



FOR DECISION

Agenda item 11

**Proposal of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia:
Redesign Tourism for the Future**

A/24/11

Madrid, 23 November 2021
Original: English

Note by the Secretariat: This agenda item was proposed by the Full Member the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia by virtue of Rule 5(1)(i) and has been included in the provisional agenda in accordance with Rule 5(3) of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly. The present document consists of the requisite report submitted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in its proposal.

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Agenda item [number]
Redesigning Tourism for the Future

[A/24/reference number]
Madrid, [date] 2021
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Executive summary (1 page max.)

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated, as never before, the vital economic and social role that tourism plays worldwide. Tourism is a major driver of the global economy, but the pandemic has had a devastating impact globally and has gravely affected this vital sector, reducing the socioeconomic value it creates. 62 million jobs and USD 4 trillion in GDP have been lost in 2020. The world needs to take action to avoid this happening again and to reinvigorate this important sector.

For the sector to recover, flourish and become resilient to future global shocks, it needs change, commitment and investment to benefit people worldwide, especially in developing countries. To reposition the tourism sector more prominently on a global scale, we need greater international collaboration and empowered international organizations. This would ensure an integrated and coordinated approach that embraces tourism's interconnected and interrelated nature and maximizes the sector's contribution to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. It is now time to Redesign Tourism for the Future through change, commitment and investment.

As an active champion of tourism that seeks to work globally with other interested governments and private sector entities, Saudi Arabia demonstrates its commitment to driving collaboration across all levels – a commitment that lies at the heart of the Diriyah Communiqué signed during Saudi Arabia's G20 Presidency in 2020, which recognizes the important role public-private partnerships play in the tourism sector.

Not only is Saudi Arabia committed, it is also ready to provide essential resources to strengthen the sector based on the principles of sustainability and opportunities for all, working with and through multilateral institutions. As the world's biggest single investor in tourism, Saudi Arabia has pledged USD 100 million to activate the Tourism Community Initiative through the World Bank, as a catalyst of sector recovery, by enabling communities through human and institutional capacity building programs to spread the economic benefits of tourism.

Saudi Arabia has been an active partner of the UNWTO, supporting important initiatives including the UNWTO Academy and UNWTO Best Villages Program as well as being the home of the first UNWTO Regional Office, opened in May 2021.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia presents the UNWTO and its Members with a proposal to redesign tourism for the future together, including by establishing a Redesigning Tourism for the Future Task Force. This proposal aims to unite the public and private sectors, empower multilateral organizations and increase collaboration among stakeholders to safeguard against future challenges. The Redesigning Tourism for the Future Task Force also aims to reinvigorate the UNWTO by, *inter alia*, considering changes to the UNWTO's current working methods, and/or other reforms of the UNWTO.

The Redesigning Tourism for the Future Task Force would be composed of one Member State selected by each of the Regional Commissions plus a chair. Building on Saudi Arabia's demonstrated commitment to the development of the sector, and its proposal to Redesign Tourism for the Future, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia offers itself to chair the Redesigning Tourism for the Future Task Force.

Action by the General Assembly

DRAFT RESOLUTION¹ (1 page max.)

The General Assembly,

Noting that the Minister of Tourism of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, H.E. Mr. Ahmed Al Khateeb, has informed the Secretary-General of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's proposal to Redesign Tourism for the Future and that this proposal includes establishing a Redesigning Tourism for the Future Task Force,

Having examined the information submitted by the Secretary-General on the proposal,

Reflecting that the world needs action as the importance of tourism has been reinforced by the COVID-19 pandemic and that the pandemic's devastating impacts are still being felt, especially in developing countries, to which the UNWTO Statutes make special reference,

Recalling that the socioeconomic impact of tourism has been wide-ranging and substantial and that multilateral collaboration is essential to strengthen the sector,

Recalling that pursuant to Article 12(j) of the Statutes of the UNWTO, the General Assembly can establish any technical or regional body which may become necessary,

1. *Recognizes* the strategic importance of working with all UNWTO Members on key initiatives to Redesign Tourism for the Future with a focus on change, commitment, and investment;
2. *Recognizes* the importance of committing to Redesign Tourism for the Future to benefit all;
3. *Recalls* that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia currently hosts a Regional Office of the UNWTO in Riyadh, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia;
4. *Resolves* to establish a task force within the UNWTO named the Redesigning Tourism for the Future Task Force;
5. *Resolves* to mandate the Redesigning Tourism for the Future Task Force in accordance with this proposal of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia;
6. *Decides* that the mandate of the Redesigning Tourism for the Future Task will continue until the 26th session of the General Assembly and will renew automatically unless decided otherwise by a majority of Full Member States present and voting;
7. *Decides* that the Redesigning Tourism for the Future Task Force will be composed of one Member State selected by each of the Regional Commissions plus a chair. If a Regional Commission has not identified its Task Force member by the end of the first quarter of 2022, then the chair shall invite a Member State from that Regional Commission to join the Task Force;
8. *Appoints* the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as chair of the Redesigning Tourism for the Future Task Force;
9. *Authorizes* the Redesigning Tourism for the Future Task Force to adopt its own rules of procedure as needed;
10. *Urges* the Redesigning Tourism for the Future Task Force to commence its work as soon as possible and no later than the end of the first quarter of 2022;
11. *Invites* the Redesigning Tourism for the Future Task Force to submit reports and recommendations periodically to the Executive Council and the General Assembly, as it may consider appropriate.

