UN Tourism at the twenty-fifth session of its General Assembly in October 2023 and endorsed by the Statistical Commission in March 2024. The framework assesses the economic, social and environmental aspects of tourism, which makes it the first sector-specific model for transitioning to metrics that go beyond gross domestic product (GDP). It contains principles, definitions, organizational structures and indicators for evaluations at the national and subnational levels, thereby enabling the generation of the reliable, comparable data that are crucial to maximizing the sector's potential.

5. UN Tourism is committed to advancing the tourism sector, as exemplified by the high-level thematic event on tourism held during the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly. Held on 16 April 2024 as a collaboration between UN Tourism and the President of the Assembly, the event gathered tourism ministers from 12 Member States and stakeholders. The event was aligned with key resolutions and provided contributions to the General Assembly Sustainability Week and to the upcoming Summit of the Future, to be held in September 2024.

6. Tourism has emerged as a crucial driver of economic recovery and growth, as highlighted by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in the October 2023 edition of

¹ UN Tourism, *G20 Bali Guidelines for Strengthening Communities and MSMEs as Tourism Transformation Agents: A People-centred Recovery* (Madrid, 2022).

² UN Tourism, *Goa Roadmap for Tourism as a Vehicle for Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals* (Madrid, 2023).

its *World Economic Outlook* report. In the report, IMF underscored the resilience of the tourism sector and its rapid rebound, emphasizing the sector's significant positive effects on certain economies worldwide. UN Tourism played a crucial role in shaping the *World Economic Situation and Prospects 2024* report, in which the tourism sector's vital contribution to recovery was underscored, with particular emphasis placed on how the sector supports small island developing States.

7. UN Tourism participated in the fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States, held in Antigua and Barbuda in May 2024. It hosted an official side event entitled "Regenerative tourism for resilience: policy, practice and finance", which was focused on the implementation of the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism. In collaboration with UNEP and the United Nations Environment Management Group, UN Tourism also held a nexus dialogue entitled "United Nations actions to advance sustainable development of small island developing States through tourism: fostering sustainable and circular solutions".

8. At the twenty-eighth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, in December 2023, UN Tourism hosted a side event entitled "Delivering on the climate action commitments of the Glasgow Declaration". At the event, climate action by key signatories was highlighted, the first comprehensive analysis of the commitments was presented, and emphasis was placed on the role of the Glasgow Declaration in shaping climate action plans. An information stand was also set up with various partners. The event also served to celebrate the inclusion of the Glasgow Declaration on the Global Climate Action portal of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. In 2023, there were 80 new signatories to the Glasgow Declaration; the total number of signatories now stands at 868.

9. UN Tourism continues to lead the One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme and the Glasgow Declaration.³ In March 2024 at the International Tourism Exchange Berlin, it launched a publication entitled *Policy Guidance to Support Climate Action by National Tourism Administrations*, in which it offers practical recommendations for achieving a low-carbon transition in tourism. From September 2023 to February 2024, signatories to the Global Tourism Plastics Initiative were urged to phase out problematic plastic packaging and adopt reusable alternatives, as a way to enhance sustainability efforts.

10. UN Tourism partnered with UNCTAD at the eighth World Investment Forum held from 16 to 20 October 2023, in Abu Dhabi, for a session entitled "Accelerating green investments in tourism for sustainable development". The session brought together the investment and tourism communities to discuss solutions for unlocking finance, accelerating green investments, promoting climate action in tourism and contributing to sustainable development. At the event, mechanisms for boosting sustainable transformation in the tourism sector were highlighted.

11. UN Tourism is leading efforts to achieve targets for nature positive tourism by 2030. On Earth Day 2024, it launched a report in collaboration with the World Travel and Tourism Council and the World Sustainable Hospitality Alliance, entitled *Nature Positive Travel and Tourism in Action*, to support the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Adopted at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Framework is aimed at reversing biodiversity loss by 2030, with the tourism sector playing a critical role. UN Tourism is committed to achieving the 23 targets set out in the Framework, with a focus on mainstreaming, assessments and reduction of impacts.

³ See www.unwto.org/sustainable-development/one-planet.

12. In December 2023, FAO and UN Tourism began to collaborate on a project to promote sustainable tourism, with a focus on agritourism and gastronomy tourism at sites designated by FAO as Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems. Those sites feature exceptional agrobiodiversity and cultural landscapes that are managed sustainably by local communities and that are vital to livelihoods and food security. The final report on the project is expected by late 2024.

13. Through its Tourism for Rural Development Programme, UN Tourism enhances rural well-being through advocacy, skills development, knowledge creation and on-the-ground projects. Sustainable tourism is promoted through the network of Best Tourism Villages, with 186 members, and 38 villages received mentoring in 2023. The UN Tourism self-assessment tool to assist rural destinations is used to evaluate rural tourism policies and provide tailored recommendations. Under the Tourism for Rural Development Small Grants Programme, UN Tourism empowers rural areas through sustainable tourism funding.

14. Since the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, UNESCO has intensified its capacity-building efforts, training thousands in heritage management and sustainable practices. UNESCO emphasizes inclusivity and gender equality in its initiatives. Following the adoption of the Declaration of the UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development, UNESCO continues to advocate for cultural heritage protection, with plans to promote sustainable development in culture and the environment.

15. The International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories is a growing network of destinations committed to sustainable tourism. The Network currently has 44 members: 14 in the western hemisphere, 16 in Asia and the Pacific and 14 in Europe. Recent additions include the Atlantic Sustainable Tourism Observatory in Ireland, the Nuevo León Sustainable Tourism Observatory in Mexico and the Petén Sustainable Tourism Observatory in Guatemala. In November 2023, the Network's global annual meeting brought together experts from over 25 countries to discuss measurement of economic, sociocultural and environmental sustainability at the destination level, governance issues and the "net positive" approach.

16. UN Tourism has contributed to the advisory group created by the World Economic Forum to revise the criteria and indicators of the Travel and Tourism Development Index. UN Tourism also collaborates with the World Economic Forum as a data partner (credited source) for the preparation of the Index. The latest edition was published in May 2024.

