

Punta Cana Declaration

Punta Cana, Dominican Republic
2 – 5 October 2024

1st UN Tourism Africa & Americas Summit

Preamble

We, the representatives of the UN Tourism Member States of the Americas and Africa, gathered in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, on the occasion of the 1st UN Tourism Africa and Americas Summit (CAM-CAF), reaffirm our solid commitment to promote South-South cooperation, with the aim of advancing sustainable development between the two regions and to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda.

Recognizing the importance of cultural diversity, cooperation and economic growth, we express our determination and willingness to intensify joint efforts to promote sustainable development. We will do so through strategic investment in tourism's infrastructure and its enabling factors, such as education, innovation and creative industries, in line with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and, in particular, with the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) closely related to the tourism sector, including:

- **SDG 1: No poverty** - Tourism, as a labour-intensive sector, drives economic growth and generates employment, thus contributing to poverty reduction, especially in local communities.
- **SDG 4: Quality education** - Through tourism and appropriate training programmes, it is possible to develop a workforce prepared to meet present and future challenges.
- **SDG 5: Gender equality** - Tourism serves as a platform to promote the inclusion and empowerment of women in the labour market and in leadership positions.
- **SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth** - Through tourism development, decent jobs are created and sustainable economic growth is stimulated in destinations.
- **SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities** - Tourism drives better sustainable urban planning through the development of improved infrastructure and the preservation of historical and cultural heritage.
- **SDG 12: Responsible consumption and production** - Through responsible tourism practices, sustainable consumption and production are promoted, reducing environmental impact.

- **SDG 13: Climate action** - With tourism being both a cause and a victim of climate change, it is essential to integrate sustainable practices throughout the life cycle of projects to build a resilient and sustainable sector in the long term.
- **SDG 14: Life below water** - Responsible tourism supports the conservation of marine ecosystems and the protection of underwater life.
- **SDG 15: Life on land** - Tourism highlights the value of the natural and ecosystemic wealth of countries, ensuring proper management and protection.
- **SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals** - Tourism generates important positive externalities for other sectors and acts as an element of peace, integration and understanding between countries and regions, thanks to the significant benefits derived from working in a coordinated and cohesive manner for the proper development of the sector.

We express our deepest appreciation and gratitude to the Government of the Dominican Republic, whose warm hospitality and excellent organization have been fundamental to the success of this summit.

Recognizing

1. The role of tourism as an engine for economic and social growth, infrastructure development, job creation, fostering inclusion and promoting and respecting diversity and cultural exchange;
2. The rich cultural heritage, the diversity of natural attractions and the extraordinary potential of both regions to foster various types of specialized tourism;
3. The immense potential of creative industries, in particular gastronomy and crafts, to strengthen identities and integration between cultures, promote innovation and contribute to economic and social prosperity;
4. The importance of improving connectivity between our regions, as it plays a key role in boosting our economies, facilitates cultural exchange and strengthens ties between our peoples;
5. That investment, especially investment directly related to or in tourism enablers, is an essential pillar in the growth and transformation of the sector, acting as a catalyst for social and economic development, and fostering prosperity in both regions by improving infrastructure and generating employment opportunities;
6. The fundamental need to incorporate sustainable practices and considerations throughout the entire life cycle of tourism development projects, from initial formulation and planning to the investment and operational phases;
7. That the sustainable transformation of tourism is crucial, not only for the preservation of the planet, but also for the sector itself, as it fosters competitiveness and strengthens resilience;
8. The essential role of innovation, the application of new technologies and entrepreneurship in developing sustainable practices that enhance the resilience of the sector to face global challenges;
9. That education and investment in training and skills development are essential factors in driving economic progress, promoting sustainable growth in the sector and ensuring a skilled and adaptable workforce in a constantly changing environment;
10. The importance of promoting accessibility for all people to enjoy tourism activities, ensuring social inclusion and improving the quality of life;

11. That community-based tourism is a valuable tool for the protection and promotion of local culture, the preservation of the environment and the generation of direct income for host communities;
12. The critical role of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), which face unique challenges such as vulnerability to climate change, limited connectivity and economic dependence on tourism;
13. The importance of upholding the principles set out in the “Global Code of Ethics for Tourism”, especially those related to mutual understanding and respect between people and societies, which will allow the States of both regions to develop their sector on an equal footing and to achieve the full development of tourism as an engine for the development of their economies.

Reaffirming

Our commitment to forward-looking policy design and implementation, accompanied by joint capacity building programmes to address the challenges ahead, promoting an inclusive, sustainable and resilient transformation of the tourism sector in the Americas and Africa. The importance of promoting the mobilization of resources towards strategic sustainable investments directly and/or indirectly related to the tourism sector, and of fostering the proper development of a dynamic innovative ecosystem, where creative industries, in particular gastronomy and handicrafts, play an essential role in connecting and enriching our valuable cultural fabric, working on incentive schemes that attract and facilitate national and international investment towards the sector aligned with international sustainability standards.

