

Media Update

25 August 2020

United Nations

SECRETARY-GENERAL MESSAGE

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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VIDEO REMARKS ON LAUNCH OF POLICY BRIEF ON TOURISM AND COVID-19 25 August 2020

Tourism is one of the world's most important economic sectors.

It employs one in every ten people on Earth and provides livelihoods to hundreds of millions more.

It boosts economies and enables countries to thrive.

It allows people to experience some of the world's cultural and natural riches and brings people closer to each other, highlighting our common humanity.

Indeed, one might say that tourism is itself one of the wonders of the world.

That is why it has been so painful to see how tourism has been devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the first five months of this year, international tourist arrivals decreased by more than half and some \$320 billion dollars in exports from tourism were lost.

Overall, some 120 million direct jobs in tourism are at risk.

Many are in the informal economy or in micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, which employ a high proportion of women and young people.

The crisis is a major shock for developed economies, but for developing countries, it is an emergency, particularly for many small island developing states and African countries.

For women, rural communities, indigenous peoples and many other historically marginalized populations, tourism has been a vehicle for integration, empowerment and generating income.

Tourism is also a key pillar for the conservation of natural and cultural heritage.

The fall in revenues has led to increased poaching and habitat destruction in and around protected areas, and the closure of many World Heritage Sites has deprived communities of vital livelihoods.

It is imperative that we rebuild the tourism sector.

But it must be in a way that is safe, equitable and climate friendly.

Transport-related greenhouse gas emissions could rebound sharply if recovery is not aligned with climate goals.

Supporting the millions of livelihoods that depend on tourism means building a sustainable and responsible travel experience that is safe for host communities, workers and travellers.

To aid recovery, I have identified five priority areas.

First, mitigate the socio-economic impacts of the crisis.

Second, build resilience across the entire tourism value chain.

Third, maximize the use of technology in the tourism sector.

Fourth, promote sustainability and green growth.

And fifth, foster partnerships to enable tourism to further support the Sustainable Development Goals.

Let us ensure tourism regains its position as a provider of decent jobs, stable incomes and the protection of our cultural and natural heritage.

Thank you.

Video link:

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/downloads2.unmultimedia.org/public/video/evergreen/MSG+SG+Tourism/MSG+SG+Policy+Brief+on+Tourism+24+Aug+Clean.mp4>