17. In February 2024, the General Assembly adopted resolution [78/260](#), through which it proclaimed 2027 the International Year of Sustainable and Resilient Tourism. In the resolution, which was sponsored by Maldives, Uzbekistan and other Member States, the Assembly invited UN Tourism to collaborate with Governments, United Nations entities and international organizations to implement the International Year. The initiative, which follows the proclamation of 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, is aimed at highlighting the potential of tourism in fostering prosperity, peace and well-being.

III. Advancing national tourism policies: strengthening sector sustainability and resilience

18. The rapid growth of tourism after the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates the sector's resilience and the benefits that it brings to local communities. Resilience is essential for strategic planning in tourism, which requires an understanding of risks, especially those related to disasters and climate, and their potential impacts on

destinations and businesses. Maintaining sector competitiveness involves sustainable development planning to ensure the sector's long-term resilience and positive impact on the global economy.

19. In Greece, the tourism sector has made resilience a priority, seeking to improve risk and crisis management through the mainstreaming of economic, social and environmental dimensions. Policies are focused on strengthening tourism sector governance, investment, skills development, digitalization of small and medium-sized enterprises and sustainable destination management, in line with the European Green Deal, the European Union transition pathway for tourism and the 2030 Agenda. The main challenge is providing incentives throughout the value chain to promote sustainability and innovation.

20. Italy, through its National Recovery and Resilience Plan, promotes sustainable tourism growth by offering tax credits for green accommodation upgrades. The revolving fund for tourism enterprises facilitates green investments in small and medium-sized tourism enterprises, while Cassa Depositi e Prestiti, an Italian development bank, finances projects in energy efficiency and digital innovation through its fund for tourism. A European Investment Bank fund supports private sector tourism projects aimed at enhancing sustainability and resilience.

21. Romania aims to improve the competitiveness and sustainability of tourism through various government plans and strategies, including its government plan 2023–2024, its national sustainable development strategy 2030 and its national recovery and resilience plan. Efforts are focused on high-quality, sustainable tourism offerings, diversification of tourism segments and initiatives such as destination management organizations and cultural tourism routes. A total of 21 destination management organizations have already been approved by the Ministry of Economy, Entrepreneurship and Tourism.

22. Slovenia, in its tourism strategy, emphasizes sustainability and quality, aiming to attract responsible visitors by positioning itself as a “green boutique” destination. Efforts are focused on improving public tourism infrastructure and benefiting local communities. Key initiatives for 2023 include efforts to promote higher quality accommodations, investment in sustainable tourism transformation, campaigns to promote hospitality careers and efforts to improve air connectivity and digital transformation.

23. In Uganda, the tourism development programme is focused on domestic and inbound tourism promotion; infrastructure, product development and conservation; and regulation and skills development. The Explore Uganda Campaign is aimed at boosting domestic tourism, diversifying products and reducing dependency on inbound tourism during off-peak seasons. Challenges remain in expanding the campaign internationally and training diplomatic staff to support tourism.

24. In March 2023, the Government of Japan unveiled a new plan on tourism promotion for the period 2023–2025, in which emphasis is placed on the role of tourism in the growth strategy, regional revitalization and international relations. The plan is focused on the 2025 World Exposition in Osaka, Kansai, Japan, as a catalyst for promoting sustainable tourism, increasing tourism consumption and enhancing the attractiveness of the region.

25. In response to the growing demand for sustainable tourism, Samoa has embarked on a transformative journey to revitalize key attractions. Improvements have been made to such sites as the Asaga mangroves, the Ma tree walk, the coastal walk and Le Mafa pass lookout. This initiative is part of the New Zealand-funded Samoa Tourism Recovery and Resilience Programme, which is aimed at improving

the visitor experience, stimulating socioeconomic development and strengthening the resilience of local tourism businesses.

26. Through an initiative that runs until 2023, Indonesia is assessing and improving sustainable tourism practices in tourism villages in five high priority destinations. The initiative is focused on crisis management and sustainable development, assessing regulatory compliance, development frameworks and policy recommendations, to strengthen destination management and promote sustainability through tourism.

27. In Malaysia, the tourism recovery framework, part of the National Tourism Policy 2020–2030, is aimed at rejuvenating the tourism industry in the post-pandemic period by increasing national income, empowering local communities and promoting sustainable tourism. Under the National Ecotourism Plan 2.0, sustainable practices are promoted through collaboration between the government, the private sector and local communities.

28. Nicaragua, in its national plan for poverty reduction and human development 2022–2026, emphasizes that tourism is part of the creative, family and entrepreneurial economy. The plan is focused on innovative tourism, cultural heritage and environmental conservation, aiming for sustainable, inclusive and accessible tourism, and it includes priorities related to tourism promotion, product diversification, infrastructure improvements, capacity-building and service quality.

29. Peru, in its national strategic plan for tourism 2025, is focused on promoting the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources and biodiversity. Through ministerial resolution No. 285-2023-MINCETUR, the country established guidelines for the governance and management of tourism destinations, mainstreaming environmental management as a strategic pillar for aligning tourism development with sustainability principles.

30. Croatia, through its sustainable tourism development strategy 2030, adopted in December 2022, promotes year-round and regionally balanced tourism, environmental protection, competitiveness and resilience. In its national plan for the development of sustainable tourism until 2027, the country outlines medium-term strategic efforts, incorporating sustainable development principles.

31. In Portugal, the sustainable plus tourism plan 2020–2023 was aimed at stimulating sustainable tourism development throughout the entire value chain, thereby promoting best practices for sustainability. The plan served to highlight the commitment made by Portugal to being a sustainable, competitive and safe tourism destination.

32. Fiji launched its National Sustainable Tourism Framework 2024–2034 to enhance sustainability, inclusivity and resilience. The country introduced a code of conduct for tourism service providers in March 2023 and has partnered with FAO to reduce reliance on imported food through the Farm-to-Fork initiative.

33. Brazil, in its multi-year plan 2024–2027, is prioritizing economic development and sustainability by improving the quality and sustainability of tourism. The programme entitled “Turismo, esse é o destino” (Tourism, this is the destination) is aimed at promoting tourism as a catalyst for sustainable development and at promoting sustainable, inclusive and accessible tourism activities.

34. Saudi Arabia, in its vision 2030, is focusing on diversifying its tourism beyond religious sites to create a sustainable tourism sector. Its national tourism strategy is aimed at strengthening Islamic and national identity, increasing employment and GDP growth and improving government efficiency; phase 2 of the strategy (2024–2026) is aimed at positioning Saudi Arabia as a leading tourism destination.

35. The United Arab Emirates, through its Energy Strategy 2050, aims to balance energy supply and demand while meeting environmental goals and supporting economic growth. Updates are aligned with the Paris Agreement, setting targets for 2030 and aiming for net-zero emissions by 2050. The United Arab Emirates declared 2023 the Year of Sustainability and hosted the twenty-eighth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

36. Austria emphasizes sustainability and cooperation in its “Plan T: master plan for tourism”, which was launched in 2019 and is aligned with the 2030 Agenda. The master plan includes periodic action plans and comprehensive indicators covering economic, environmental and sociocultural aspects of tourism. Key initiatives involve integrating tourism acceptance metrics into regular statistics with a larger sample size, supporting regional decision makers with tailored solutions through a brochure on finding the right balance for tourism, and associated funding opportunities.

37. Italy launched its strategic plan for tourism 2023–2027 in 2022. The plan is aligned with European sustainability goals and focused on five pillars: governance; sustainability; innovation; quality and inclusion; and tourism education and careers. It promotes sustainable tourism, ecotourism and the revitalization of mountain tourism.

38. Indonesia, through its Sustainable Tourism Destination Guidelines, launched in 2021 by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, promote sustainable and resilient tourism in line with global standards. The guidelines prioritize cleanliness, health, safety and environmental sustainability.

39. Viet Nam, through directive No. 08/CT-TTg, issued by its Prime Minister in February 2024, aims to comprehensively develop sustainable tourism by improving management, pricing regulations and tax compliance, supporting small and medium-sized enterprises, preserving cultural heritage, ensuring safety, promoting cleanliness and advancing digital transformation.

IV. Significance of tourism for sustainable socioeconomic development

40. According to the World Tourism Barometer of May 2024, international arrivals in the first quarter of 2024 were the equivalent of 97 per cent of 2019 levels, with an estimated 285 million tourists travelling internationally, a 19 per cent increase over the same period in 2023. International tourism receipts in 2023 had nearly rebounded to pre-pandemic levels: coming in at \$1.5 trillion, they were just 3 per cent below 2019 levels. Total export revenues from tourism, including receipts and passenger transport, stood at \$1.7 trillion, about 96 per cent of pre-pandemic levels. The direct contribution of tourism to GDP recovered to \$3.3 trillion, equivalent to 3 per cent of global GDP.

41. Tourism is expanding rapidly and is one of the fastest growing sectors in the global economy. Its growth contributes to economic diversification and job creation, thereby supporting the Sustainable Development Goals; therefore, the sector is a cornerstone of the economic strategies of many countries aiming for more sustainable and inclusive economies.

A. Income generation and job creation

42. In 2023, the tourism sector in Nicaragua thrived, attracting 1.2 million visitors and generating \$739.2 million, an increase of 24.1 per cent over 2022. Tourism became the second largest foreign exchange earner after gold exports. Visitors spent

an average of \$43.3 per day over a stay averaging 10.6 days. Most tourists came from North America, Central America or Europe. Over the past seven years, tourism has injected \$3,617.3 million into the economy of Nicaragua. Air travel has surged; the 9,058 landings in 2023 represented an increase of 25.9 per cent from 2022.

43. Tourism is growing rapidly in Saudi Arabia and is crucial for economic diversification and job creation. In 2022, tourism accounted for 3.4 per cent of GDP, the same as in 2019. Employment in the sector reached 880,140, an increase of 39.5 per cent from 2019, accounting for around 6 per cent of total employment. The country received 16.6 million international tourists in 2022, 95 per cent of the 2019 level, generating revenues of 98.3 billion riyals. Domestic tourism reached a record high of 77.8 million overnight tourists and 48 million same-day visits, generating 127.6 billion riyals. Saudi Arabia expects to receive 119.6 million overnight visitors in 2024.

44. The tourism sector in Slovenia showed remarkable growth and resilience in 2023, making it the most successful year for Slovenian tourism to date. With 6.19 million tourists, an increase of 5.5 per cent compared with 2022, contributing to 16.13 million overnight stays, an increase of 3.5 per cent compared with the previous year, Slovenia showed its ability to adapt and recover in the face of challenges. Although those numbers reflect a slight decline compared with 2019, the Slovenian tourism sector has demonstrated its enduring appeal and robust infrastructure.

45. The tourism sector of Uganda rebounded significantly in 2022, with 814,508 tourist arrivals, a 59 per cent increase from the 512,945 arrivals reported in 2021. In 2022, tourism contributed 7.9 trillion shillings (4.7 per cent of GDP) to the economy, supporting industries such as hotels, airlines, restaurants and leisure activities. It also generated 620,000 jobs, accounting for 3.5 per cent of total employment. Tourism receipts amounted to 2.7 trillion shillings (\$736 million), accounting for 12.2 per cent of the country's total exports and 41.4 per cent of its services exports.

46. In Indonesia, an awareness-raising campaign and coaching clinics on business licensing through the Online Single Submission-Risk Based Approach platform is an effort by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy to simplify business licensing in the tourism and creative economy sectors. The initiative aims to facilitate business licensing in line with government regulations through the platform and provide technical guidance to promote investment, economic growth and job creation. The coaching clinics, which target local governments and businesses, were launched in 2022 and will continue until 2024, covering different regions within Indonesia.

47. Italy is focusing on improving training in the tourism sector during its term as president of the Group of Seven, particularly through efforts to address such challenges as integration of artificial intelligence. Key initiatives include retraining and upskilling programmes supported by a fund for improving professional standards and reducing unemployment. Italy aims to strengthen the role of tourist guides and promote partnerships with the private sector, academia and developing countries, in particular in Africa, to foster cooperation and knowledge-sharing in tourism.

48. Uzbekistan is prioritizing economic growth by investing in tourism infrastructure and cultural sites. Through Presidential Decree No. 60 of 28 January 2022, the country plans to create 25,000 jobs by developing new tourist zones, at a cost of \$300 million. Supported by Presidential Resolution No. 7, the initiative is aimed at leveraging tourism for poverty alleviation and fostering regional development through increased employment and entrepreneurship.