That education fosters a sense of responsibility and awareness, which is fundamental to promoting sustainable tourism practices in our sector and is key to attracting foreign investment by increasing productivity, adaptability and strengthening the business culture in our regions, facilitating the creation of sustainable tourism businesses, contributing significantly to the economic and social development of countries, provided that professionals in the sector acquire the necessary skills for this purpose.

Our aspiration to unite and join efforts to strengthen the tourism sector in our regions, making it truly transformative. This involves not only enhancing economic growth, but also contributing to the preservation of peace and understanding, and enhancing and preserving the exceptional cultural heritage and the unique and distinctive particularities of our diverse communities globally. This commitment to sustainability requires the integration of practices that minimize environmental impact and cultural erosion, promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the use of plastics, and improve waste management through innovative approaches.

Tourism has the potential to be a driving force for biodiversity conservation and building lasting peace with nature. By promoting sustainable and responsible tourism practices that respect ecosystems and local cultures, we can contribute to safeguarding the rich biological diversity of our regions. This approach strengthens our commitment to mitigating climate change, restoring ecosystems, and improving the well-being of the communities that depend on them.

We, the representatives of the Member States, therefore, express our intention to redouble our efforts by promoting the following initiatives:

Promoting strategic investment in the tourism sector:

1. Encouraging public-private partnerships as a key strategy for mobilizing resources and exchanging expertise with the aim of promoting sustainable tourism development.
2. Stimulating investment in enabling factors (infrastructure, services and initiatives) linked to the tourism sector that strengthen the economic resilience and sustainability of the sector.
3. Adopting and implementing supportive policies that create an enabling environment for sustainable tourism investment, including tax incentives and the creation of regulatory frameworks that attract and retain investment.
4. Facilitating access to innovative financing mechanisms that drive the development of green technologies and sustainable practices, accelerating the fair, equitable and orderly ecological transition of the sector, in line with national priorities.
5. Prioritizing investments, in accordance with national circumstances, which include technologies (artificial intelligence, mobile applications and virtual reality, among others) and sustainable practices aimed at minimizing the environmental footprint of tourism activities, improving operational efficiency, increasing competitiveness and promoting universal accessibility in tourism offerings.
6. Strengthening regional connectivity by optimizing air, sea and land transport routes, thereby facilitating more agile and efficient travel between our regions, boosting tourism and supporting economic growth and cultural exchange.
7. Promoting responsible and sustainable tourism practices through the implementation of certifications and international standards that guarantee the quality and sustainability of tourism services.
8. Fostering and expanding strategic partnerships with key stakeholders and organizations, including multilateral financial institutions and banks, to leverage new funding opportunities, tap into the technical and cooperative expertise of these institutions and generate access to resources for the tourism sector.
9. Investing in the development of tourism marketing and communication strategies that include both traditional channels and new channels for the promotion and dissemination of content based on new technologies and promotional trends (social networks, influencers, online advertising and events, among others).
10. Adopting and implementing supportive policies that create an enabling environment for sustainable tourism investment, especially in Small Island Developing States (SIDS), which require tailored solutions to their specific challenges, such as limited connectivity and high vulnerability to climate change, with fiscal incentives and regulatory frameworks that attract and retain investment in these states, ensuring that they can actively participate in international tourism markets and move towards a fair, equitable and orderly ecological transition.

Improving training and skills development in tourism:

1. Investing in education and training as the backbone of tourism sector development, ensuring a well-trained, empowered and diverse tourism workforce that adapts to the changing needs of the sector.
2. Promoting cultural exchange and educational tourism programmes to foster mutual understanding and contribute to the enhancement of natural and cultural wealth. This includes strengthening local capacities, boosting sustainable tourism, diversifying tourism offerings, promoting cultural identity, stimulating community-based tourism and offering incentives to encourage return visitors to destinations in the Americas and Africa.
3. Providing access to UN Tourism Academy training programmes and online courses for all stakeholders in both regions, in collaboration with international academies. This will ensure accessibility and innovative training offerings, leading the way towards affordable and quality education for the tourism workforce. In addition, it will support Member States in the capacity building or training of their tourism workforce.
4. Promoting and supporting awareness of the importance of tourism activity and tourism training at all levels of education, from secondary education to university and vocational training programmes, by incorporating tourism content into curricula and conducting educational campaigns.
5. Ensuring that curricula incorporate the latest emerging trends, ensuring relevance and quality. This will raise awareness of the sector and build expertise at an early stage. Trends to be considered include sustainability, digitalization and new forms of tourism.
6. Boosting the incorporation of digital technologies and innovative tools in tourism training programmes to prepare the workforce for the demands of the digital age and improve the competitiveness of the sector.
7. Incorporating content on sustainability and environmental conservation in educational programmes, in order to train professionals who are aware of the importance of protecting natural and cultural resources.
8. Promoting learning opportunities and skills development in local communities to enable them to adapt to market trends and strengthen their tourism offerings, focusing on authenticity and sustainability. This translates to a more resilient local economy. It is essential to involve communities in tourism planning and management to ensure that development responds to their needs and values.
9. Encouraging policies and programmes that promote gender equality and the inclusion of minority groups in training and employment in the tourism sector, ensuring equal opportunities for all.

Fostering the innovation ecosystem in tourism:

1. Promoting and supporting startup competitions focused on global, regional and national tourism with the aim of fostering innovative ideas and solutions that address current and future challenges in the sector.
2. Encouraging entrepreneurship and collaboration between key players in the tourism sector in both regions, including governments, businesses, academic institutions and non-governmental organizations.
3. Stimulating the creation of a network of Tourism Innovation Centres between the two continents to boost research and development. These centres will facilitate the exchange

of knowledge and best practices, boost the activities of startup networks, support them in intermediation with investors and promote the generation of new ideas.

4. Supporting the development and adoption of new technologies to increase the competitiveness and sustainability of the tourism sector. In particular, promoting technologies related to waste management, the reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and the promotion of practices that favour carbon sequestration in the activities associated with the sector.
5. Facilitating programmes that promote access by MSMEs in the tourism sector to available financial resources (subsidies, technical cooperation, seed capital, angel investors, among others).
6. Promoting investments that support the development of community and rural tourism, ensuring direct benefits for local communities and contributing to poverty reduction.
7. Incorporating digitalization and the adoption of emerging technologies in the tourism sector, promoting the use of artificial intelligence and data analytics to improve the tourist experience and the operational efficiency of businesses.
8. Promoting innovation geared towards environmental and social sustainability, encouraging projects that reduce environmental impact, promoting responsible practices and contributing to the well-being of local communities.

Strengthening the role of cultural and creative industries:

1. Promoting the inclusion of cultural and creative industries as essential components of tourism policies, highlighting their importance in making destinations unique and attractive.
2. Encouraging collaboration between tourism institutions, cultural institutions and creative industries to develop unique and innovative attractions and experiences.
3. Providing support and assistance to learning and capacity building in Member States by sharing best practices related to cultural and creative industries through workshops, seminars and exchange programmes.
4. Managing, with the support of UN Tourism, funds to finance cultural and creative projects that can attract tourists and enrich the local tourism experience.
5. Involving local communities and tourism-oriented towns in the development and promotion of cultural tourism, ensuring that they derive economic and social benefits from increased tourism activity.
6. Promoting international trade fairs that allow companies from different countries to present and showcase their products and services, thus strengthening cultural and creative industries at the global level.
7. Promoting towns with a tourism vocation that conserve their cultural and natural heritage, encouraging the exchange of experiences that promote the protection and sustainable use of tourism.
8. Developing targeted marketing campaigns that highlight the cultural and creative tourism attractions of both regions, using digital platforms and social media, adapting the message to different markets and audiences.
9. Supporting the adoption and use of digital tools, such as mobile applications and online platforms, to increase inclusion and competitiveness, enhancing the positive impact on communities and promoting the sustainable growth of the tourism sector.
10. Encouraging the protection and promotion of intangible cultural heritage, such as traditions, festivals, music and crafts, ensuring their transmission to future generations and their appreciation as tourism attractions.

11. Implementing education and training programmes for artists, artisans and other actors in the creative industries, facilitating their access to the tourism market and improving their economic opportunities.
12. Developing cultural tourism routes that connect different attractions and experiences, offering visitors a deep immersion in the cultural and creative richness of our regions.

Enhancing exchange between the two regions through the creation of multi-destination tourism products between the Americas and Africa:

1. Supporting actions such as market studies and destination analysis to identify possibilities and resources to enable the formulation of multi-destination routes between regions.
2. Generating common strategies, such as integrated tourism packages and joint promotion, which allow countries to complement each other and improve international tourism offerings.
3. Developing strategies to increase regional connectivity in air, maritime and land transport in order to boost multi-destination routes within and between regions.
4. Facilitating immigration and customs procedures through bilateral or regional agreements, facilitating the transit of tourists between multi-destination destinations and improving their travel experience.
5. Implementing common quality and service standards across countries, ensuring a homogeneous and high-quality tourism experience in multi-destination products.
6. Designing communication strategies for the international presentation of these regional tourism products, using digital media, social networks and participating in international fairs.
7. Promoting training programmes for tourism professionals in the development and management of multi-destination products, strengthening the necessary skills to promote this modality.

The Punta Cana Declaration is a fundamental milestone in building a transformative partnership between Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa. We are confident that through joint efforts in promoting innovation, education, strategic investments and creative industries, we will succeed in opening new avenues for mutual growth, cooperation and sustainable development. This Declaration marks the beginning of a new chapter in South-South cooperation, paving the way for a more promising and prosperous future for our regions.

We, the Members and delegates of the Regional Commission for the Americas and the Regional Commission for Africa, by virtue of this declaration, reaffirm our commitment to making our best efforts to meet every two (2) years.

Adopted and signed in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, on 3 October 2024.

