



# General Assembly

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## Seventy-sixth session

Agenda item 20

### Sustainable development

**Belize, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras,  
Nicaragua, Panama: draft resolution**

### **Sustainable tourism and sustainable development in Central America**

*The General Assembly,*

*Recalling* its resolutions [68/207](#) of 20 December 2013, [70/196](#) of 22 December 2015, [72/214](#) of 20 December 2017 and [74/211](#) of 19 December 2019, and all relevant declarations and conferences on this matter,

*Reaffirming* its resolution [70/1](#) of 25 September 2015, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, in which it adopted a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and transformative Sustainable Development Goals and targets, its commitment to working tirelessly for the full implementation of the Agenda by 2030, its recognition that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, its commitment to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental – in a balanced and integrated manner, and to building upon the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals and seeking to address their unfinished business,

*Reaffirming also* its resolution [69/313](#) of 27 July 2015 on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, supports and complements it, helps to contextualize its means of implementation targets with concrete policies and actions, and reaffirms the strong political commitment to address the challenge of financing and creating an enabling environment at all levels for sustainable development in the spirit of global partnership and solidarity,

*Reaffirming further* the Paris Agreement<sup>1</sup> and its early entry into force, encouraging all its parties to fully implement the Agreement, and parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change<sup>2</sup> that have not yet done so to

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<sup>1</sup> Adopted under the UNFCCC in [FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1](#), decision 1/CP.21.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.



deposit their instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, where appropriate, as soon as possible,

*Recalling* the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030,<sup>3</sup> in which Member States recognized the need to promote and integrate disaster risk management approaches throughout the tourism industry, given the often heavy reliance on tourism as a key economic driver,

*Noting with concern* that, owing to its geographical location and its geological and hydrometeorological characteristics, Central America is a region prone and vulnerable to adverse natural events which have caused substantial human and economic losses, including impacts on gross domestic product per capita, income, and poverty reduction,

*Recognizing* that Central America is a region of significant natural resources and that its rich biodiversity provides invaluable benefits to its populations and to its countries' economies, and noting that sustainable tourism can contribute directly to the conservation of ecosystems through a variety of activities and by raising awareness of the importance of biodiversity and, in this regard, that the Central American countries are improving their institutional and policy frameworks, strategies and action plans,

*Noting* the role of the World Tourism Organization as a member of the informal advisory group on mainstreaming biodiversity, which is tasked with supporting the Executive Secretary and the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in developing a coherent outline for a long-term approach on mainstreaming, including on ways to integrate mainstreaming adequately into a post-2020 global biodiversity framework, welcoming the convening of the summit on biodiversity on 30 September 2020, and looking forward to the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in Kunming, China, which is expected to adopt a post-2020 global biodiversity framework,

*Recalling* its resolution [70/193](#) of 22 December 2015, entitled “International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, 2017”, noting the efforts and initiatives taken to celebrate the Year, with a view to creating awareness of the important contribution of tourism to sustainable development while promoting the exchange of good practices, knowledge and experiences, as well as increased cross-border collaboration by developing joint ventures to increase the synergies of tourism, including the sharing of tourism-related data and statistics, as appropriate, and noting with appreciation the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the proclamation of 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development,<sup>4</sup>

*Recognizing* the important cross-cutting role of sustainable tourism as a positive contribution to the three dimensions of sustainable development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, including the eradication of poverty, with a focus on ecotourism, rural tourism, community-based tourism and micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, the generation of trade opportunities, protection of the environment, improvement of quality of life, and advancement on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, especially in developing countries,

*Recognizing also* the importance of promoting tourism product development by indigenous peoples and local communities in order to support their economic

<sup>3</sup> Resolution [69/283](#), annex II.

<sup>4</sup> See [A/73/283](#).

development and participation in trade while protecting natural environments and cultural traditions,

*Stressing* the need for responsible tourism and for its beneficial socioeconomic impact on local communities, the economic empowerment of women through tourism, fair tourism, the protection of women, children and people in vulnerable situations against all forms of exploitation in tourism, the prevention of trafficking in persons and trafficking in cultural artefacts, respect for intangible cultural heritage and cultural and natural sites, the protection of tourists as consumers and the provision of unbiased information to tourists,

*Noting* in this regard the role of the Central American Integration System,<sup>5</sup> through the Central American Tourism Integration Secretariat, in the promotion of sustainable tourism in the region,

*Commending* the ongoing efforts of the Governments of the Central American countries, in coordination with the Central American Commission on Environment and Development and in cooperation with the World Tourism Organization, in the implementation of existing and new programmes designed to launch and promote sustainable tourism throughout the region,

*Noting* the existing joint initiatives designed and implemented to stimulate regional tourism integration and to foster the development of indigenous and local communities, such as the Mayan World regional brand,

*Recalling* the outcomes of the Forum on Tourism, Sustainability and Climate Change in Central America, held from 11 to 13 April 2013 in La Ceiba, Honduras, the declaration of the fifteenth forum on the development of tourism and on the harmonization of efforts to promote tourism in Central America and the Dominican Republic, held in Guatemala City on 27 August 2014, the outcomes adopted at the 112th meeting of the Central American Tourism Council, held in San Salvador on 23 September 2019, and the outcomes adopted at the 119th meeting of the Central American Tourism Council, held virtually on 29 April 2021,