49. ILO, in collaboration with UN Tourism, developed an e-learning module on reducing poverty and advancing social justice in rural areas through decent jobs in tourism. The module was integrated into the 2023 Rural Development Academy,

which was focused on social justice for resilient, inclusive and productive economies. The Academy provides integrated approaches, tools and training packages to promote full and productive employment and decent work in rural economies.

50. Upgrading and reskilling the tourism workforce is the focus of another ongoing project in Greece, funded by the European Union through its Recovery and Resilience Facility. The initiative is aimed at improving the skills of tourism workers through short vocational training programmes (250 hours) designed to equip the workforce with the skills that are currently in demand in the labour market, in line with the green and digital transitions that the sector is undergoing. By the project's conclusion in 2025, 18,000 beneficiaries are expected to have received vouchers for training.

51. UNESCO, supported by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and the German Agency for International Cooperation, launched and implemented a project to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on cultural tourism in seven countries and 10 World Heritage communities. Under the programme, over 1,000 people received training, digital literacy was improved, short-term jobs were provided to more than 3,000 locals, and 50 sustainable tourism events benefiting women and young people were organized.

B. Efforts to boost small and medium-sized enterprises as the backbone of the tourism sector

52. Tourism is a key economic priority and essential for sustainable development, as it drives growth with extensive direct and multiplier effects. It has a significant impact on global employment and empowers women in particular, who make up more than 50 per cent of the sector workforce. Small and medium-sized enterprises are crucial, representing more than 90 per cent of the tourism sector.

53. In 2023, Austria introduced guidelines for funding to support family-owned and owner-managed small and medium-sized enterprises in the tourism sector, with the aim of strengthening sustainability and resilience. The fund offers subsidized loans, guarantees and a sustainability bonus of 7 per cent for eligible investments of up to €350,000, covering ecological, human resources, regional and digitalization improvements. Support is provided to young entrepreneurs who take over tourism businesses, but new construction in tourism-intensive areas does not qualify for support.

54. UNIDO supports micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises through a toolkit for improving capacity and market performance while strengthening links with tourism. In Indonesia, micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises make a significant contribution to the economy. Since 2022, the United Nations joint programme on accelerating investment for the Goals in Indonesia has been promoting job creation and competitiveness, linking micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises with tourism financing and sustainable financing, and supporting women and youth entrepreneurs.

55. In Tunisia, UNIDO is implementing a Swiss-funded project for market access of typical agrifood products to promote typical agrifood products as regional attractions. Under the project, in 2022, Tunisia launched a national strategy for the valorization of typical agrifood products, which is focused on marketing, alternative tourism and cultural heritage. Working with Government ministries, UNIDO supports local stakeholders in pilot regions through workshops, promoting on-site sales and tasting experiences for agrifood small and medium-sized enterprises, including branding and gastronomic tourism festivals.

56. In the United Arab Emirates, under the “Entrepreneurial nation” initiative led by the Ministry of Economy, support is provided to companies based in the United Arab Emirates for their global expansion efforts. The initiative fosters partnerships between the public and private sectors to create a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem. Key partners include government agencies and large technology firms, which provide tools and expertise to help local small and medium-sized enterprises and entrepreneurs overcome barriers to international growth.

57. Uzbekistan has implemented measures to support entrepreneurship in the tourism sector, including access to finance and business development services for small and medium-sized enterprises. The programme on improving service quality is aimed at continuous improvement through comprehensive training. Financial support and incentives, including subsidies for accessible accommodation, encourage innovation and sustainability, underlining the country’s commitment to raising tourism standards globally.

58. The project funded by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on achieving sustainable tourism with intangible cultural heritage and creative cities network in waterway cities of ASEAN is supported by various organizations, including Designated Areas for Sustainable Tourism Administration from Thailand and UNESCO. UNESCO is working with local tourism partners to provide training and workshops for community-led tourism entrepreneurs to improve their businesses and promote sustainability.

C. Preserving cultural heritage: enhancing cultural tourism and fostering inclusivity

59. The Republic of Korea is creating an inclusive tourism infrastructure by preventing overtourism, establishing barrier-free tourism cities, developing a Korean culture tourism model and increasing travel support for workers. As a result, the number of workers enjoying holidays surged from 20,000 in 2018 to 100,000 in 2022.

60. In Uganda, the Museums and Monuments Act of 2023 strengthens the legal framework for the protection of cultural and natural heritage, consolidating laws, establishing administrative structures and protecting areas such as national parks and archaeological sites. The Act ensures the preservation of the country’s heritage through measures such as the Uganda Museum Board.

61. From 2021 to 2024, phase IV of the Japan-funded UNESCO project on strengthening the conservation and management of Lumbini, the birthplace of Lord Buddha, a world heritage property, has been focused on preserving cultural heritage, promoting sustainable tourism and improving local livelihoods. Through the project, skills in heritage management and conservation have been improved, and recommendations have been made on steps to promote sustainable development and tourism.

62. UNESCO, with World Heritage Catalysis and Zegeba, developed the Visitor Management Assessment and Strategy Tool to promote sustainable tourism at world heritage sites. The tool was tested initially at sites in ASEAN countries, including 12 heritage sites in Thailand, and workshops were held at the level of ASEAN and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum. At the same time, through its project on promoting quality heritage tourism at the Trang An world heritage site, UNESCO empowered local women who work as boat rowers and guides through the provision of training from 2020 to 2022, enhancing tourism services and heritage interpretation at the Trang An landscape complex in Viet Nam.

63. In Romania, the Ministry of Economy, Entrepreneurship and Tourism launched a programme to recognize cultural tourism routes created by tourism bodies or local authorities. These routes promote cultural tourism and knowledge exchange. Romania participated in the UN Tourism Best Tourism Villages initiative, with Rășinari winning the competition and Ciocănești taking part in the initiative's upgrade programme.

64. UNESCO, with support from Saudi Arabia, led a project entitled "Preservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage in Bukhara, Uzbekistan" from 2017 to 2023. Under the project, conservation practices were improved, and sustainable tourism was promoted. In addition, the biennial "Atlas Bayrami" ("Celebrating Atlas") international festival of traditional textiles serves to support sustainable tourism and benefit the local economy, especially women and young people.