¹ This is a draft resolution. For the final resolution adopted by the Assembly, please refer to the Resolutions document issued at the end of the session.

I. Proposal to Redesign Tourism for the Future

1. By a letter dated 20 October 2021, the Minister of Tourism of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, H.E. Mr. Ahmed Al Khateeb, informed the Secretary-General of the proposal of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to work in collaboration with international partners to redesign tourism to unite the public and private sectors, empower multilateral organizations and increase collaboration between stakeholders to safeguard against future challenges through a range of measures, including establishing within the UNWTO a task force to redesign tourism for the future (the "**Redesigning Tourism for the Future Task Force**"). A copy of the letter is attached to the present document as **Annex I**.
2. At the request of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Secretary-General hereby submits this proposal to Redesign Tourism for the Future including establishing the Redesigning Tourism for the Future Task Force, for decision by the General Assembly of the UNWTO, in accordance with Rules 38(1) and 40 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly.

II. The Need for Action

3. Tourism is a major driver of the global economy, but the COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact globally and has gravely affected this vital sector, reducing the socio-economic value it creates. 62 million jobs, and USD 4 trillion in annual GDP have been lost in 2020. All countries have suffered. But this impact has fallen disproportionately on the developing world.
4. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia recognizes that current global policy does not reflect the far-reaching importance of the tourism sector and it is time for this to change. Tourism is a major driver of the global economy. Before the pandemic hit, 10.4% of global GDP was generated by travel and tourism and 1 in 4 new jobs were created by the tourism sector. The pandemic has had a devastating impact globally and has seriously affected this vital sector, reducing the socioeconomic value it creates.
5. For the sector to recover, flourish and become resilient to future global shocks, it needs change, commitment and investment to benefit people worldwide, and especially in developing countries. To reposition the tourism sector more prominently on a global scale, we need greater international collaboration and empowered international organizations. This will ensure a more integrated and coordinated approach that embraces tourism's interconnected and interrelated nature and maximizes the sector's contribution to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

III. Mandate of the Redesigning Tourism for the Future Task Force

6. In order to address the above, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia proposes that the UNWTO establish the Redesigning Tourism for the Future Task Force.
7. The Redesigning Tourism for the Future Task Force shall be mandated to:
 - i. reinvigorate the UNWTO by, *inter alia*, considering changes to the UNWTO's current working methods, as well as the establishment of improved programs and initiatives, to ensure that the UNWTO can service the existing and future needs of the tourism sector, particularly in relation to the developing world;
 - ii. take under consideration measures that respond to global calls for a UNWTO that provides its Member States with materially improved programs and initiatives, that it is capable of executing with tangible and measurable outcomes which are designed to serve the future, that caters to the needs of all Member States including developing States and that aligns with the three key pillars of Redesigning Tourism for the Future: sustainability, resilience and inclusivity; and

- iii. encourage and ensure the meaningful participation of non-State stakeholders in the redesign of the global tourism sector.
8. This mandate of the Redesigning Tourism for the Future Task Force aligns with the UNWTO's aims and purposes.
9. In order to ensure the Redesigning Tourism for the Future Task Force can satisfy its mandate, it shall continue until at least the 26th (ordinary) session of the General Assembly of the UNWTO. The Redesigning Tourism for the Future Task Force mandate shall be renewed automatically, unless decided otherwise by a majority of Full Member States present and voting.

