

Executive Council

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Agenda item 6(a)**Report on the Affiliate Membership**

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**Executive Summary**

Through this report, the Executive Council is informed about the most notable activities and developments carried out in the area of Affiliate Members since the 122nd Executive Council session (Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, 14-15 November 2024), in line with the strategic objectives established by the Secretary-General for the Affiliate Members and Public-Private Collaboration Department (AM-PPC).

The report emphasizes the Affiliate Membership's commitment to reinforcing its role as a pillar of the Organization, providing a robust platform for effective public-private collaboration and fostering partnerships between the Organization and the private tourism sector, as well as making valuable contributions through resources, support, and projects to enhance UN Tourism's ability to deliver value to the global tourism sector and its Member States.

DRAFT DECISION¹

Agenda item 6(a)

Report on the Affiliate Membership
(document CE/123/6(a))

The Executive Council,

Having examined the Report on the Affiliate Membership,

1. *Thanks* the Chair of the Board of the Affiliate Members for her communication;
2. *Thanks* the members of the Board of the Affiliate Members for the successful fulfilment of their mandate during 2022-2025;
3. *Encourages* the Affiliate Members to actively participate in the upcoming process for the election of the Board members for the period 2026-2029;
4. *Welcomes* the readiness of the Affiliate Members Board to proactively contribute to the ongoing efforts to achieve a quality-oriented and geographically balanced expansion of the UN Tourism Affiliate Membership; and
5. *Stresses* the importance of further engaging Affiliate Members and the private sector in the UN Tourism agenda and its Programme of Work.

¹ This is a draft decision. For the final decision adopted by the Council, please refer to the Decisions document issued at the end of the session.

I. Activities of the Board of the Affiliate Members

1. The Board of the Affiliate Members (AM Board) continued to prioritize its institutional engagement and participation in all projects, meetings and events organized by UN Tourism, in order to take full advantage of such opportunities to share with the governments of the Member States their innovative projects and proposals related to the priority topics and areas of work of the Organization and of the tourism industry, duly considering the Affiliate Members' priorities and needs.
2. The Board of the Affiliate Members met in November 2024 in Madrid, to carry out a necessary update on the main activities carried out in 2024, the schedule of events for 2025, and the integration of the Affiliate Members' priorities within UN Tourism's Programme of Work 2026-2027.
3. The constructive dialogue and collaboration between the AM Board and the Committee on Matters Related to Affiliate Membership (CMAM) have significantly enhanced the integration of Affiliate Members within the Organization. The CMAM provides the AM Board with an ideal platform to promote the proposals and initiatives of affiliated entities, leveraging its prerogative to make recommendations to the UN Tourism Governing Bodies for further consideration and approval.
4. In this context, during the meeting of the Committee on Matters Related to Affiliate Membership on 29 May 2025, the Affiliate Members will present an initiative from the Middle East region which aims to showcase the beauty and diversity of Arab countries through immersive experiences (presentation by the Jordan Tourism Board) and an advance of the publication on astrotourism that UN Tourism is preparing in collaboration with Affiliate Member Starlight Foundation (Spain).
5. The representatives of the Affiliate Members also had institutional participation in the Regional Commissions held recently:
 - (a) 51st meeting of the Regional Commission for the Middle East, Doha, Qatar, 11-14 February 2025, through the Vice-Chair of the AM Board, Chameleon Strategies; and
 - (b) 37th joint meeting of the Regional Commissions for East Asia and the Pacific and South Asia, Jakarta, Indonesia, 14-15 April 2025, through the Affiliate Member Traveloka (Indonesia).
6. Furthermore, the Affiliate Members seek to contribute to strengthening the various mechanisms and priority thematic discussions that UN Tourism is advancing by incorporating Affiliate Members in all of UN Tourism's specialized committees.
7. The Affiliate Members and Public-Private Collaboration Department has launched the process for the election of the members of the Board of Affiliate Members for the period 2026-2029. In order to guide this election process and to ensure transparency and to encourage broad and active participation, a clear roadmap has been established and properly communicated to the Affiliate Members.

II. Participation of the Affiliate Members in UN Tourism activities

8. With the objective of advancing towards a stronger integration of Affiliate Members within the Organization, the Affiliate Members have participated, during the period November 2024 - May 2025, in the main conferences and events organized by UN Tourism and other projects and activities in priority areas, such as:
9. **Sports Tourism**
 - (a) Many notable Affiliate Members, such as VisitScotland, Iberia, Croatian National Tourist Board, International Master Games Association, MadCup, FIA, Madrid City Council etc., participated in the 3rd edition of the World Sports Tourism Congress (WSTC), organized by UN Tourism in cooperation with Affiliate Member the Tourism Board of the Region of Madrid and held at the Santiago Bernabéu Stadium (Madrid, 28-29 November 2024). Their

contributions played a vital role in shaping the vast potential of Sports Tourism and its role in economic growth, sustainability, and destination development.