65. Uzbekistan, through the programme on tourism without barriers, has promoted inclusive travel experiences and organized free regional tours since 2023. Presidential Resolution No. 20 of 12 January 2024 outlines plans to improve the quality of services for people with disabilities in the tourism sector through the use of modern technologies from 2024 onward.

66. UNESCO and the Royal Commission of AlUla in Saudi Arabia launched an initiative on heritage and creativity for the sustainable development of Ula in late 2023. Under the initiative, the heritage of Ula is being leveraged to promote sustainable tourism and benefit local stakeholders through networking, mentorship, capacity-building and sustainability promotion.

67. The United Arab Emirates, through its sustainable blue economy strategy for Umm Al Quwain, aims to increase the contribution of the blue economy to GDP to 40 per cent while reducing emissions. The country's plans include tripling mangrove cover by 2031, establishing a centre for entrepreneurship and the blue economy and creating new tourism destinations that emphasize environmental and cultural aspects.

D. Empowering women and Indigenous Peoples: a journey through rural tourism, including community-based initiatives

68. UN Tourism is committed to advancing responsible and sustainable Indigenous tourism. In March 2023, it partnered with the World Indigenous Tourism Alliance to publish the *Compendium of Good Practices in Indigenous Tourism: Regional Focus on the Americas*, highlighting good practices from Indigenous leaders and associations and offering recommendations for public administrations.

69. From 2022 to 2024, UNESCO partnered with the authorities of Mexico City and the Yucatán to promote community participation in tourism, with a focus on cultural diversity and heritage. The initiative targeted marginalized areas and rural communities, involving over 100 cooperatives led by women and Indigenous groups, such as the Maya and Nahua. At workshops held under the initiative, emphasis was placed on decentralization, gender equality and heritage conservation.

70. In Brazil, the programme entitled "Turismo, esse é o destino" ("Tourism, this is the destination"), part of the country's multi-year plan, is focused on social development, the creative economy, cultural diversity and the safeguarding of rights. Efforts under the programme are aimed at promoting the rights of Indigenous Peoples, Quilombola communities and traditional populations, as well as fighting racism and promoting racial equality. Value is placed on the arts and popular culture, and emphasis is placed on the environment and gender equality.

71. In Nicaragua, the tourism sector offers sun and beach, rural community tourism, heritage cities, adventure tourism, culture, history and immersive traditions. With an emphasis on public safety and public-private cooperation, the sector promotes sustainable tourism as an economic driver. Community involvement is central, with small and medium-sized enterprises account for over 90 per cent of the sector and women making up 51.8 per cent of the workforce.

72. In Peru, tourism promotion programmes prioritize sustainable tourism. Under the “Pueblos con Encanto” (“Charming villages”) initiative, the country is developing tourism in places rich in cultural heritage and promoting growth. Through the “Turismo Emprende” programme, support is provided to small businesses through competitions and grants, focusing on conservation and economic development. The National Community Tourism Strategy contains measures to create competitive tourism products in rural communities, improving socioeconomic vitality and local quality of life.

73. Viet Nam, through its rural development programme for the period 2021–2025, aims to improve quality of life in rural areas, promote gender equality, develop infrastructure, ensure environmental sustainability and preserve traditional culture. With a budget of 2.45 trillion dong, the country aims to ensure that 80 per cent of communes meet the standards for recognition as new-style rural areas by 2025. Efforts under the rural tourism development programme are aimed at promoting rural tourism based on local agriculture, handicraft villages, culture and ecological environment.

74. Uzbekistan, through Presidential Resolution No. 122 of 7 March 2024, has allocated \$100 million to increasing economic participation, skills acquisition and entrepreneurship among women. The funds aim to alleviate poverty through the economic empowerment of women and demonstrate a commitment to involving women in entrepreneurial activities.

E. Certification and standards systems for the sustainability of tourism

75. UN Tourism is enhancing accessibility across the tourism value chain. In September 2023, it launched guidelines for applying International Organization for Standardization Standard 21902,⁴ covering key aspects for applying the standard in administration, accommodations, transport facilities and tourism services.

76. In 2023, in Austria, the Ministry of Labour and Economy, the National Tourist Office and the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber joined together to combat greenwashing in tourism by endorsing sustainability certificates, such as the Austrian Ecolabel, the European Union Ecolabel, Green Key, Green Destinations and TourCert. Austria has integrated the Austrian Ecolabel into tourism products since 1996; in 2022, the country launched an ecolabel for tourism destinations⁵ as part of its strategy to support regional value chains and meet growing demand for sustainable travel. Three destinations have already been certified.

77. In Egypt, the “Green Star Hotel” certification programme promotes sustainable tourism by encouraging hotels to adopt environmentally friendly practices, reduce operating costs and increase competitiveness. The programme has been recognized

⁴ UN Tourism and others, “How to apply ISO standard 21902, Accessible tourism for all: recommendations for key players in the cultural tourism ecosystem”, available at: www.unwto.org/tourism-and-culture.

⁵ See “Tourism destinations”, available at <https://www.umweltzeichen.at/en/tourism/destinations-1>.

by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council and is focused exclusively on hotels in Egypt; 178 hotels have been certified.

78. In Peru, the commitment to promoting sustainable tourism is underlined by initiatives on certificates for environmentally responsible companies and on public recognition for the implementation of good environmental practices. Through these initiatives, companies working within the framework of sustainable tourism are recognized, and those that implement good environmental practices and contribute to the sustainability of the sector are rewarded.

79. The Pacific Sustainable Tourism Standard for Destination and Industry, which is aligned with the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Policy Framework, serve to guide the Pacific Tourism Organization and its members. The Samoa Tourism Authority worked with the Pacific Tourism Organization and the Samoa Accommodation Standards Committee to develop sustainable tourism standards that emphasize the importance of sustainable practices and influence traveller expectations.

80. In June 2004, the national tourism authority of Romania, supported by the Carpathian-Danubian Centre for Geocology, launched the “Blue Flag” programme to promote sustainable tourism. By 2023, six beaches in Romania had been awarded Blue Flag status, as a sign of their commitment to maintaining high environmental standards and providing safe, clean recreational areas for visitors.

