



South-South Cooperation for Tourism Development Advances at 2nd UN Tourism Africa & Americas Summit

Livingstone, Republic of Zambia, 10 April 2025 – UN Tourism has advanced South-South cooperation in tourism development, putting into action the aims of the Punta Cana Declaration signed by its Member States from Africa and the Americas. Building on the success of the inaugural event, the 2nd UN Tourism Africa & The Americas Summit outlined concrete plans for achieving shared goals, focused on innovation, Technical Cooperation, enhanced connectivity, tourism investments and tourist confidence through security.

According to UN Tourism’s data, both regions have bounced back from the impacts of the pandemic: in 2024, **Africa welcomed 74 million** international arrivals, 7% more than in 2019, and **12% more than in 2023**. The Americas, meanwhile, welcomed **213 million**, or around **97%** of pre-pandemic arrivals. The Summit made clear the strong links between the two regions, both in terms of visitors between and within regions, as well as investment source markets and recipients.

UN Tourism Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili said: “This Summit is proof of the enduring commitment of Africa and the Americas to cooperate across borders and oceans. Our roadmap will advance inclusive growth and ensure that tourism remains a driver of shared prosperity. Above all, by focusing on training and skill-building, we’re giving people, especially youth, the means to succeed in today’s competitive world.”

The Vice President of the Republic of Zambia, Mutale Nalumango, stressed the importance of “shared connectivity” and cooperation in the face of shared challenges. In remarks delivered by Minister of Tourism Rodney Sikumba, she said: “The diversity of experiences and perspectives here today represents a treasure of knowledge which, if collectively harnessed, will enhance our capacity to advance the resilient tourism sector we envision.”

South-South Development through Investments

Growing and directing investment into tourism is one of the key pillars of the Punta Cana Declaration. In Zambia, UN Tourism shared its achievements in this priority area. To date, 18 editions of the “**Tourism Doing Business Guidelines**” for investment have been published for destinations across Africa and the Americas. A further 10 are in development.

The Guidelines highlight the enormous potential for tourism investment within and between the regions. Between 2019 and 2024, Africa invested around USD 3.9 in 36 projects in the Americas, while Latin America and the Caribbean invested the same amount in 34 projects in Africa. With the aim of raising these levels, UN Tourism announced plans to organise a **Biennial Africa-Americas Tourism Investment Conference**. The Conference will bring together governments, financial institutions, private sector actors and development partners with the aim of boosting cross-continental investment flows and target investment around shared priorities.

A shared future: Growth through education

With over **50% of the tourism workforce under 25**, the sector offers vast opportunities for young people, particularly in Africa – the world’s youngest continent – and the Americas. To put the education-focused aims of the Punta Cana Declaration into action, UN Tourism is advancing training in both regions. In Zambia, delegates were brought up-to-date with work in the Dominican Republic, where a collaboration with MIREX will provide training on diplomacy and tourism, to be launched this year.

Also at the Summit, delegates were given an update on the status of the planned **Academy in collaboration with UN Tourism in Livingstone**. The Academy will serve as a hub for specialist education and join UN Tourism’s growing network of education centres. These include the International Academy for the Culinary Arts in Zimbabwe and a planned centre in the Dominica Republic, in collaboration with INFOTEP. Moving forward, UN Tourism will also aim to reach around 2,000 beneficiaries in both Africa and the Americas through its new WhatsApp courses for professional development.

Innovation to shape future of African-American tourism

Hand-in-hand with education, the Punta Cana Declaration places innovation at the centre of South-South cooperation for tourism development. In Livingstone, UN Tourism announced the pending launch of a first Start-Up Competition for the regions. The **“Bridges of Innovation” challenge** will seek out enterprises ready to address challenges in the areas of sustainability, inclusivity and digital transformation, with a focus on local communities.

Investment will also serve as the main aim of the first **UN Tourism Thematic Office in Morocco**. The Office will serve as a hub for innovation, with acceleration programmes for regional start-ups, research and development and for celebrating new talent through Tourism Tech Adventures.

Enhanced connectivity and tourist safety

The Punta Cana Declaration aims to address challenges hindering tourism growth through limited air connectivity. In Guatemala, UN Tourism has partnered with INGUAT to begin a joint Work Plan aimed at linking industry players to boost links. Alongside this, a planned 2nd Ministerial Conference on Tourism and Air Transport in Africa will be held in Angola in July, with a focus on AI and innovation for connectivity.

The Africa & Americas Summit also platformed UN Tourism's progress in elevating safety standards for tourists and so boosting confidence in travel to both regions. In Livingstone, delegates were brought up-to-date with progress in the Safety of Destinations Initiative (SAFE-D), designed to boost public-private collaboration and promote crisis preparedness.

Related links:

[2nd UN Tourism Africa & Americas Summit](#)

[2nd UN Tourism and ICAO Ministerial Conference on Tourism and Air Transport in Africa Investment Guidelines](#)