*Recalling also* the twenty-third session of the General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization, held in Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation, from 9 to 13 September 2019, and looking forward to its twenty-fourth session, to be held from 30 November to 3 December 2021, in Marrakech, Morocco,

*Acknowledging* the importance of ongoing actions to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production<sup>6</sup> in the tourism sector while contributing to sustainable development and resilient societies,

*Taking note* of the World Tourism Organization *World Tourism Barometer* of January 2019, according to which the tourism sector has become a major economic activity for many of the countries in the region, creating much-needed job opportunities and bringing in significant income and foreign exchange earnings, noting also the *World Tourism Barometer* of September 2021, which highlighted the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on tourism, and noting with concern that the global tourism sector suffered its greatest crisis on record in 2020, as a result of the unprecedented health, social and economic emergency caused by the onset of the pandemic,

[Placeholder para for cross-cutting language on COVID-19]

<sup>5</sup> The membership of the Central American Integration System includes Belize, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama.

<sup>6</sup> In accordance with United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 4/1 (UNEP/EA.4/Res.1).

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General;<sup>7</sup>
2. *Recognizes* the major role that sustainable tourism plays in the development of the Central American countries, as an instrument of social inclusion that generates decent jobs and contributes to the improvement of the quality of life of the population, aimed at achieving poverty eradication in all its forms and dimensions;
3. *Also recognizes* that since the adoption of resolution [74/211](#) in 2019, despite the many challenges they have faced owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Central American countries have shown numerous positive developments, initiatives and efforts to promote sustainable tourism and sustainable development, notwithstanding which it is expected that the pandemic will continue to adversely affect progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,<sup>8</sup> including the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and in this sense, encourages strategic actions and accelerators to address the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 and to promote a sustainable recovery in the tourism sector, through global and regional political action and coordination to mitigate the effects of the crisis and support the recovery that require unprecedented financial efforts to rebuild a more resilient, diversified, inclusive and sustainable tourism sector;
4. *Recalls* the adoption of the principles of sustainable tourism, developed by the Central American Tourism Integration Secretariat and found in its strategic plan for sustainable tourism development, 2021–2025, which captures the region’s vision of itself as an integrated, sustainable, multi-location, cross-border destination of high quality and emphasizes its action plan for tourism and climate change as a component of the regional strategy on climate change;
5. *Recognizes* that the tourism sector has been a catalyst for achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions in Central America, including addressing environmental issues, in particular climate change, poverty eradication and economic development, highlighting the importance of strengthening appropriate policies and financial support within a broader framework of sustainable development policies;
6. *Encourages* regional and national tourism organizations to promote destination models that seek the highest possible direct benefits for local and national economies, in order to contribute to improving quality of life and reducing poverty in local communities, taking into account the integration of sustainability policies in the tourism sector, and invites all stakeholders to identify, assess and mitigate the impacts of tourism on the three dimensions of sustainable development;
7. *Stresses* the importance of biocultural heritage, endogenous development, scientific research and replicable models to promote tourism activities for the benefit of people and nature, as a priority for the Central American region, and recognizes that some countries in the region are developing new and innovative models such as the tourism, conservation and research tourism model;
8. *Recognizes* the valuable role of international cooperation with relevant partners, and encourages them to continue to support the implementation of various projects aimed at promoting sustainable tourism in the region by, inter alia, strengthening ecotourism, rural, cultural and heritage tourism, including colonial sites, preventing trafficking in cultural artefacts and ensuring respect for intangible cultural heritage and cultural and natural sites;

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<sup>7</sup> [A/76/217](#).

<sup>8</sup> Resolution [70/1](#).

9. *Welcomes* the progress made by the Central American countries in converging towards a regional tourism strategy based on preserving the region's biodiversity and natural and cultural attractions and reducing poverty through employment and entrepreneurial tourism development that emphasizes micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, while addressing the adverse effects of climate change, to improve the quality of life of the region's inhabitants;

10. *Appreciates* the continued efforts of the Central American countries to support sustainable tourism development, including the adoption and implementation of new legislation and policies, and encourages them to use sustainable tourism as a tool to promote the eradication of poverty and enhance the protection of biodiversity, cultural heritage and community development;

11. *Encourages* cooperation to promote the engagement of women, youth, indigenous peoples and local communities and initiatives that foster their socioeconomic empowerment through sustainable tourism that continues to promote equitable partnerships, the creation of jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities;

12. *Recognizes* the continued need to support sustainable tourism activities and relevant capacity-building efforts that promote environmental awareness, conserve and protect the environment, respect wildlife, biodiversity, ecosystems and cultural diversity and improve the welfare and livelihoods of local communities by supporting their local economies and the human and natural environment as a whole;

13. *Notes* the importance of adequately measuring the sociocultural and environmental impact of tourism, and encourages efforts to fill the present data gap in this area by taking advantage of the emergence of non-traditional solutions and sources of data, with an overarching goal of advancing the national sustainable development agenda beyond the tourism sector;

14. *Recognizes* that the implementation of sustainable consumption and production patterns in the tourism sector in Central America, and hence advancing the 2030 Agenda in the region, requires, inter alia, the identification and adoption of more resource-efficient tourism planning approaches by all relevant stakeholders;

15. *Stresses* the need to promote the further development of sustainable tourism, in particular through the consumption of sustainable tourism products and services, and to strengthen the development of ecotourism, maintaining, in particular, the culture and environmental integrity of indigenous and local communities and enhancing the protection of ecologically sensitive areas and the natural heritage and indigenous cultural and religious sites of those communities;

16. *Invites* Governments and other stakeholders to join the Sustainable Tourism Programme of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns,<sup>9</sup> which aims at promoting innovation and circular thinking to accelerate resource efficiency in the tourism value chain;

17. *Recalls* the establishment of two observatories for sustainable tourism in Central America,<sup>10</sup> and invites Governments and other stakeholders to consider joining the International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories of the World Tourism Organization, which contributes to the promotion of economically, socially and environmentally sustainable tourism, and to support the practice of informed policymaking around the world;

18. *Encourages* further collaboration by public-private partnerships towards the enhancement of quality data collection, taking into account the concerted efforts

<sup>9</sup> A/CONF.216/5, annex.

<sup>10</sup> The observatories are located in Panama City and in La Antigua Guatemala.

by national authorities of the Central American countries, in conjunction with the private sector, through the establishment of observatories for sustainable tourism to monitor the development of tourism at the destination level in order to provide timely information for evidence-based policies and decision-making;

19. *Urges* the tourism sector in the Central American countries to be part of the coordination, knowledge-sharing and communication mechanisms for security and emergency management at the national and regional levels and to collectively promote an evidence-based approach in developing measures for safe, secure and seamless travel, which will enable government agencies to make relevant, informed and coordinated decisions;

20. *Emphasizes*, taking into account the fact that the tourism sector is vulnerable to natural disasters, the need to foster resilient tourism development in the Central American region, including through national strategies for rehabilitation after shocks, climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction plans and public-private partnerships;

21. *Welcomes* the efforts of the World Tourism Organization, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, regional commissions and other regional organizations, as well as the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to promote sustainable tourism worldwide;

22. *Invites* Member States and other stakeholders and the World Tourism Organization to continue to support the activities undertaken by the Central American countries for the promotion of sustainable tourism in the region, including with regard to emergency preparedness for better disaster risk reduction, the vulnerabilities of the Central American countries to natural disasters, and their impacts on sustainable tourism, as well as for capacity-building, job creation and the promotion of local culture and products, and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals;

23. *Invites* the international community to support efforts, as appropriate, in creating and implementing innovative technologies to modernize the tourism industry in the Central American countries;

24. *Encourages* the Central American countries, through the Central American Tourism Council and the Central American Tourism Integration Secretariat, to promote sustainable tourism by intensifying bilateral, regional and multilateral cooperation at the level of the tourism industry, and to continue to support sustainable tourism through policies that foster responsive and inclusive tourism, strengthen regional identity and protect their natural and cultural heritage, including their ecosystems and biodiversity, and notes that existing initiatives, such as the Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism, among other international initiatives, can deliver direct and focused support to Governments;

25. *Also encourages* the Central American countries to establish and strengthen secure, reliable, efficient, high-quality, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including transit transport systems that link them to international markets, affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy and information and communications technology, with the support of the international community, as appropriate, so as to promote sustainable tourism in the region;

26. *Recognizes* that persons with disabilities have equal rights to access tourism services and opportunities, such as independent travel, accessible services, trained staff, reliable information and inclusive marketing, and that great efforts should be made to ensure that tourism policies and practices are inclusive of persons with disabilities, the majority of whom live in developing countries;

27. *Calls upon* Member States and the tourism sector to take effective measures, in the context of sustainable tourism, including ecotourism initiatives, to help to promote the equal participation of women and the balanced participation of youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and local communities, at all levels and in decision-making processes in all areas, and to promote effective economic empowerment, mainly through decent job and income creation;

28. *Recognizes* that addressing the need for improved monitoring of the development impacts of tourism requires rethinking and changing traditional practices in order to incorporate multiple data sources to provide public administrations and the tourism sector with the most updated intelligence on tourism, and notes the progress achieved through the International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories of the World Tourism Organization, which is focused on continuously monitoring the impacts of tourism, tackling the three dimensions of sustainability, strengthening evidence-based decision-making and creating a culture of continuous and timely monitoring and measurement;

29. *Welcomes* the positive role of tourism in the conservation of biodiversity and in fighting climate change, which provides a further argument for enhancing the environmental components of tourism policies and better utilizing the potential of tourism as an enabling agent of change, and the convening of the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Glasgow, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland within the context of the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;

30. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in cooperation with the Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization and with other relevant United Nations entities, to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-eighth session an action-oriented report on the implementation of the present resolution, including concrete recommendations to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in this regard, in the Central American countries, and decides to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-eighth session the item entitled “Sustainable development”.

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