81. Slovenia promotes sustainable tourism through several initiatives. Through calls for proposals in 2022 and 2023, support was provided to 69 and 64 businesses, respectively, so they could adopt environmental and sustainability labels. The “Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism” initiative is being enhanced through the addition of a pilot project to reduce food waste. A suitable tool has been identified for implementation in 2024 in selected hotel restaurants bearing the Slovenia Green label.

82. In Egypt, the “Green Fins” initiative was launched in South Sinai in 2019 and expanded to the Red Sea in 2020. The initiative involves 44 diving centres that aim to protect coral reefs and marine life through eco-friendly guidelines and promote sustainable marine tourism. The initiative is in line with the country’s commitment to sustainable tourism and contributes to the transformation of Sharm El-Sheikh into a green city.

83. In Indonesia, tourism villages are assessed against sustainability criteria through the sustainable tourism village certification, launched in 2019 by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy in partnership with the Indonesian Sustainable Tourism Council. By 2022, 36 villages and two destinations had received certification. The initiative fosters community engagement and encourages sustainable tourism practices, ensuring the long-term viability and resilience of the tourism sector.

V. Promoting environmental sustainability in tourism

84. Governments and tourism stakeholders are increasingly aligning their strategies with the 2030 Agenda, with an emphasis on sustainability. However, many countries lack an enabling environment, appropriate policy frameworks and actionable plans to ensure coherence between policies, development initiatives and governance structures.

85. In *The Integration of Biodiversity in National Tourism Policies*, published in 2024, UN Tourism highlights a gap in the implementation of detailed sustainable management practices, particularly in the management of natural resources. While the importance of nature is recognized in 95 per cent of the national tourism policies

reviewed, there is a significant gap in implementation of sustainable practices. The report aims to address this gap by advocating for more detailed and actionable plans to protect biodiversity in the tourism sector.

A. Biodiversity and ecotourism

86. Romania, through its national ecotourism development strategy for the period 2019–2029, aims to promote ecotourism in protected areas, focusing on recognized ecotourism destinations and competitive products. Six destinations have already been designated as recognized ecotourism destinations, and the country's efforts have been praised by the European Commission in a 2021 report on regional impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on the tourism sector. The Government supports tourism businesses, spas and international events, and plans to provide support to ecotourism destinations in the future.

87. In Egypt, through a project on mainstreaming the conservation of biodiversity into tourism development in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, three working groups for Government, the private sector and civil society are being established. Objectives include biodiversity conservation and mitigation of the impacts of tourism. Key outputs include the Eco Egypt campaign, the “Green Fins” diving brand and environmental guides for tourism facilities. A portal for sustainable tourism in Egypt is also being developed.

88. In Kuwait, the Environment Public Authority is promoting ecotourism by expanding nature reserves, such as Jahra', and developing management plans. Efforts include opening reserves to the public, planning island tourism and organizing workshops. Participation in international events, such as the 2023 International Horticultural Exposition in Doha, demonstrates the country's commitment to horticultural development and ecotourism.

89. Uganda is making progress on tourism and wildlife management, focusing on infrastructure, such as trails and Internet connectivity. The Uganda Wildlife Authority which manages 10 National Parks and 12 Wildlife Reserves, works to address human-wildlife conflict and combat poaching in those protected areas. Trained scouts maintain electric fences and assist with the removal of invasive species. The Uganda Wildlife Conservation Education Centre supports conservation education and revenue sharing, benefitting local communities and boosting tourism and wildlife conservation.

90. Peru is promoting sustainable observation of marine wildlife with guides for tour operators on best practices in the area. The manual of good practices for tourism management of the observation of marine animals and the manual of good practices for tourism management of the observation of sea turtles along the Peruvian coast are aimed at protecting ecosystems while providing an enjoyable experience for visitors.

91. Uzbekistan prioritizes sustainable tourism, as emphasized in Presidential Resolution No. 131 and Decree No. 81. Efforts include promoting wildlife conservation and ecotourism through round tables and media campaigns, as well as green urbanization and environmental management projects.

92. The “Dubai Reef” project, part of the “Dubai Can” sustainability initiative in the United Arab Emirates, is aimed at creating one of the world's largest marine reefs (600 km²) to boost fish stocks and marine biodiversity while promoting sustainable fisheries and ecotourism. Al Marmoom Desert Conservation Reserve, which covers 10 per cent of Dubai and is focused on wildlife conservation, supports diverse bird species and fish nurseries through mangrove kayaking. Ajman aims to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, as demonstrated by the initiative, launched in 2021, to plant 50,000 mangrove trees.

93. UNESCO is working with the League of Arab States to safeguard the Kharga Oasis for possible nomination to the World Heritage List, in line with the 2030 vision for sustainable development of Egypt. UNESCO is also combating the illicit trade in cultural property and supporting capacity-building for sustainable tourism management of heritage sites.

B. Circular economy and climate change

94. In Croatia, around €1.3 billion has been secured from national and European sources between now and 2030 for the tourism reform for sustainable development. The National Recovery and Resilience Plan 2021–2026 allocates €290 million to tourism, focusing on green initiatives, the digital transition and climate change mitigation. Croatia implemented its first Tourism Act in January 2024; the Act promotes sustainable tourism through measurable data and aims to maintain competitiveness while prioritizing resident satisfaction and environmental protection.

95. In Greece, the action plan 2025 is aligned with European Union efforts aimed at advancing sustainable tourism. The plan creates destination management and marketing organizations, promotes sustainable experiences and mainstreams climate adaptation into ecotourism initiatives. The plan is aimed at transforming Greek islands into innovation hubs, tackling plastic pollution, conserving mountainous areas and beaches and developing the tourism sector on the basis of the principles of sustainability and the circular economy.

96. In Greece, the “GR-eco Islands” initiative, launched in 2023, is aimed at transforming the Greek islands into models of green economy, energy autonomy, digital innovation and eco-mobility, improving liveability and quality of the visitor experience.

97. In the Kuwait climate change strategy, emphasis is placed on public welfare, poverty eradication and environmental protection, including through the reduction of emissions from the oil and gas sector by 50 per cent by 2040 and achievement of carbon neutrality by 2050. The 2050 Low Carbon Strategy, to be launched by the end of 2024, highlights the country’s comprehensive commitment to tackling climate challenges.

98. Saudi Arabia is promoting sustainability in tourism through such initiatives as the Saudi Green Initiative and the Middle East Green Initiative. The Sustainable Tourism Global Centre, launched by the Ministry of Tourism in 2021, aims to transition tourism to net-zero emissions while supporting conservation and local communities.

99. The Dubai Sustainable Tourism Initiative is focused on energy efficiency and environmental protection, using the 2023 Carbon Calculator to track hotel carbon footprints in real-time. The aim of the integrated energy initiative is to achieve 29 per cent clean energy by 2030, to be supported by the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Solar Park, which has a target capacity of 5,000 MW and which was contributing 14 per cent to the energy mix in Dubai as of late 2023. The “Dubai Can” initiative, launched by the Deputy Prime Minister, includes measures to promote the use of reusable bottles and citywide water stations to reduce single-use plastic waste, in line with the commitment made by Dubai to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and with the ban on single-use plastic bags that has been in place since June 2022.

100. In the Republic of Korea, tourism policy is focused on environmental priorities, notably through the “K-Tourism Islands” project, under which five islands have been designated for sustainable tourism development. The initiative includes substantial

funding and promotes wellness, health tourism and ecotourism principles. Research on greenhouse gas emissions is aimed at tracking greenhouse gas emissions by source, producing a dataset that can be used to support achievement of the country's carbon neutrality targets, and sustainability is emphasized in the environmental, social and governance guidelines for meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions.

101. In Samoa, the Energy Efficiency Program for the Tourism Sector is aimed at reducing electricity use in the tourism sector, stabilizing the grid, cutting costs and enhancing sustainability. The Samoa Tourism Authority, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and the secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme have partnered with the International Institute for Energy Conservation to create a suitable energy efficiency programme for diverse types of tourist accommodations. The Samoa Tourism Authority is also collecting data on regionally led initiatives, such as the Pacific Ocean Litter Project, which is aimed at phasing out single-use plastics.

102. The "Climate change and sustainable tourism development in Slovenia" project, completed in 2023, was aimed at reducing the carbon footprint of tourism and promoting climate change adaptation. Under the project, strategic recommendations aligned with international and national climate goals were issued, with a focus on emission reduction strategies and climate adaptation.

103. In Egypt, the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities is promoting the use of solar energy in hotels by working with a project on small-scale solar power systems to install solar power stations. Seven stations with a capacity of 1,864 kilowatts have been installed, reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 832 tons per year.

104. In Egypt, a project to convert world heritage sites to green energy by installing solar systems at key sites was launched with the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the Supreme Council of Antiquities and the United Nations Development Programme in 2022. The project is aimed at reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 295 tons per year.

105. Romania, through its national strategy for tourism development 2023–2035, aims to position itself as a top tourism destination, focusing on its cultural and natural heritage. The strategy, which is currently under consultation, aims to strengthen spa and ski tourism through the Tourism Investment Development Programme.

C. Maximizing tourism impact: inclusive strategies, women's and youth empowerment, and poverty alleviation

106. Worldwide, tourism policies are increasingly focused on environmental protection, conservation, sustainability, cultural preservation and community participation. These policies are aimed at safeguarding nature, biodiversity and heritage while promoting responsible tourism that benefits local communities and ecosystems.

107. Governments prioritize involvement of local communities, especially women, in decision-making to achieve equitable and sustainable tourism that drives economic growth while preserving the environment, culture and heritage. UN Tourism, through its "Centre Stage" programme, empowers women in tourism by uniting public and private sectors with civil society to implement an action plan. After a successful pilot in 2022–2023, the programme is now open to all member States.

108. Egypt launched the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030 in 2017. The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities has established an Equal Opportunities Unit to promote gender equality within the Ministry and in the tourism

sector through awareness campaigns and projects, such as a project on creating a safe working environment for women in the tourism sector, funded by the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation. The Unit also works with the National Council for Women to promote the adoption of an Egyptian gender equality seal in hotels, focusing on such issues as employment and anti-sexual harassment policies.

109. Indonesia is prioritizing the tourism and creative economy sectors for growth, with significant investment in key destinations, such as Lake Toba and Borobudur. While the country aims to attract both domestic and foreign investors, investment trends have shifted, with a decrease in foreign investment and an increase in domestic investment. Limited international marketability of national products and other challenges highlight the need for strategies to promote investment in tourism and the creative economy. Initiatives such as the “ready-to-offer” investment projects are aimed at attracting investors and stimulating growth in the sector.

110. The International Tourism Investment Forum promotes sustainable tourism development in Indonesia. Supported by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, UN Tourism and the International Finance Corporation, the Forum addresses global green investment opportunities and challenges. The aim is to help Indonesia meet its target for investment in tourism of \$6 billion to \$8 billion by 2025, thereby fostering economic growth and sustainability.

111. In Jordan, small and micro projects are driving sustainable tourism development in line with the Goals. These efforts focus on the promotion of decent work, gender equality, poverty eradication and the eradication of hunger. A total of 210 tourism projects owned by local communities in the country’s governorates are being actively promoted by the Jordan Tourism Board and the country’s official tourism website.

112. In the Republic of Korea, the Government’s economic initiatives are aimed at boosting regional tourism through various strategies, including securing significant investment for integrated resorts, such as the INSPIRE Entertainment Resort; establishing regional tourism centres to help small and medium-sized enterprises enter global markets; and supporting tourism start-ups with financial packages and networking opportunities. A financial package of 700 billion won will be issued to small and medium-sized enterprises in the tourism sector by 2027. In addition, there are youth employment initiatives focused on industry-academia collaboration and community-driven projects to keep the sector dynamic.

113. The United Arab Emirates is committed to empowering youth in tourism through initiatives such as the Tourism Youth Summer Camp, the Tourism TechGen Hackathon and the “Our Youth Talents” initiative. These efforts, which are aligned with national priorities and the vision set out in the United Arab Emirates Centennial Plan 2071, are aimed at equipping youth with future-ready skills, fostering innovation and developing leadership. The Dubai College of Tourism offers vocational training and manages the Medyaf initiative for Emiratis, promoting inclusivity by training hospitality staff to serve all customers, including those with special needs.

D. Leveraging innovation to drive the competitiveness of the tourism sector

114. In early 2022, Austria initiated an initiative aimed at improving guest experiences and business models in tourism using data. The initiative, called the Tourism Data Space, was launched in the third quarter of 2023, led by the Austrian National Tourist Office. With a focus on energy consumption and mobility, the Office envisions seamless experiences and improved services through scenario planning.

The data space provides stakeholders with access to diverse data sources, fostering innovation and collaboration within the sector.

115. In Austria, the Federal Ministry of Labour and Economy hosts the “Tourism for SDGs platform”, promoting sustainable tourism practices and awareness of the 2030 Agenda among industry stakeholders. Austrian university students also contribute by writing dissertations on tourism and sustainability, offering valuable insights for the sector.

116. In Greece, the “My Digital Tourism” platform, which is being developed by the Ministry of Tourism, will be a user-friendly portal for the public, entrepreneurs and tourists. The platform will be used to help businesses with improving their products, to encourage investment in tourism and to ensure clarity and security for consumers. The platform will be used to streamline licensing, complaints, inspections, data collection and similar processes for tourist accommodations. When fully operational in mid-2025, the platform is expected to benefit more than 100,000 businesses.

117. The Greek Ministry of Tourism launched an initiative on integrated management for model tourism destinations to establish model destinations that prioritize smart and sustainable practices. Municipalities and regions can apply for the designation of model tourism destination, which fosters collaborative governance, promotes sustainable innovation and sets benchmarks for responsible tourism. These destinations aim to enhance the visitor experience while preserving natural and cultural heritage.

118. In the United Arab Emirates, the Intelak Hub in Dubai supports entrepreneurial growth in the travel, tourism and aviation sectors. In partnership with organizations such as the Emirates Group and the Department of Economy and Tourism of Dubai, the Hub offers comprehensive support to start-ups at all stages, providing mentorship and growth opportunities to foster innovation and business development.

119. FAO and UN Tourism, through an agreement signed in 2024, will launch an initiative on development of sustainable tourism itineraries focused on local gastronomy and sustainable agriculture for small island developing States in the Pacific. The initiative will be implemented over 18 months in Fiji, Palau, Tonga, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and the Cook Islands, and will serve to promote sustainable tourism while supporting local producers and raising awareness of their role in ecosystem management.

120. Croatia has made considerable progress in implementing the Sustainable Tourism Satellite Account System, which is revolutionizing the way tourism impacts are assessed. This structured mechanism allows for consistent tracking of tourism impacts across sectors, thereby supporting informed decision-making for sustainability. Components include a sustainable tourism satellite account system of Croatia for national data and a regional tourism satellite account system for regional data.

121. Italy is digitizing its tourism sector through projects funded by the Digital Europe Programme. The country is participating in a study on the data space for tourism, with a view to improving digital tools and services. The Digital Tourism Hub, which is part of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, supports innovation in Italian tourism businesses and promotes sustainable tourism, including through the use of artificial intelligence to analyse user behaviour and tourist flows.

122. FAO, the secretariat of the Mountain Partnership and UN Tourism have published two reports highlighting the importance of knowledge for sustainable mountain tourism. *Mountain Tourism: Towards a More Sustainable Path*⁶ is focused on best practices for the post-pandemic recovery, while *Understanding and*

⁶ R. Romeo and others. *Mountain Tourism: Towards a More Sustainable Path* (Rome, FAO, 2021).

*Quantifying Mountain Tourism*⁷ is aimed at filling data gaps to support local incomes and conserve resources, with an emphasis on informed decision-making and innovation.

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

123. Since the adoption of resolution 77/178 in 2022, global efforts to promote sustainable tourism for poverty eradication and environmental protection have made considerable progress. Although the COVID-19 pandemic posed challenges, the rapid recovery of tourism demand highlights the inherent resilience of the sector. This resilience underscores the importance of developing strategies to ensure that the tourism sector can withstand future disruptions effectively.

124. Member States prioritize environmental protection, conservation and sustainability in tourism, alongside cultural and heritage preservation. Tourism drives the economy, particularly in rural areas, by creating jobs, improving livelihoods and fostering community engagement. There is a growing emphasis on the inclusion of marginalized groups, such as women, young people and persons with disabilities, and accessibility measures are increasingly being incorporated into national tourism policies.

125. Digitalization plays a significant role in the tourism sector; in recognition of that reality, several initiatives, including the development of specialized information technology systems, the provision of digital skills training and the integration of digital tourism and cultural ecosystems, have been implemented under a number of projects. The emphasis on digitalization is crucial to supporting small and medium-sized enterprises, the backbone of the tourism ecosystem, especially in their efforts to carry out the reskilling and upskilling activities required for the digital and green transitions.

126. Strategic priorities for efforts to harness tourism for development include fiscal support, enhancement of skills, the empowerment of women and young people, sustainable investment and digital innovation. The integration of digital technologies creates opportunities for market growth, sustainable promotion and income generation, particularly for women and rural communities. The sector's potential for ecosystem conservation, job creation and rural development is recognized in tourism policies.

127. National policies underscore the urgent need to protect and conserve biodiversity for sustainable tourism, recognizing the intrinsic link between healthy ecosystems, cultural heritage and economic prosperity. Achieving a resilient tourism model requires collaboration between the public and private sectors and the active participation of civil society, local communities and Indigenous Peoples.

128. Tourism policies serve to highlight the sector's significant potential to contribute to the conservation, protection and restoration of ecosystems. It is critical to ensure that use of biodiversity is sustainable and aligned with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework in particular. Achieving sustainable use of biodiversity requires enhanced policy dialogue and public engagement to facilitate better planning and implementation.

129. To leverage tourism for rural development, it is crucial to enhance local natural and cultural assets, to encourage community participation in tourism services, to support local businesses in their efforts to add value to their products and to promote

⁷ FAO and UN Tourism, *Understanding and Quantifying Mountain Tourism* (Rome and Madrid, 2023).

sustainable practices. These actions should drive rural prosperity, ensure broad-based economic benefits and promote resource conservation.

130. The UN Tourism commitment to sustainable and resilient tourism growth, highlighted through initiatives such as the International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories, emphasizes the crucial role of evidence-based management and monitoring in guiding tourism development.

131. The Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism, along with efforts to promote circularity and innovation in the tourism value chain, is vital for sustainable and resilient economic growth. Member States are encouraged to uphold the commitments outlined in that Declaration and to work actively towards a sustainable future for the tourism sector and the planet.