- (b) In the framework of the 51st meeting of the Regional Commission for the Middle East (13 February 2025, Doha, Qatar), the company Red Sea Global (Affiliate Member from Saudi Arabia) and International Masters Games Association (AM from Belgium) participated in the conference “Sports Tourism and the Tourism Industry Post-World Cup” to explore the impact of major sporting events on tourism in the Middle East, their role in fostering sustainable tourism, and how technology is transforming the sports tourism experience.
 - (c) In the framework of the First International Conference of Adventure Tourism (30 April - 2 May, Fujairah, UAE), organized by the Affiliate Member Fujairah Adventures Center with the support of UN Tourism, several Affiliate Members are set to participate in the debate focused on how outdoor sports activities can drive tourism development and community involvement while protecting the environment (Sabah Tourism Board (Malaysia), Tanzania Association of Tours Operators, Kenya Tourism Board, Petra Development & Tourism Authority (Jordan), Federation of Camping and Caravanning (FICC), Maldives Association of Tourism Industry (Maldives), Türkiye Tourism Promotion and Development Agency).
10. **Astrotourism.** The Affiliate Members are also taking an active role in the development of the first publication prepared by UN Tourism addressing Astrotourism, understood as a nature-friendly and mindful type of tourism that combines night and day sky observation, outreach, and leisure activities related to astronomy. This publication is being produced in collaboration with Affiliate Members from Spain: Starlight Foundation, Tenerife Tourism and La Palma Island Tourism.
 11. **Thermal Tourism.** The Affiliate Member European Historic Thermal Towns Association (EHTTA) from Belgium is working closely with UN Tourism in the organization of the 3rd International Congress on Thermal Tourism to be held in Budapest at the beginning of June, a global event that brings together experts, researchers, policymakers, and industry stakeholders to explore the evolving potential of thermal tourism. This congress serves as a platform for discussions on sustainability, heritage, innovation, and well-being in the context of thermal destinations.
 12. **Artificial Intelligence.** The Affiliate Member Saxion University of Applied Sciences (Netherlands) was actively involved in UN Tourism's first publication on Artificial Intelligence in the tourism sector. A broad range of Affiliate Members were being involved in presenting best practices in how to use artificial intelligence in tourism. These included: Booking.com (Netherlands), Colliers Mena (UAE), Expedia Group (USA), Piñero Group (Spain), JTB Corp. (Japan), Madrid Tourism City Council, Meliá Hotels International and Visit Benidorm (Spain), NEOM (Saudi Arabia), Tripadvisor (USA), and Vienna Tourist Board (Austria).
 13. The Affiliate Members welcomed the efforts by the Affiliate Members and Public-Private Collaboration Department in providing them with opportunities to actively participate at the main International Tourism Fairs:
 - (a) In November 2024, several Affiliate Members (HotelBeds and Expedia from USA, and JTB Corp. (Japan)) spoke at the World Travel Market Ministers' Summit, in association with UN Tourism and WTTC, to debate the transformative potential of AI and emerging technologies in shaping the future of travel and hospitality weighed against the ethical implications of its deployment.
 - (b) At FITUR 2025, the Affiliate Members Corner “Targeting Traveller Segments” provided a platform to share best practices and data, showcasing UN Tourism Affiliate Members (Petra Development & Tourism Region Authority, IATA, Tanzania Association of Tour Operators (TATO), Cartagena de Indias Tourism Corporation, Allianz Partners Spain, ICF, MAWDY - MAPFRE, Brazilian Association of Travel Agencies (ABAV), and IGLTA) presenting key data and insights on various travellers segments.
 - (c) In collaboration with Saxion University of Applied Sciences, UN Tourism unveiled the groundbreaking report *‘Artificial Intelligence Adoption in Tourism: Key Considerations for Sector Stakeholders’*. The report explores AI's transformative potential, from personalized travel experiences to enhancing operational efficiency, and highlights case studies from Affiliate Members.

- (d) At ITB Berlin (4-6 March, Berlin, Germany), several Affiliate Members (IATA, Istanbul Convention & Visitors Bureau) participated as speakers in the UN Tourism Ministers' Summit to discuss how tourism and peace were interlinked, emphasizing the value of travel for understanding between people.
- 14. The Affiliate Members were involved in developing new episodes of *On the Go*, a podcast series developed by UN Tourism and the Affiliate Member ATREVIA (Spain) dedicated to discussing current and emerging topics in the tourism sector. The series features insights from industry leaders, covering key trends such as sustainability, artificial intelligence, destination management, and gender leadership.

III. Priorities of the Affiliate Members for the upcoming period

- 15. The Affiliate Members are in a unique position to contribute to the reinforcement of UN Tourism's capacity to deliver value to its Members, especially regarding topics or areas where there is a strong need for private sector involvement.
- 16. The Affiliate Membership expresses the full availability and commitment of the UN Tourism private sector to support the Organization and its Member States in their efforts to build a more sustainable, inclusive, and resilient tourism sector.
- 17. Considering that the terms of office of the Members of the Board of the Affiliate Members is finishing this year, they would like to thank the UN Tourism Secretariat, especially to the Affiliate Members and Public-Private Collaboration Department for all the support and efforts during the last 4 years to keep integrating Affiliate Members and the voice of the private sector in UN Tourism's agenda.