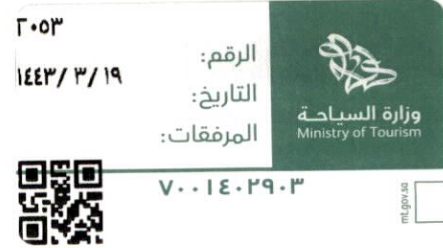
IV. Saudi Arabia: Calling to Reshape the Future of Tourism Together

10. As an active champion of tourism, Saudi Arabia demonstrates its commitment to driving collaboration across all levels – a commitment that lies at the heart of the Diriyah Communiqué signed during Saudi Arabia's G20 Presidency in 2020, which recognizes the important role public-private partnerships play in the tourism sector.
11. Saudi Arabia has been an active partner of the UNWTO, supporting important initiatives including the UNWTO Academy and UNWTO Best Villages Program as well as being the home of the first UNWTO Regional Office opened in May 2021.
12. As the world's biggest single investor in tourism, Saudi Arabia has pledged USD 100 million to activate the Tourism Community Initiative through the World Bank as a catalyst of sector recovery by enabling communities through human and institutional capacity building programs to spread the economic benefits of tourism.
13. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has successfully held a leadership role within the UNWTO. In addition to hosting a Regional Office of the UNWTO, this year the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia co-hosted the Global Tourism Crisis Committee Meeting of the UNWTO, as well as the 47th meeting of UNWTO Regional Commission for the Middle East. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has also served on several committees and organs of the UNWTO, including as the current Second Vice-Chair of the Executive Council.
14. As part of its demonstrated commitment to Redesign Tourism for the Future, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has offered to chair the Redesigning Tourism for the Future Task Force.

Annex I: Letter from the Minister of Tourism of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



HE Zurab Pololikashvili
Secretary-General
United Nations World Tourism Organization
Calle Poeta Joan Maragall 42
28020 Madrid, Spain



25 October 2021

Your Excellency,

I take this opportunity to present my compliments to Your Excellency and am looking forward to personally attending the upcoming 24th session of the General Assembly of the UNWTO in Madrid, Spain.

We are all aware of the profound negative impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the global tourism sector, with devastating socio-economic effects. Sixty-two million jobs and USD 4 trillion in GDP have been lost in 2020. Governments around the world have seen what happens when the tourism sector is not sufficiently supported and developing nations have suffered disproportionately. The world needs to take action to avoid this happening again and to reinvigorate this important sector.

With this in mind, it is my pleasure to convey to Your Excellency a proposal by Saudi Arabia to be put forth as an agenda item at the upcoming General Assembly, entitled "Redesign Tourism for the Future", which focuses on commitment and investment in sustainable and innovative changes necessary for the sector.

For the sector to recover, flourish and become resilient to future global shocks, it needs change, commitment, and investment to benefit people worldwide, and especially in developing countries. To reposition the tourism sector more prominently on a global scale, we need greater international collaboration and empowered international organizations. This ensures an integrated and coordinated approach that embraces tourism's interconnected and interrelated nature and maximizes the sector's contribution to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

It is time to Redesign Tourism for the Future to ensure benefits for all.

The proposal of Saudi Arabia (as set forth in the attached agenda item) to Redesign Tourism for the Future aims to unite the public and private sectors, empower multilateral organizations and increase collaboration between stakeholders to safeguard against future challenges. A key feature of the proposal is to establish the "Redesigning Tourism for the Future Task Force". The proposed mandate of the Redesigning Tourism for the Future Task Force includes reinvigorating the work of the UNWTO by considering changes to the UNWTO's current working methods, as well as the establishment of improved programs and initiatives, to ensure that the organization can serve the existing and future needs of the tourism sector, particularly in relation to the developing world.

As an active partner of the UNWTO, Saudi Arabia has been a leading voice in the sector's recovery and is committed to driving further progress, a promise Saudi Arabia made during its Presidency of the G20 that led to the adoption of the Diriyah Communiqué. As a champion of tourism, Saudi Arabia has supported many important UNWTO initiatives, including the UNWTO Academy and UNWTO Best Villages Program and most recently as the home of the first UNWTO Regional Office, opened in Riyadh in May 2021. As the world's biggest single investor in tourism, Saudi Arabia has pledged USD 100 million to activate the Tourism Community Initiative as a catalyst of sector recovery.



As part of its demonstrated commitment to the Redesign Tourism for the Future, we put Saudi Arabia forth as the Chair of the Redesigning Tourism for the Future Task Force, which supports the mandate of the UNWTO.

Saudi Arabia also kindly requests the opportunity to give a keynote speech at the beginning of the program ahead of the formal agenda. We believe that with the opening of the established UNWTO Regional Office for the Middle East in Riyadh, the swift and successful response to COVID-19 domestically and on the international stage, as well as the new initiatives proposed, Saudi Arabia will provide engaging insight into the future that we will build together.

I kindly request that Saudi Arabia's proposal to Redesign Tourism for the Future be circulated to Member States and be included in the agenda of the upcoming session of the General Assembly.

I also wish to convey my appreciation to Your Excellency for your attention and consideration of this request, as well as the keynote request, and look forward to meeting you in Madrid soon.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurance of my highest consideration,

Ahmed Al-Khateeb
Minister of Tourism of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia