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Agenda item 8**Report on the Regional and Thematic Offices**

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**Executive summary**

The Working Group on UN Tourism Regional and Thematic Offices has held five meetings. It reports its progress and provides a draft Final Report with the Recommendation on the Improvement of the Legal and Operational Framework on the Selection and Establishment of Regional and Thematic Offices.

The report also provides updated information on the progress of existing and upcoming Regional and Thematic Offices as well as on new applications. It also includes the amendment proposed by Japan.

DRAFT RESOLUTION¹

Agenda item 8

Report on the Regional and Thematic Offices
(document A/26/8 rev.1)

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions [656\(XXI\)](#), [740\(XXIV\)](#) and [763\(XXV\)](#),

Having examined the report on the status of Regional and Thematic Offices (A/26/8 rev.1) and decision [xx] of the Executive Council at its 124th session,

1. *Takes note* of the decision of the Executive Council to approve the Report of the Working Group concerning the Improvement of the Legal and Operational Framework on the Selection and Establishment of Regional and Thematic Offices adopted in its resolution 740(XXIV) under Annex I of the present report;
2. *Approves* the revised Legal and Operational Framework on the Selection and Establishment of Regional and Thematic Offices under Annex I of the Report of the Working Group;
3. *Takes note* of all the progress achieved after its 25th session and thanks the Secretary-General for all the contributions;
4. *Reiterates* the utmost importance that all applicants to host UN Tourism Regional and/or Thematic Offices comply with the Legal and Operational Framework adopted by the present resolution and with the standard requirements to be included in the relevant host country agreement, while extensively considering the policies and practices of the United Nations system in case of challenges during the discussion phase between the Secretariat and the Member States related to the establishment of UN Tourism Offices;
5. *Ratifies* the decisions adopted by the Executive Council concerning the arrangements necessary for the entry into force of the Host Country Agreement between the Federative Republic of Brazil and the World Tourism Organization concerning the Regional Office for the Americas in Rio de Janeiro;
6. *Approves* the Protocol between the Federative Republic of Brazil and the World Tourism Organization concerning the Annual Financial Contribution by Brazil to UN Tourism for the Regional Office for the Americas, and the Agreement between the Federative Republic of Brazil and the World Tourism Organization concerning the Financial and Administrative Arrangements of the Regional Office for the Americas;
7. *Congratulates* Brazil on the completion of the conditions for the entry into force of the Host Country Agreement for the establishment of the Regional Office for the Americas in Rio de Janeiro, in accordance with its resolution 763(XXV), as well as on the inauguration of the Regional Office for the Americas and the commencement of its operations;
8. *Ratifies* the decision of the Executive Council to approve the proposal of the Government of Morocco to establish a Thematic Office on Innovation for Africa in Rabat instead of the Regional Office for Africa in Marrakesh;

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.

9. *Approves* the Host Country Agreement between the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco and the World Tourism Organization on the establishment of the Thematic Office on Innovation for Africa in Rabat;
10. *Ratifies* the decision of the Executive Council concerning the arrangements necessary for the entry into force of the Host Country Agreement concerning the Thematic Office on Innovation for Africa;
11. *Approves* the Agreement between the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco and the World Tourism Organization relating to the financial and administrative arrangements of the UN Tourism Thematic Office on Innovation for Africa in the Kingdom of Morocco;
12. *Encourages* the Government of Morocco to complete all remaining procedures required to allow for the entry into force of the Host Country Agreement concerning the Thematic Office on Innovation for Africa;
13. *Ratifies* the decision of the Executive Council to approve the establishment of the Tourism Law Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean in Montevideo, Uruguay;
14. *Further ratifies*, on an exceptional basis, the decision of the Executive Council to apply, on a *mutatis mutandis* basis, the provisions of the UNDP-Uruguay Agreement to the Tourism Law Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean for such time until a Host Country Agreement with Uruguay is concluded;
15. *Approves*, the Agreement between the World Tourism Organization and the Oriental Republic of Uruguay on the interim legal status of the Tourism Law Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean;
16. *Ratifies* the decision of the Executive Council on the legal, financial and administrative arrangements for the establishment of the Thematic Office on Tourism on the Silk Road in Samarkand;
17. *Approves* the Host Country Agreement between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the World Tourism Organization on the establishment of the Thematic Office on Tourism on the Silk Road in Samarkand;
18. *Encourages* the Secretariat to continue to pursue the consultative and negotiation process with the Government of Uzbekistan on the financial and administrative requirements for the establishment of the Thematic Office on Tourism on the Silk Road in Samarkand in accordance with the legal and operational framework adopted in its resolution 740(XXIV);
19. *Welcomes* the proposal of the Government of China to establish a Regional Office in Shanghai in accordance with the requirements set out in the legal and operational framework for the establishment of UN Tourism Regional Offices adopted in its resolution 740(XXIV);
20. *Takes note* of the comments received at the Secretariat from the Members of the Commission for East Asia and the Pacific (CAP) and the Commission for South Asia (CSA);

[Option 1]

Approves the proposal of the Government of China to establish a Regional Office in Shanghai subject to further discussions at the CAP-CSA Meetings on the distribution of roles of the Regional Office in China and the Regional Support Office in Japan;

Authorizes the Secretary-General to prepare, in collaboration with the Government of China, the legal, financial and administrative arrangements for the establishment of the Regional Office in Shanghai in accordance with the legal and operational framework adopted by the present resolution;

[Option 2]

Invites the Secretary-General and the Government of China to hold further discussions, in consultation with the CAP and CSA, on the proposal to establish a Regional Office in Shanghai;

Authorizes the Executive Council to consider and approve the proposal of the Government of China to establish a Regional Office in Shanghai after such consultation and provided that the proposal is compliant with the legal and operational framework adopted by the present resolution;

Requests the Secretary-General to report to the Executive Council on the results of such discussions;

21. *Takes note with appreciation of* the steps taken by Japan to formalize the legal status of the Regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific and to negotiate a new legal framework to provide a clear legal basis for its operations safeguarding the interests of the Organization;
22. *Notes* that Japan has undertaken to apply the provisions of the 1947 Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies and Annex XVIII to UN Tourism as of 20 July 2020;
23. *Approves*, as an interim measure, the Arrangements between the Japan Tourism Agency and the World Tourism Organization concerning the legal and operational framework of the Regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific [aimed at paving the path for it to become a **Category I entity** / aimed at paving the path for it to fall **under the model of Category I entity**]²;
24. *Encourages* the Government of Japan to complete the internal procedures required to allow for any legal, financial and administrative arrangements concerning the Regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific to become legally binding for both UN Tourism and Japan in accordance with the conditions and criteria applicable to Category I entities adopted in resolution 656(XXI) in order for it to fully operate as a UN Tourism Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in accordance with said conditions; and
25. *Requests* the Secretariat to report to the Executive Council on the negotiations with the Government of Japan in the reform process of the Regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific in accordance with the conditions and criteria applicable to Category I entities pursuant to the mandate received by the General Assembly in resolution 656(XXI) with a view to integrate it fully into the legal and institutional framework of UN Tourism.

² Amendment proposed by Japan (see paragraph 66 of the report).

I. Working Group on Regional and Thematic Offices

1. The Working Group on Regional and Thematic Offices was established by the Executive Council at its 118th session through decision 7(CXVIII), and its [Terms of Reference](#) (pp.6-7), as adopted by the Working Group on 27 September 2023, were endorsed by the Executive Council at its 119th session in decision 7(CXIX) and by the General Assembly at its 25th session in resolution 763(XXV).
2. The primary objective of the Working Group was to discuss the input that had been submitted by the Member States in the period of 2022-2023 on the Legal and Operational Framework on the Selection and Establishment of Regional and Thematic Offices adopted by the General Assembly at its 24th session in resolution 740(XXIV), with a view to producing a report with recommendations on its improvement to the 124th session of the Executive Council.
3. In continuation of the decision of the 118th session of the Executive Council, the Secretariat finalized the steps for the establishment of the Working Group and 37 Member States presented their candidatures for its membership, namely 6 from Africa, 6 from the Americas, 6 from Asia and the Pacific, 6 from Europe and 13 from the Middle East. The following countries are present in the Working Group by regions: Africa – Benin, Burkina Faso, Morocco, Nigeria, Sudan, United Republic of Tanzania; Americas – Brazil, Colombia, Haiti, Nicaragua, Peru, Uruguay; Asia and the Pacific – Afghanistan, China, Indonesia, Japan, Myanmar, Sri Lanka; Europe – Armenia, Belarus, Lithuania, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Spain; The Middle East – Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates, Yemen.
4. Having approved the [Time Frame and Work Plan](#) of meetings (pp. 8-10), the Working Group held five meetings (online format) instead of the initially planned six, with the fourth and fifth meetings combined due to postponements and the need to finalize the Work Plan on time for processing. These postponements were made at the request of the Secretariat. As a result, the Working Group produced a [First Report](#) (pp.7-10), which was submitted to the 122nd session of the Executive Council and of which it took note in decision 6(CXXII), while the Second Report was not prepared because the Fourth Meeting took place after the 123rd session of the Executive Council.
5. The first meeting of the Working Group held on 4 July 2024 brought together representatives from 29 Member States, along with one Associate Member and one Affiliate Member. The meeting reviewed the current status of existing Regional and Thematic Offices and focused on organizational matters essential for the Working Group's functioning. Members discussed and decided on the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair in line with the Terms of Reference, eventually reaching consensus on **Egypt** serving as Chair and **Uruguay** as Vice-Chair. The Working Group also considered and approved the official Time Frame and Work Plan.
6. The second meeting of the Working Group was held on 2 October 2024, with participation from 26 Member States and one Affiliate Member, along with the Chair, Vice-Chair, and the Secretariat. The meeting opened with introductory remarks and adoption of the agenda, which was approved without amendments. Under the agenda item "Status of Regional and Thematic Offices – New and Existing Offices," members discussed the distinction between Regional and Thematic Offices and their Legal and Operational Frameworks, with proposals to ensure greater clarification in the Secretariat's forthcoming framework. Some Members suggested limiting future offices to their geographical sphere and specific thematic priorities, while others requested additional clarification on the Secretariat's proposal. The "Legal Framework of the Regional and Thematic Offices" was addressed, including divergent views on the application of the 1947 Convention and the benchmark for host country agreements; it was confirmed that the 1947 Convention would serve as the minimum standard. Under "Development of a Template Agreement," the Secretariat introduced a flexible negotiation template, while some Members highlighted the need to consult national foreign ministries; the discussion was postponed to the end of the Working Group's mandate. The Chair confirmed the next meeting would be held virtually in February 2025, and the procedure for adopting the first report was established under a 72-hour silence procedure, ensuring divergent views would be recorded where consensus could not be reached. The meeting concluded with emphasis on clarifying the definitions and functions of future Regional and Thematic Offices and confirming that privileges would adhere to

the 1947 Convention as the minimum standard, with additional elements agreed with host countries.

7. The Third Meeting of the Working Group on UN Tourism Regional and Thematic Offices was held on 24 June 2025, due to requests made first by the Secretariat and then by the Chair to postpone the initially agreed date of the said meeting for organizational matters, with 29 Member States, the Chair, Vice-Chair, and the Secretariat participating. The meeting opened with introductory remarks made by the Chair emphasizing procedural accuracy, transparency, and the need for faithful documentation of interventions, followed by the unanimous adoption of the agenda. Under the agenda items "Information on other UN Agencies' models (Regional and Thematic Offices)" and "Secretariat proposals following second meeting of the Working Group," the Secretariat presented research on 12 UN organizations' external office models and proposed a clear differentiation between Regional and Thematic Offices, highlighting the evolving nature of UN Tourism offices and their operational and financial constraints. Discussions on the "Legal Framework of the Regional and Thematic Offices" addressed revisions to ensure host countries apply, at minimum, the provisions of the 1947 Convention, with some Members supporting the revisions and others reiterating its view that no new agreement is needed if a country is a Convention signatory. The agenda item on "Legal Framework of the Regional Offices – Tax Immunities" was considered, with no further comments raised. Under "Budget & Financial Arrangements of the Offices," the Working Group reviewed contributions, in-kind support, utilities, equipment, labour, and security requirements, with Member States raising questions; the discussion highlighted reliance on voluntary contributions, the risks of uneven funding, and the need for internal host country assessments to ensure sustainability. Working Group Members agreed to request the Executive Council to look into the possibility of allocating part of the Organization's financial resources to support Member States in establishing Regional and Thematic Offices, ensuring that the Organization's Offices are not limited to certain Countries, taking into consideration the Organization's current financial situation. Other matters addressed included clarifying privileges and immunities, confirming that the final report will include all recommendations, and improving the meeting format to enhance participation and documentation. The Working Group agreed to consolidate the remaining meetings into a single final meeting at the end of September 2025, with preparatory documents circulated in advance, and to submit written feedback on the Secretariat's proposals to inform the final report for the 124th session of the Executive Council. Closing remarks reiterated the importance of clearer definitions, sustainable funding mechanisms, and stronger institutional support for Regional and Thematic Offices, while noting limited interventions from some Member States due to the meeting format.
8. The fourth and fifth meetings of the Working Group on UN Tourism Regional and Thematic Offices were convened on 23 September 2025 with the participation of 32 Member States, one Associate Member, alongside the Chair, Vice Chair, and the Secretariat. The agenda was adopted without objection, focusing on three main items: review of members' comments from the previous meeting, budgetary and financial arrangements, and the Operational Framework and Programme of Work. Under the review of comments, a Member sought clarification on privileges and immunities, the structure of the final report, and the scope of a proposed Regional Office in China, reaffirming its intention to host such an office with formal communications confirming compliance with the established framework. Another Member emphasized the need for a distinct legal framework for Thematic Offices, raised questions on host country agreements and privileges under the 1946 and 1947 Conventions, and expressed concern about the lack of procedural clarity. Divergent views emerged on tax remission and the role of host country agreements, with the Secretariat clarifying that agreements are essential for proper functioning and accountability.
9. Under budgetary and financial arrangements, no new comments were received, and it was noted that the matter had already been sufficiently addressed in prior discussions. Regarding the Operational Framework and Programme of Work, Member States highlighted issues of timelines, mandate, internal governmental procedures, and the decision-making role of Regional Commissions. Divergence arose over whether applications for new offices should be routed through Regional Commissions or submitted directly to the Executive Council, with some Members favouring the latter and others insisting on regional endorsement. Concerns were also raised by several Members on jurisdictional clarity, mandate dilution, and unregulated expansion, prompting the Secretariat to emphasize strategic coherence, equitable representation, and the cross-regional scope of Thematic Offices. The Secretariat introduced a refined proposal distinguishing between Regional and Thematic Offices, informed by comparative research across

- 12 UN Organizations and feedback from Member States, defining Regional Offices as geographically focused and Thematic Offices as subject-specific, potentially cross-regional.
10. Critical issues that remained included the balance between collective decision-making and regional consultation, the scope of host country agreements, and ensuring financial feasibility for Member States hosting offices. Working Group members agreed to kindly request the Executive Council to look into the possibility of allocating part of the Organization's financial resources to support Member States in establishing Regional and Thematic Offices, ensuring that the Organization's Offices are not limited to certain countries, and that financial capacity does not constitute a barrier in this regard. The Chair also highlighted the importance of bringing to the attention of the Executive Council that the virtual format of the Working Group Meetings prevented Members' representatives from wide participation and active engagement, requesting the Council to look into the possibility of holding upcoming meetings of Committees and Working Groups in-person through the Member States' Embassies in Madrid.
 11. The Secretariat confirmed that a draft report will be circulated under a 72-hour silence procedure, with members invited to submit comments or reservations, ensuring divergent views are duly reflected. The meetings concluded with a shared commitment to advancing the decentralization agenda and with the understanding that final recommendations will guide the Executive Council and General Assembly in decision-making.
 12. Following the authorization of the Working Group, the draft Final Report (see Annex I) was circulated among its members under a 72-hour silence procedure to allow Member States to provide their final feedback. In accordance with Section IV, "Working Modalities," of the Terms of Reference of the Working Group, which stipulates that "where it is not possible to reach consensus on a specific issue, the divergent views will be set out in the report of the Working Group to the Executive Council," and taking into account the nature of the comments received from Japan, presented in Annex III of the draft Final Report, the document is hereby submitted to the 124th session of the Executive Council for its decision.

II. Status of established Regional and Thematic Offices

A. Saudi Arabia – Regional Office for the Middle East

13. The Regional Office for the Middle East is established in the city of Riyadh pursuant to the Host Country Agreement between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the World Tourism Organization done in Tbilisi, Georgia, on 17 September 2020, following the authorization received by the Executive Council in decision 5(CXII) adopted at its 112th session ratified by the General Assembly in resolution [740\(XXIV\)](#) adopted at its 24th session. The Host Country Agreement entered into force on 21 April 2021.
14. In accordance with Staff Regulation 15(b), the Secretary-General appointed Mr Samer Al-Kharashi from Saudi Arabia as the Director of the Regional Office for the Middle East.
15. Information on the implementation of activities for the Regional Office for the Middle East can be found in document A/26/4(b).

B. Brazil – Regional Office for the Americas

16. The Regional Office for the Americas is established in the city of Rio de Janeiro pursuant to the Host Country Agreement between the Federative Republic of Brazil and the World Tourism Organization done in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, on 19 October 2023, following the authorization received by the General Assembly in resolution [763\(XXV\)](#) adopted at its 25th session.
17. It was also established in said resolution that the signature of the Host Country Agreement, and the opening of the Regional Office, would be subject to the conclusion of a supplementary agreement between UN Tourism and the Federative Republic of Brazil on the financial and administrative arrangements of the Office, and completion by Brazil of the internal procedures necessary for the establishment of the Office in accordance with the legal and operational framework governing UN Tourism Offices adopted by the General Assembly in resolution [740\(XXIV\)](#).

18. During the negotiations over the supplementary agreement pursuant to resolution 763(XXV), the Secretariat and the Government of Brazil acceded to separate it into two different arrangements supplementary to the Host Country Agreement:
 - (a) a first agreement to fix the annual financial contribution to be provided by Brazil for the establishment, organization and maintenance of the Office, and
 - (b) a subsequent agreement on the detailed terms and conditions governing the contribution and the administrative arrangements of the Office.
19. On 26 January 2024, UN Tourism and Brazil signed the Protocol between the Federative Republic of Brazil and the World Tourism Organization concerning the Annual Financial Contribution by Brazil to UN Tourism for the Regional Office for the Americas establishing the annual financial contribution to be provided by Brazil to UN Tourism for the establishment, organization and maintenance of the Office covering the period 2024-2026. The Secretariat reported to the 121st session of the Executive Council which, in its decision 6(CXXI), urged the Secretariat to finalize the necessary agreements to allow for the entry into force of the Host Country Agreement. The Protocol entered into force on 2 August 2024.
20. The Secretariat was informed through Note Verbale from the Embassy of Brazil in Spain, received on 7 August 2024, of the completion by Brazil of the internal procedures necessary for the entry into force of the Host Country Agreement. As such, the only pending condition for the entry into force of the Host Country Agreement was the conclusion of an agreement on the financial and administrative arrangements of the Office.
21. On 1 November 2024, UN Tourism and Brazil further signed the Agreement between the Federative Republic of Brazil and the World Tourism Organization concerning for the Financial and Administrative Arrangements of the Regional Office for the Americas with a view to establishing the detailed terms and conditions governing the annual financial contribution by Brazil to UN Tourism as well as the administrative arrangements and facilities for the Office in accordance with the Host Country Agreement and the Protocol. The Agreement entered into force on the date of its signature.
22. With the entry into force of the Protocol and the Agreement, of which the Executive Council took note in decision 6(CXXII), and the completion by Brazil of its internal procedures, all conditions set out in the Host Country Agreement for its entry into force in accordance with General Assembly resolution 763(XXV) have been completed. Pursuant to the entry into force of the Host Country Agreement, the Secretariat commenced taking steps for the implementation of these Agreements.
23. In accordance with Staff Regulation 15(b), the Secretary-General has appointed Mr. Heitor Kadri from Brazil as Director of the Regional Office for the Americas.
24. Information on the implementation of activities for the Regional Office for the Americas can be found in document A/26/4(b).
25. Pursuant to Articles 12(l)³ and 20⁴ of the Statutes, the General Assembly is required to approve the following agreements: the Protocol between the Federative Republic of Brazil and the World Tourism Organization concerning the Annual Financial Contribution by Brazil to UN Tourism for the Regional Office for the Americas, done on 26 January 2024, and the Agreement between the Federative Republic of Brazil and the World Tourism Organization concerning for the Financial and Administrative Arrangements of the Regional Office for the Americas, done on 1 November 2024.

³ **Article 12(l) of the Statutes:** The functions of the Assembly shall be, *inter alia*, "to approve or to delegate the power to approve the conclusion of agreements with governments and international organizations"

⁴ **Article 20 of the Statutes:** "Between sessions of the Assembly and in the absence of any contrary provisions in these Statutes, the Council shall take such administrative and technical decisions as may be necessary, within the functions and financial resources of the Organization, and shall report the decisions which have been taken to the Assembly at its following session, for approval"

III. Progress on the establishment of Regional and Thematic Offices

A. Morocco – Thematic Office on Innovation for Africa

26. Through decision 5(CXV), the Executive Council approved the proposal of the Government of Morocco on the establishment of a Regional Office for Africa, subject to the ratification of the General Assembly and provided that it is in compliance with the legal and operational framework governing Regional and Thematic Offices, as adopted by the General Assembly through resolution 740(XXIV).
27. Pursuant to resolution [763\(XXV\)](#) adopted at its 25th session, the General Assembly authorized the Secretary-General to sign the Host Country Agreement between UN Tourism and the Kingdom of Morocco for the Regional Office for Africa in the city of Marrakesh and urged the Government of Morocco and the Secretariat to continue negotiations to finalize the supplementary agreement on the financial and administrative arrangements of the Office. Accordingly, the Secretariat and the Government of Morocco worked together to prepare the Host Country Agreement in three authentic languages (Arabic, English and French), a process which was concluded in early April 2024.
28. Following further discussions between the Government of Morocco and the Secretariat the Secretariat received a proposal from the Kingdom of Morocco to establish a Thematic Office on Innovation for Africa in Rabat instead of the Regional Office for Africa in Marrakesh, as approved by the General Assembly in resolution 763(XXV) (paragraphs 8-11).
29. In accordance with the procedure for the establishment of a Thematic Office, as adopted by the General Assembly in resolution [740\(XXIV\)](#) and supplemented by the Executive Council in decision [8\(CXVI\)](#), the establishment of the Thematic Office on Innovation for Africa would be examined by the Programme and Budget Committee (hereinafter "PBC") and then, upon its recommendation, considered for approval by the Executive Council.
30. On 28 January 2025, the Government of Morocco and UN Tourism signed the Host Country Agreement on the establishment of the UN Thematic Office on Innovation for Africa in the Kingdom of Morocco and, on 29 May 2025, the Agreement relating to the financial and administrative arrangements of the UN Tourism Thematic Office on Innovation for Africa in the Kingdom of Morocco, with a view to establishing the detailed terms and conditions governing the financial contribution by Morocco to UN Tourism as well as the administrative arrangements and facilities for the Thematic Office in accordance with the Host Country Agreement.
31. Both the Host Country Agreement and the Agreement contained stipulations establishing that they would enter into force upon the establishment of the Thematic Office being approved by the PBC and the Executive Council, pending ratification by the General Assembly; the Host Country Agreement being also subject to the receipt of the written notification by the Government of Morocco of the completion of its internal procedures necessary for it to become effective.
32. Accordingly, the Secretariat submitted to the 123rd session of the Executive Council the proposal by the Kingdom of Morocco to change the nature and location of the proposed Office as well as the Host Country Agreement and the Agreement, all of which was, upon recommendation of the PBC, approved in [decision 7\(CXXIII\)](#). The Executive Council further requested the Secretary-General to submit the Host Country Agreement, including the Agreement, to the present session of the General Assembly for ratification.
33. The Secretariat has not received yet the written notification by the Government of Morocco of the completion of its internal procedures necessary for the Host Country Agreement to enter into force.
34. Pursuant to Article 20⁵ of the Statutes, the General Assembly is required to approve the decision of the Executive Council accepting the proposal of the Government of Morocco to establish a Thematic Office on Innovation for Africa in Rabat instead of the Regional Office for Africa in Marrakesh, as had been initially decided by the General Assembly in resolution [763\(XXV\)](#).

⁵ Ibid.

35. Pursuant to Articles 12(I)⁶ and 20 of the Statutes, the General Assembly is required to approve the following agreements: the Host Country Agreement between the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco and the World Tourism Organization on the establishment of the UN Tourism Thematic Office on Innovation for Africa in the Kingdom of Morocco, done on 28 January 2025, and the Agreement between the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco and the World Tourism Organization relating to the financial and administrative arrangements of the UN Tourism Thematic Office on Innovation for Africa in the Kingdom of Morocco, done on 29 May 2025.
- B. Uruguay – Tourism Law Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean (Thematic Office)**
36. Following resolution 757(XXV) adopted by the General Assembly at its 25th session, the Executive Council, in its decision 6(CXXI) adopted at its 121st session, approved the establishment of the Thematic Office on the Tourism Law Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean in Montevideo (hereafter, the “LAC Observatory”), subject to ratification by the General Assembly at its 26th session, and provided that the establishment of the LAC Observatory is in compliance with the legal and operational framework governing UN Tourism Offices adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 740(XXIV).
37. On 3 September 2024, UN Tourism and the Ministry of Tourism of Uruguay entered into a Cooperation Agreement establishing the financial and administrative conditions for the establishment, maintenance, and functioning of the LAC Observatory in 2025 and 2026. This Agreement, which the Executive Council approved in its decision [6\(CXXII\)](#), entered into force on the date of signature.
38. The Host Country Agreement between UN Tourism and the Government of Uruguay concerning the legal and operational framework of the LAC Observatory, in line with the Host Country Agreement with Brazil and Morocco, is currently being negotiated.
39. With a view to allowing the LAC Observatory to start its operations at the beginning of 2025, the Executive Council, also in its decision [6\(CXXII\)](#) adopted at its 122nd session, authorized the Secretary-General, subject to ratification by the General Assembly, to conclude an agreement with the Government of Uruguay to apply, on a *mutatis mutandis* basis, the provisions of either the UNDP or the UNOPS Agreement to the LAC Observatory and for such time until a Host Country Agreement is concluded.
40. On 7 May 2025, the Secretariat received confirmation from the Government of Uruguay to apply to UN Tourism the Agreement signed between Uruguay and UNDP, of which the Executive Council, at its 123rd session, took note in decision [7\(CXXIII\)](#).
41. Pursuant to the above, UN Tourism and the Government of Uruguay entered into an Agreement on the *interim* legal status of the Tourism Law Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean in Montevideo through an Exchange of Letters between the Secretary-General and the Minister of Foreign Relations of Uruguay, held on 2 and 11 September 2025, respectively. The Agreement entered into force on 11 September 2025.
42. Pursuant to Articles 12(I)⁷ and 20⁸ of the Statutes, the General Assembly is required to approve the following agreements: the Cooperation Agreement between the World Tourism Organization and the Ministry of Tourism of Uruguay for the Tourism Law Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, done on 3 September 2024, and the Agreement between the World Tourism Organization and Uruguay on the *interim* legal status of the Tourism Law Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean in Montevideo done through an Exchange of Letters held on 2 and 11 September 2025.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

C. Uzbekistan – Thematic Office on Tourism on the Silk Road

43. The General Assembly, through resolution 763(XXV) adopted at its 25th session, welcomed the proposal of Uzbekistan to establish a Thematic Office on “Tourism on the Silk Road” in the city of Samarkand.
44. During the negotiations between the Secretariat and the Government of Uzbekistan, it was agreed to divide the discussions into two parts:
 - (a) the Host Country Agreement establishing the legal framework for the Thematic Office (hereafter referred to as “the Host Country Agreement”), and
 - (b) a supplementary agreement on the financial and administrative arrangements of the Office (hereafter referred to as “the Supplementary Agreement”).
45. The Executive Council, in decision [7\(CXXIII\)](#) adopted at its 123rd session, approved the Host Country Agreement and requested the Secretary-General to submit it for ratification by the present session of the General Assembly pending the conclusion of the Supplementary Agreement and completion by Uzbekistan of the internal procedures necessary for the establishment of the Thematic Office in accordance with the legal and operational framework adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 740(XXIV).
46. The Host Country Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the World Tourism Organization on the establishment of the UN Tourism Thematic Office on Tourism on the Silk Road in Samarkand was signed on 2 July 2025.
47. In accordance with Article 14(1), the Host Country Agreement shall enter into force upon the following conditions: (i) approval by the Executive Council, pending ratification by the General Assembly pursuant to Article 12 of the Statutes, (ii) written notification by the Government of Uzbekistan of the completion of its internal legal requisites necessary for it to become effective, and (iii) the entry into force of the supplementary agreement on the financial and administrative arrangements of the Thematic Office.
48. Negotiations on the Supplementary Agreement are currently ongoing. The Secretariat shall keep the Member States informed of the progress of these negotiations through an addendum to the present report.
49. Pursuant to Articles 12(l)⁹ and 20¹⁰ of the Statutes, the General Assembly is required to approve the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the World Tourism Organization on the establishment of the UN Tourism Thematic Office on Tourism on the Silk Road in Samarkand, done on 2 July 2025.

IV. Establishment of new Regional and Thematic Offices

A. China – Regional Office

50. On 1 August 2025, the Secretariat received a Note Verbale from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China submitting the interest of China in hosting a Regional Office in the city of Shanghai and requesting the Secretariat to provide a draft host country agreement.
51. On 10 September 2025, the Secretary-General received a letter from Mr. Gao Zheng, Vice Minister for Culture and Tourism, in connection with the hosting of a Regional Office in Shanghai, conveying the commitment of China to comply with the requirements set out in the legal and operational framework for the establishment of UN Tourism Regional Offices adopted by the General Assembly resolution 740(XXIV).
52. Finally, on 8 October 2025, the Secretariat received a communication from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of China requesting that its application to host a Regional Office be disseminated

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

among the Member States of the Commission for East Asia and the Pacific (CAP) and the Commission for South Asia (CSA) for their support and recommendation, and conveying that the detailed plan on the operation of the Regional Office would be communicated at the Joint CAP-CSA Meeting in 2026, to consult with Member States and accommodate their comments and proposals for the operational framework of the Regional Office.

53. In accordance with the procedure for the establishment of Regional Offices, as adopted by the General Assembly in resolution [740\(XXIV\)](#)¹¹, the Secretariat communicated on 10 October 2025 through Note Verbale the application of China to host a Regional Office to the Members of CAP and CSA so that it be examined until 28 October 2025. If no objections are received by the Members of CAP and CSA to the application by the established deadline, it will be considered recommended by the CAP and CSA. The Secretariat will report accordingly to the 124th session of the Executive Council and to the 26th session of the General Assembly for decision.
54. Within the established deadline, the Secretariat received comments from the following Members, in chronological order: the Republic of Korea, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, India, and Indonesia, on 28 October 2025. Following the dissemination of these comments to CAP-CSA Members on the same day, the Secretariat subsequently received comments from the People's Republic of China on 30 October, submitted in response to those of the aforementioned five Member States, which were disseminated to CAP-CSA Members on the same day. All comments and feedback received from Members of both Commissions are presented in Annex II to the present Report.
55. In relation to the comments submitted by the above Member States, and bearing in mind that there is no express limitation on the number of offices per region outlined in the legal and operational framework approved by the General Assembly in resolution 740(XXIV), the Secretariat wishes to recall that there is precedent for the approval by the Executive Council of two applications to host Regional Offices within the same region, namely by the Executive Council at its 115th session whereby through decision 5(CXV) it approved, the establishment of Regional Offices in **Argentina** and **Brazil**, subject to the ratification the General Assembly and provided that they are in compliance with the legal and operational framework adopted by the General Assembly.
56. Moreover, the Secretariat further recalls that, pursuant to Article 12(j) of the Statutes, the General Assembly is the only organ with the authority to establish offices of the Organization.
57. As such, the Executive Council, in accordance with Article 19(c) of the Statutes¹², is invited to:
 - (a) Recommend to the General Assembly to approve the application submitted by China to host a Regional Office, subject to the holding of further consultations at the CAP-CSA Meeting in 2026 on the distribution of roles of the Regional Office in China and the Regional Support Office in Japan, or
 - (b) Request that the General Assembly authorizes the Executive Council to approve the application subject to the holding of further consultations at the CAP-CSA Meeting in 2026 on the same matter.
58. Subsequently, the General Assembly is further invited to:
 - (a) approve the establishment of a Regional Office in Shanghai subject to the holding of further consultations at the CAP-CSA Meeting in 2026 on the distribution of roles of the Regional Office in China and the Regional Support Office in Japan, or
 - (b) delegate authority under article 12(j) of the Statutes to the Executive Council and authorize it to approve the establishment of a Regional Office in Shanghai subject to the holding of further consultations at the CAP-CSA Meeting in 2026 on the same matter.

¹¹ "Dissemination by the UNWTO Secretariat of an application among the Member States of the Region or inclusion [of] the subject at the Regional Commission Meeting for its support and further recommendation" (par. 37, [A/24/10 rev.1](#)).

¹² Article 19(c) of the Statutes: The functions of the Council shall be: (...) (c) "To submit proposals to the Assembly."

V. Progress on the reform of the Regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific

59. In accordance with the mandate received by the General Assembly in resolution 656(XXI), the Government of Japan and UN Tourism have been engaged in addressing the gaps and are moving towards a solution that preserves the benefits of Japan's support while embedding RSOAP firmly within UN Tourism's legal and institutional framework. Both parties recognize the importance of aligning RSOAP with Category I criteria to ensure its legitimacy, effectiveness, and sustainability. Japanese authorities have expressed willingness to formalize RSOAP's legal status and to negotiate a new legal framework to provide a clear legal basis for RSOAP's operations in Japan and grant RSOAP the independence and authority it needs to function as an office of the UN system, thus safeguarding the Organization's interests. Demonstrating Japan's commitment thereto, the Government of Japan concluded the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies of 1947 and its Annex XVIII in 2020 in line with the Conditions applying to Category I entities referred to in the Resolution 656(XXI)¹³.
60. Following extensive negotiations between the Secretariat and the Government of Japan, significant progress has been made in this regard. In February 2025, through an Exchange of Letters held between the Secretary-General and the Commissioner of the Japan Tourism Agency ("JTA"), UN Tourism and the Government of Japan agreed on the arrangements concerning the operations of the Organization with a view to complying with the conditions and criteria applicable to RSOAP as a Category I entity and to ensure that it enjoys the appropriate legal framework in Japan. Through these arrangements, the Japanese Government acknowledges that all the principles and criteria of Category I entities are applicable to RSOAP; recognizes its legal personality as an integral part of the Organization; and undertakes that UN Tourism receives treatment not less favourable than that enjoyed by the United Nations and other specialized agencies in Japan. It is further stated that "JTA's intention to bear the necessary costs to support the activities of RSOAP, as a voluntary contribution every year subject to its budgetary appropriations", the amount of which would be agreed annually, will be established in a separate "Memorandum of Cooperation between UN Tourism and JTA".
61. This Exchange of Letters was reported to the 123rd session of the Executive Council as a first part of the proposed arrangements for the integration of RSOAP into the structure of UN Tourism as a Category I entity, the "Memorandum of Cooperation" mentioned therein being the second part ([CE/123/5 Add.1](#)). Indeed, in its decision [7\(CXXIII\)](#), the Executive Council "encourages the Secretariat to continue negotiations with the Government of Japan to finalize the required financial arrangements for integrating RSOAP fully into UN Tourism as a Category I entity" (par. 5) and "[r]equests the Secretariat to report on the negotiations with the Government of Japan in the reform process of [RSOAP] in accordance with the conditions and criteria applicable to Category I entities pursuant to the mandate received by the General Assembly resolution 656(XXI)" (para. 12).
62. One crucial step for the integration of RSOAP into UN Tourism's institutional and legal system as a Category I entity is the conclusion of a Host Country Agreement ("HCA") between UN Tourism and Japan – be it through a formal agreement, a memorandum of understanding, or an exchange of letters – that is binding on both Parties. Indeed, a legally binding HCA is the only instrument that sets out enforceable legal and financial obligations on both Japan and UN Tourism, providing the governance backbone required by the Category I framework. It is noteworthy that UN agencies typically establish offices through direct agreements with host governments to confer legal personality to the offices and to extend privileges and immunities to them and their staff, with these offices staffed and managed as integral parts of the relevant agency. From a comparative perspective, RSOAP's current model is an outlier within the UN system.
63. Likewise, any financial contribution from the Government of Japan to support RSOAP must be embedded in a legally binding agreement in accordance with UN Tourism Financial Regulations and Rules.
64. The current structure of RSOAP, as it stands, does not yet fully meet the legal and operational standards of a Category I entity standards, but the pieces (Japan's acceptance to apply the 1947 Convention and its willingness to improve RSOAP's legal and financial framework) are in place

¹³ Amendment proposed by Japan (see paragraph 66 of the report).

for a transitional path toward compliance. The main outstanding steps are signing a Host Country Agreement, restructuring RSOAP personnel arrangements, and integrating finances. These steps require coordinated action by the Secretariat and Japan to avoid disrupting RSOAP's ongoing work. Therefore, the General Assembly may wish to consider, as an interim measure in this transitional period, approving the 2025 Exchange of Letters while the Secretariat continues discussions with the Government of Japan with a view to integrate RSOAP fully into UN Tourism's legal and institutional framework as a Category I entity.

65. Pursuant to Article 12(I) of the Statutes, the General Assembly is invited to approve, as an interim measure, the Arrangements between the Japan Tourism Agency and the World Tourism Organization concerning the legal and operational framework of RSOAP done through an Exchange of Letters held on 2 February and 13 February 2025.
66. On 31 October, the Secretariat received a communication from Japan requesting modifications to paragraph 23 of the draft resolution and paragraph 61 of the present report. The communication is attached to the present report as Annex III. On the amendment proposed for the draft resolution, the Secretariat wishes to add the text below in italics to clarify that, as explained above, the 2025 Exchange of Letters is a step in the transitional measure during ongoing discussions for the integration of RSOAP as a Category I entity:

“Approves, as an interim measure, the Arrangements between the Japan Tourism Agency and the World Tourism Organization concerning the legal and operational framework of the Regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific [aimed at paving the path for it to become a Category I entity / aimed at paving the path for it to fall under the model of Category I entity]”.

Annex I: Report of the Working Group on UN Tourism Regional and Thematic Offices

Working Group on UN Tourism Regional and Thematic Offices

Final Report

Introduction

The Executive Council, through its [decision 7\(CXVIII\)](#), decided to establish a Working Group on Regional and Thematic Offices, composed of Member States and supported by the Secretariat.

Subsequently, Terms of Reference establishing the mandate, composition and working methods of the Working Group were approved by the 119th session of the Executive Council through [decision 7\(CXIX\)](#) and subsequently further noted by the 25th session of the General Assembly through [Resolution 763\(XXV\)](#).

The Working Group, composed by Afghanistan, Armenia, Bahrain, Belarus, Benin, Brazil, Burkina Faso, China, Colombia, Egypt, Haiti, Indonesia, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Lithuania, Morocco, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Oman, Peru, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, and Yemen have reviewed the input previously received by the Secretariat regarding the Legal and Operational Framework for UN Tourism Offices during the period 2022-2023 and, on this basis, prepared a recommendation for the improvement of the Framework, requesting the Secretary-General to submit it to the Executive Council at its 124th session for approval.

The Working Group convened five meetings. A summary and overview of the discussions are presented in the Report on Regional and Thematic Offices submitted to the 124th session of the Executive Council (CE/124/5).

The Report consists of three annexes. Annex I provides the final, revised version of the recommendations on the improvement of the Legal and Operational Framework for the Selection and Establishment of Regional and Thematic Offices, based on comments received from Member States and the outcomes of discussions held during the five meetings of the Working Group. To ensure greater clarity and transparency, Annex II provides a comparative chart with four columns: the initial text of the Report on the “Establishment of UNWTO Regional Offices (A/24/10 rev.1)”; any further developments or refinements made during subsequent Executive Council sessions; the final and proposed text of the Working Group, or indications where no changes were made; and comments with specific notes, including divergent views from Member States. Annex III contains the comments received from Japan during the circulation of the draft Final Report among the Working Group Members under the 72-hour silence procedure.

NOTE

The Working Group Members kindly request the Executive Council to look into the possibility of allocating part of the organization’s financial resources to support Member States in establishing Regional and Thematic Offices, ensuring that the Organization’s Offices are not limited to certain Countries, and that financial capacity does not constitute a barrier in this regard.

The Chair also wishes to inform the Executive Council the virtual format of the Working Group Meetings prevented Members’ Representatives from wide participation and active engagement, requesting the Council to look into the possibility of holding upcoming Committees and Working Groups’ Meetings in-person through the Member States’ Embassies in Madrid.

Actions to be taken by the 124th session of the Executive Council:

The Executive Council is invited to:

1. Thank the Working Group members, its Chair, Vice Chair and the Secretariat for the overall work undertaken and to take note of its activities on the review of the legal and operational framework for UN Tourism Offices;
2. Approve the report with the recommendation on the legal and operational framework for UN Tourism Offices made by the Working Group for the improvement of the legal and operational

framework on the selection and establishment of Regional and Thematic Offices and to submit the report to the 26th session of the UN Tourism General Assembly for consideration;

3. Further approve the revised Legal and Operational Framework on the Selection and Establishment of Regional and Thematic Offices, and submit this revised framework to the 26th session of the UN Tourism General Assembly for approval;
4. Consider the mandate of the Working Group as completed.

Annex I: Recommendation of the Working Group on the improvement of the Legal and Operational Framework on the Selection and Establishment of Regional and Thematic Offices¹

Differentiation between Regional and Thematic Offices

1. **UN Tourism Regional Offices** are established to bring the Organization's strategic vision and initiatives closer to Member States by translating global policies and programmatic priorities into regionally adapted actions. Their core objective is to ensure that UN Tourism's work remains responsive to the specific needs, opportunities, and challenges of each geographic area. Operating as decentralized structures under the full supervision of the UN Tourism Secretariat—which retains oversight of the Organization's political engagement—**Regional Offices** enhance the relevance and impact of the Programme of Work (PoW) by aligning global objectives with regional priorities. They play a proactive role in implementing UN Tourism's mandate in ways that reflect regional policy frameworks, cultural contexts, and development agendas, while delivering tailored support and services to Member States to ensure that measures are both targeted and effective.
2. **Regional Offices** serve as key structures for outreach and advocacy, forging strategic partnerships with international and regional organizations, donor institutions, and other stakeholders. Depending on the needs and specificities of the regions they serve, **Regional Offices** may operate at regional and/or sub-regional levels.
3. **UN Tourism Thematic Offices** may be established to address specialized subject areas requiring focused expertise and sustained attention. Operating as decentralized structures under the full supervision of the UN Tourism Secretariat—which retains oversight of the Organization's political engagement—**Thematic Offices** serve as dedicated hubs for research, policy input, and the advancement of thematic priorities. Their scope of work aligns with the UN Tourism Programme of Work (PoW) but may also extend beyond it to address emerging trends and evolving needs of Member States. **Thematic Offices** are responsible for knowledge creation and dissemination, training, capacity development, and policy guidance, while ensuring active coordination with national tourism administrations, destination management organizations, industry associations, and other relevant stakeholders.
4. They may also produce publications, studies, and tailored academic and practitioner research in close collaboration with universities and academic institutions. Overall, **Thematic Offices** support the achievement of sustainable tourism development and resilience in Member States.
5. Depending on the needs and specificities of the subject areas, **Thematic Offices** may operate at regional, sub-regional, or other geographically defined levels. These scopes may encompass groups of countries within the same region or across different regions, based on thematic relevance and spatial linkages.

Establishment of Offices

Procedure for the establishment of Offices

6. Submission of an official letter of intent (application) by a Member State to host a Regional or Thematic Office, addressed to the Secretary-General of UN Tourism, along with a commitment to all requirements stipulated in the Host Country Agreement, including compliance with the applicable legal framework.
7. Dissemination by the UN Tourism Secretariat among the Members of the corresponding Regional Commission(s) of the application and detailed proposal for hosting a Regional or Thematic Office — covering the proposed scope of work, financial aspects, and other relevant matters — prepared by the applicant country in consultation with the UN Tourism Secretariat, for subsequent recommendation by the Regional Commission(s), or inclusion of these documents in the agenda of the corresponding Regional Commission meeting(s) for discussion and subsequent

¹ Unless expressly stated otherwise in the text, "Offices" shall be understood as both Regional and Thematic Offices.

recommendation. In the case of Thematic Offices, in addition to the recommendation of the corresponding Regional Commission(s), the Secretariat shall also disseminate the application and detailed proposal among the Members of the Programme and Budget Committee (PBC), for subsequent recommendation by the PBC, or include them in the agenda of the PBC for discussion and subsequent recommendation.

8. Submission by the UN Tourism Secretariat of the recommended application to the Executive Council for its endorsement, including any information relevant to the conclusion of the agreement for the hosting of the Office.
9. Submission by the UN Tourism Secretariat of the endorsed application to the General Assembly for its ratification.

Host country agreement

10. The establishment of Offices is subject to the conclusion of an agreement with the host State that ensures the appropriate legal framework and, in particular, the principles and conditions for external entities established under Category I as adopted by the General Assembly through resolution 656(XXI). The full list of conditions applying to Category I entities is included in General Assembly [document A/21/8\(I\)\(f\)](#).

Operational Framework and Programme of Work

11. Insofar as they constitute an integral part of the Organization, Offices shall carry out the mandate assigned to them by the General Assembly under the supervision of the Secretary-General.
12. Offices shall be administered from the Organization's Headquarters and be headed by an official appointed by the Secretary-General.
13. The timeline for the operationalization of the Offices may be prepared and proposed by the UN Tourism Secretariat; however, it is not possible to establish a concrete schedule, as the overall process depends not only on negotiations between the Organization's Secretariat and the host country, but also on internal procedures within the host country involving various governmental entities.
14. UN Tourism's institutional responsibility is to ensure the smooth, timely and high-quality functioning of its Offices, as well as to foster coordination and collaboration between them.
15. In terms of the overall planning and improvement of the global layout of the Offices and clarifying their respective scope of work under the premise of full consideration of regional balance and the specific context of each host country, it is important that (1) equitable regional representation is ensured; (2) mandates and specialization of each Office are defined; (3) a decision is made on how many Offices are to be established globally; (4) a rationale is established for how countries are selected to host these Offices; and (5) the network of Offices is cohesive and not redundant.

Legal Framework

Status of the Offices

16. Offices are an integral part of the Secretariat and shall be recognized as representing a specialized agency of the United Nations in the territory of the host State. Therefore, the host State must undertake to apply to the proposed Office, at a minimum, the provisions of either the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 21 November 1947 ("the 1947 Convention"), and its Annex XVIII, or, alternatively, where the host State has not ratified said Convention, it shall undertake to apply at a minimum, the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, approved by the

General Assembly of the United Nations on 13 February 1946, ("the 1946 Convention"), as may be applicable to UN Tourism *mutatis mutandis*.

Their application shall be without prejudice to the granting of additional privileges and immunities required in practice for the correct functioning of the Office, and to align with those afforded to other offices of the UN in the country or to those enjoyed by the Organization at the Headquarters.

17. These are essential, in line with the practice of UN Tourism and other organizations of the UN system, to guarantee the independence of the operations of the Organization, the privileges and immunities necessary to its personnel and to the representatives of UN Tourism Members. Further, they are necessary to ensure that the legal status and framework of the Organization is respected regardless of the country hosting the office and to prevent any legal or financial liability to the Organization.
18. Furthermore, the Organization shall be exempt from all indirect taxes when making important purchases intended for official use, in particular from value added taxes and/or duties which constitute part of the cost of goods purchased by or services rendered to the Organization. In such instances, the host State shall make appropriate arrangements for the remission or reimbursement of the amount of duty or tax.
19. As a general principle, the Organization shall enjoy treatment in respect of its privileges, immunities, exemptions and facilities not less favourable than those accorded by the host State to the United Nations and other specialized agencies. The Secretariat will conduct benchmarking exercises as appropriate to review other agreements signed between other UN Agencies and the individual host country to ensure that the same conditions are provided to UN Tourism Offices and its personnel.

Status of Office Personnel

20. All officials of the Organization shall enjoy the privileges and immunities provided for under Article VI of the 1947 Convention while persons having the status of "experts"² shall be accorded such privileges and immunities as are necessary for the independent and effective exercise of their functions and, in particular, those provided for under paragraph 3 of the Annex XVIII.
21. For the purpose of enabling them to discharge their functions independently and efficiently, all individuals, irrespective of their nationality or residence, engaged by the Organization to perform services in the execution of the mandate of the Office should be considered by the host State as "officials" within the meaning of Section 18, Article VI, of the 1947 Convention³. Subsidiarily, when having the status of "experts" they shall be also entitled to the privileges and immunities provided for in Sections 19 and 20 of the 1947 Convention at a minimum.
22. In addition to the privileges and immunities granted to officials, the Head of the Office, and his or her spouse and relatives dependent on him or her, shall be accorded the same privileges, immunities and facilities as are enjoyed by diplomatic agents and their families in the host State.
23. All personnel of the Office shall be provided with a personal identity card certifying their status and the privileges and immunities afforded under the host country agreement.

Transit

24. All personnel of the Office shall be granted facilities enabling them to enter and leave the duty station and to be repatriated in times of international crisis. To this end, the host State shall issue

² Experts are defined under paragraph 3 of Annex XVIII to the Convention as persons other than officials within the scope of Article VI of the Convention serving on organs and bodies of, or performing missions for, the Organization.

³ Each specialized agency will specify the categories of officials to which the provisions of this article and of article VIII shall apply. It shall communicate them to the Governments of all States parties to this Convention in respect of that agency and to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The names of the officials included in these categories shall from time to time be made known to the abovementioned Governments (Section 18, Article VI, Convention)

to all Office personnel promptly, free of charge and without restrictions all necessary visas, permits and authorizations.

25. Likewise, the Host Country shall take appropriate measures to facilitate the entry into, sojourn in and departure of all representatives of Members of the Organization and any other persons who, by reason of their functions, must have access to the Office in an official capacity.

Prevention of Abuses

26. The privileges and immunities provided to the Organization and the personnel of the Office are only granted with a view to ensuring the effective fulfilment of the Organization's aims and purposes. The Secretary-General shall have the right and the duty to waive the immunity of any member of personnel if it would impede the course of justice and it can be waived without prejudice to the interests of the Organization.
27. The Organization and the host State shall cooperate in order to facilitate the proper administration of justice, assure the observance of police regulations and prevent any abuse in connection with the privileges, immunities, exemptions and facilities granted to the Organization and its personnel.

Financial and Administrative Framework

Budget and Financial Arrangements

28. Regarding the requirement of the conditions applying to Category I entities adopted by the General Assembly, it should be noted that although Offices should be an integral part of UN Tourism's budget, this would not be possible unless assessed contributions would be increased to allow for the operation of such offices.
29. Therefore, the only possibility at the present moment for the establishment, organization and maintenance of an Office to carry out its mandate effectively is that it be financed by the host State through a voluntary contribution. This voluntary contribution is managed by the Secretariat to comply with the Programme of Work approved by the Governing Bodies for the Office and to ensure its correct functioning as well as the necessary support to the Office and coordination extended by the Headquarters of the Organization. Furthermore, the management of the Office is subject to UN Tourism's Financial Regulations and Rules.
30. In particular, the host State's contribution to the functioning of the Office shall cover:
- a) The salaries of the Director and officials of the Office and such other personnel as may be assigned to the Office from time to time, including regional allowances and recruitment costs for local employees; and
 - b) Institutional strengthening, modernization and other management issues of the Organization that have an impact on the Office.
31. Additionally, the host State shall bear the following costs:
- a) Labour, equipment, supplies and other services or property as may be needed.
32. The premises of the Office in the location agreed with the host State shall be provided to the Organization free of charge.

Staffing

33. The selection, recruitment and contracts of all personnel of the Office shall be subject to the rules and regulations and policies of the Organization.

34. Therefore, all Office personnel, including the Head of the Office, shall be recruited by the Organization and be subject to the supervision of the Secretary-General or a designated Senior Officer, as in the practice of the United Nations, and shall not seek or accept instructions from any external authority.
35. In addition to officials, the Organization may also hire individuals on a fixed-term contract as service contract holders or experts to support the activities of the Office.

Security

36. Insofar as the premises of the Offices are inviolable, irrespective of their owner, no agent of the host State shall enter them without consent of the Secretary-General.
37. The host State shall take all necessary measures to ensure the safety and security of the building and premises of the Office and its personnel in line with the mandatory security standards required by UNDSS.

Meetings

38. The 1947 Convention and Annex XVIII shall be applicable in respect of meetings and conferences convened by the Organization in the host State. Without prejudice to the provisions of the 1947 Convention, all participants and persons performing functions in connection with a meeting or conference of the Organization in the host State shall enjoy such privileges and immunities, facilities and courtesies as are necessary for the independent exercise of their functions in connection thereto.
39. Meetings and conferences held outside of the premises of the Office shall require prior notification to the authorities of the host State.

Review of operations

40. The Organization will conduct evaluations as to ascertain whether an Office constitutes a significant contribution to the Organization's aims and objectives and will report periodically on the functioning and operations of Offices to the General Assembly and the Executive Council.

Annex II – Comparative Chart^{17 18}

Initial text (2021) (A/24/10 rev.1) ¹⁹	Further development and refinements made at the Executive Council sessions EC116 (2022) (CE/116/4(b)); EC 117th (2022) (CE/117/5), other subsequent sessions	The final and proposed text (2025) and/or no changes were made	Comments
Host country agreement 10. The establishment of a Regional Office is subject to the conclusion of an agreement with the host State that ensures the appropriate legal framework and, in particular, the principles and conditions for external entities established under Category I as adopted by the General Assembly through resolution 656(XXI). The full list of conditions applying to Category I entities is annexed to the present document.		The Working Group made no changes. Final text (GA24): Host country agreement The establishment of Offices is subject to the conclusion of an agreement with the host State that ensures the appropriate legal framework and, in particular, the principles and conditions for external entities established under Category I as adopted by the General Assembly through resolution 656(XXI). The full list of conditions applying to Category I entities is included in General Assembly document A/21/8(l)(f).	Comment received from Japan following the Fourth and Fifth meetings of the Working Group Following the fourth and fifth meetings, Japan submitted the following comment “...in the Resolution 763 adopted in 2023, the General Assembly ‘reiterates the utmost importance that all applicants to host UNWTO Regional and Thematic Offices comply...with the requirements of the host country agreement.’ However, as Japan has already hosted RSOAP ever since its establishment in 1995 based on the exchange of letters, Japan is not an ‘applicant(s) to host UNWTO Regional and Thematic Offices’ referred to in the said resolution. Importantly, Japan also wishes to point out that UN Tourism explained to us that the subject to be heeded in the present Working Group is new regional and thematic offices to be established. In the wake of the foregoing, in the Decision 7 of the 123rd Executive Council this year, the Executive Council ‘Encourages the Secretariat to continue negotiations with the Government of Japan to finalize the required financial arrangements for integrating RSOAP fully into UN Tourism as a Category 1 entity.’

¹⁷ The order of the sections under Annex II is based on the order adopted at the 24th General Assembly (A/24/10 rev.1). The order of the sections under Annex I has been updated.

¹⁸ Unless expressly stated otherwise in the text, “Offices” shall be understood as both Regional and Thematic Offices.

¹⁹ By virtue of Resolution 740(XXIV), the legal and operational framework established under document A/24/10 rev.1 applies to both Regional and Thematic Offices, as such, it should be read as applying to both categories of Office.

			As the said decision shows that the condition for the RSOAP to be upgraded to the Category 1 entity will be met once the financial arrangement (i.e. MoC) has been signed, over which the negotiation is ongoing, it is of utmost importance that the MoC is signed at an earliest timing possible.” “We would also like to additionally note that there are no preceding cases where Japan, in addition to the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies, has concluded additional agreements with other UN specialized agencies when they established their offices in Japan. Besides, Japan reiterates that the facility of the United Nations University located in Japan is its headquarters, not its office. Therefore, a simple comparison between the headquarters of the United Nations University and the RSOAP as done in the Response from the Secretariat is fundamentally inappropriate.” Comment received from China following the Fourth and Fifth meetings of the Working Group China replied to the comments submitted by Japan following the fourth and fifth meetings of the Working Group that “According to General Assembly resolutions 656(XXI) and 740(XXIV), a Cat 1 entity requires Host Country Agreement. It is our understanding that without HCA, any office would not be qualified to become a Cat 1 office. We believe that the Secretariat will and should act in accordance with the GA resolutions.”
Status of Regional Offices 11. Regional Offices shall be recognized as representing a specialized agency of the United		Final text (WG): Status of Regional Offices	Comment received from Japan following the Fourth and Fifth meetings of the Working Group

Nations in the territory of the host State. Therefore, the host State must undertake to apply to the Organization at minimum the provisions of the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 21 November 1947, and its Annex XVIII, without prejudice to granting additional privileges and immunities for the correct functioning of the Office and to align with those afforded to other offices of the UN in the country or to those enjoyed by the Organization at the Headquarters. 12. These are essential, in line with the practice of UNWTO and other organizations of the UN system, to guarantee the independence of the operations of the Organization, the privileges and immunities necessary to its personnel and to the representatives of UNWTO Members. Further, they are necessary to ensure that the legal status and framework of the Organization is respected regardless of the country hosting the office and to prevent any legal or financial liability to the Organization. 13. Furthermore, the Organization shall be exempt from all indirect taxes when making important purchases intended for official use, in particular from value added taxes and/or duties which constitute part of the cost of goods purchased by or services rendered to the		Regional Offices are an integral part of the Secretariat and shall be recognized as representing a specialized agency of the United Nations in the territory of the host State. Therefore, the host State must undertake to apply to the proposed Office, to the Organization at a minimum, the provisions of either the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 21 November 1947 ("the 1947 Convention"), and its Annex XVIII, or, alternatively, where the host State has not ratified said Convention, it shall undertake to apply at a minimum, the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 13 February 1946, ("the 1946 Convention"), as may be applicable to UN Tourism <i>mutatis mutandis</i>. Their application shall be without prejudice to the granting of additional privileges and immunities required in practice for the correct functioning of the Office, and to align with those afforded to other offices of the UN in the country or to those enjoyed by the Organization at the Headquarters. These are essential, in line with the practice of UN Tourism and other organizations of the UN system, to guarantee the independence of the operations of the Organization, the privileges and immunities necessary to its personnel and to the representatives of UN Tourism Members. Further, they are necessary to ensure that the legal status and framework of the Organization is	Following the fourth and fifth meetings, Japan submitted the following comments "The General Assembly Resolution 656 adopted in 2015 set forth the 11 conditions applying to Category 1 entities, which were also reiterated in the General Assembly Resolution 740 adopted in 2021. Over the past years, Japan and UN Tourism have bilaterally coordinated matters concerning the 11 conditions, although Japan refrains from openly elaborating here all the details of the negotiation given its nature. However, it should be noted that the sole condition explicitly stated with respect to privileges and immunities in the aforesaid resolutions is to 'apply the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies of 1947 and its Annex XVIII,' both of which Japan has already concluded. Moreover, it should be also noted that Japan and UN Tourism have formed common understanding on personnel and budget necessary for the Regional Office (RSOAP), leading to the exchange of letters in February this year which confirmed that the conditions and criteria applicable to Category 1 entities are complied with vis-à-vis RSOAP through the arrangements made in the exchange of letters." "Regarding VAT exemption which UN Tourism is requesting, Japan already has a consumption tax (equivalent to VAT) exemption scheme* in place based on Article 3, Paragraph 10 of the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies. Under this scheme, UN Tourism already enjoys exemption in the same way as other UN organizations.
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Organization. In such instances, the host State shall make appropriate arrangements for the remission or reimbursement of the amount of duty or tax. 14. As a general principle, the Organization shall enjoy treatment in respect of its privileges, immunities, exemptions and facilities not less favourable than those accorded by the host State to the United Nations and other specialized agencies.		respected regardless of the country hosting the office and to prevent any legal or financial liability to the Organization. Furthermore, the Organization shall be exempt from all indirect taxes when making important purchases intended for official use, in particular from value added taxes and/or duties which constitute part of the cost of goods purchased by or services rendered to the Organization. In such instances, the host State shall make appropriate arrangements for the remission or reimbursement of the amount of duty or tax. As a general principle, the Organization shall enjoy treatment in respect of its privileges, immunities, exemptions and facilities not less favourable than those accorded by the host State to the United Nations and other specialized agencies. The Secretariat will conduct benchmarking exercises as appropriate to review other agreements signed between other UN Agencies and the individual host country to ensure that the same conditions are provided to UN Tourism Offices and its personnel.	(*Under the scheme of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, international organizations in Japan can enjoy the tax exemption regarding consumption tax when purchasing eligible official goods at designated duty-free stores, by using a tax exemption card issued upon request in the name of official of the office in Japan specified by the organization.) As is the case with the abovementioned consumption tax exemption scheme, the RSOAP already enjoys the equal treatment with other UN specialized agencies' offices in Japan. In the light of the foregoing, it should be concluded that the RSOAP in Japan fulfils the requirement for the Category 1 entity once the MoC, over which the negotiation is ongoing, is signed, and that the RSOAP, as an already existing Regional Office, falls outside of the scope of the present Working Group."
Programme of work 15. Insofar as they constitute an integral part of the Organization, Regional Offices shall carry out the mandate assigned to them by the General Assembly under the supervision of the Secretary-General. 16. Offices shall be administered from the Organization's		Final text (WG): <u>Operational Framework and the Programme of work</u> Insofar as they constitute an integral part of the Organization, Offices shall carry out the mandate assigned to them by the General Assembly under the supervision of the Secretary-General.	

Headquarters and be headed by an official appointed by the Secretary-General.		Offices shall be administered from the Organization's Headquarters and be headed by an official appointed by the Secretary-General. The timeline for the operationalization of the Offices may be prepared and proposed by the UN Tourism Secretariat; however, it is not possible to establish a concrete schedule, as the overall process depends not only on negotiations between the Organization's Secretariat and the host country, but also on internal procedures within the host country involving various governmental entities. UN Tourism's institutional responsibility is to ensure the smooth, timely and high-quality functioning of its Offices, as well as to foster coordination and collaboration between them. In terms of the overall planning and improvement of the global layout of the Offices and clarifying their respective scope of work under the premise of full consideration of regional balance and the specific context of each host country, it is important that (1) equitable regional representation is ensured; (2) mandates and specialization of each Office are defined; (3) a decision is made on how many Offices are to be established globally; (4) a rationale is established for how countries are selected to host these Offices; and (5) the network of Offices is cohesive and not redundant.	
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Budget and financial arrangements 17. The establishment, organization and maintenance of a Regional Office to carry out its mandate shall be financed by the host State. In particular, the host State's contribution to the functioning of the Office shall cover: (a) The salaries of the Director and officials of the Office and such other personnel as may be assigned to the Office from time to time, including regional allowances and recruitment costs for local employees; (b) Institutional strengthening, modernization and other management issues of the Organization that have an impact on the Office. 18. Additionally, the host State shall bear the following costs: (a) Labour, equipment, supplies and other services or property as may be needed. 19. The premises of the Office in the location agreed with the host State shall be provided to the Organization free of charge.	Budget and financial arrangements 27. Regarding the requirement of the conditions applying to category I entities adopted by the General Assembly, it should be noted that although Regional/thematic offices should be an integral part of UNWTO's budget, this would not be possible unless assessed contributions would be increased to allow for the operation of such offices. 28. Therefore, the only possibility at the present moment for the establishment, organization and maintenance of a Regional/Thematic Office to carry out its mandate effectively is that it be financed by the host State through a voluntary contribution. This voluntary contribution is managed by the Secretariat to comply with the program of work approved by the Governing Bodies for the Office and to ensure its correct functioning as well as the necessary support to the Office and coordination extended by the Headquarters of the Organization. Furthermore, the management of the office is subject to UNWTO Financial Regulations and Rules. The establishment, organization and maintenance of a Regional Office to carry out its mandate	The Working Group made no changes. Final text (EC116): Budget and financial arrangements Regarding the requirement of the conditions applying to Category I entities adopted by the General Assembly, it should be noted that although Offices should be an integral part of UN Tourism's budget, this would not be possible unless assessed contributions would be increased to allow for the operation of such offices. Therefore, the only possibility at the present moment for the establishment, organization and maintenance of an Office to carry out its mandate effectively is that it be financed by the host State through a voluntary contribution. This voluntary contribution is managed by the Secretariat to comply with the Programme of Work approved by the Governing Bodies for the Office and to ensure its correct functioning as well as the necessary support to the Office and coordination extended by the Headquarters of the Organization. Furthermore, the management of the Office is subject to UN Tourism's Financial Regulations and Rules. In particular, the host State's contribution to the functioning of the Office shall cover: (a) The salaries of the Director and officials of the Office and such other personnel as may be assigned to the Office from time to time, including regional allowances and recruitment costs for local employees; and	The Chair of the Working Group recommended that, in the future, a portion of the Organization's regular budget be considered for allocation to the operation of the Offices, following a thorough preliminary assessment and taking into account the convenience and affordability within the Organization's overall financial situation.
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	shall be financed by the host State. In particular, the host State's contribution to the functioning of the Office shall cover: (a) The salaries of the Director and officials of the Office and such other personnel as may be assigned to the Office from time to time, including regional allowances and recruitment costs for local employees; and (b) Institutional strengthening, modernization and other management issues of the Organization that have an impact on the Office. 29. Additionally, the host State shall bear the following costs: (a) Labour, equipment, supplies and other services or property as may be needed. 30. The premises of the Office in the location agreed with the host State shall be provided to the Organization free of charge.	(b) Institutional strengthening, modernization and other management issues of the Organization that have an impact on the Office. Additionally, the host State shall bear the following costs: (a) Labour, equipment, supplies and other services or property as may be needed. The premises of the Office in the location agreed with the host State shall be provided to the Organization free of charge.	
Staffing 20. The selection, recruitment and contracts of all personnel of the Office shall be subject to the rules and regulations and policies of the Organization. 21. Therefore, all Office personnel, including the Head of the Office, shall be recruited by the Organization and be subject to the supervision of the Secretary-General or a designated Senior Officer, as in the practice of the		The Working Group made no changes. Final text (GA24): Staffing The selection, recruitment and contracts of all personnel of the Office shall be subject to the rules and regulations and policies of the Organization. Therefore, all Office personnel, including the Head of the Office, shall be recruited by the Organization and be subject to the supervision of the Secretary-General or a	

United Nations, and shall not seek or accept instructions from any external authority. 22. In addition to officials, the Organization may also hire individuals on a fixed-term contract as service contract holders or experts to support the activities of the Office.		designated Senior Officer, as in the practice of the United Nations, and shall not seek or accept instructions from any external authority. In addition to officials, the Organization may also hire individuals on a fixed-term contract as service contract holders or experts to support the activities of the Office.	
Status of Office personnel 23. All officials of the Organization shall enjoy the privileges and immunities provided for under Article VI of the Convention while persons having the status of “experts”⁴ shall be accorded such privileges and immunities as are necessary for the independent and effective exercise of their functions and, in particular, those provided for under paragraph 3 of the Annex XVIII. ⁴ Experts are defined under paragraph 3 of Annex XVIII to the Convention as persons other than officials within the scope of Article VI of the Convention serving on organs and bodies of, or performing missions for, the Organization. 24. For the purpose of enabling them to discharge their functions independently and efficiently, all individuals, irrespective of their nationality or residence, engaged by the Organization to perform services in the execution of the mandate of the Office should be considered by the host State as “officials” within the		The Working Group made no changes. Final text (GA24): Status of Office personnel All officials of the Organization shall enjoy the privileges and immunities provided for under Article VI of the Convention while persons having the status of “experts”⁴ shall be accorded such privileges and immunities as are necessary for the independent and effective exercise of their functions and, in particular, those provided for under paragraph 3 of the Annex XVIII. ⁴ Experts are defined under paragraph 3 of Annex XVIII to the Convention as persons other than officials within the scope of Article VI of the Convention serving on organs and bodies of, or performing missions for, the Organization. For the purpose of enabling them to discharge their functions independently and efficiently, all individuals, irrespective of their nationality or residence, engaged by the Organization to perform services in the execution of the mandate of the Office should be considered by the host State as “officials” within the meaning of Section 18, Article VI, of the Convention⁵. Subsidiarily,	

meaning of Section 18, Article VI, of the Convention⁵. Subsidiarity, when having the status of “experts” they shall be also entitled to the privileges and immunities provided for in Sections 19 and 20 of the Convention at a minimum. ⁵ Each specialized agency will specify the categories of officials to which the provisions of this article and of article VIII shall apply. It shall communicate them to the Governments of all States parties to this Convention in respect of that agency and to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The names of the officials included in these categories shall from time to time be made known to the abovementioned Governments (Section 18, Article VI, Convention) 25. In addition to the privileges and immunities granted to officials, the Head of the Office, and his or her spouse and relatives dependent on him or her, shall be accorded the same privileges, immunities and facilities as are enjoyed by diplomatic agents and their families in the host State. 26. All personnel of the Office shall be provided with a personal identity card certifying their status and the privileges and immunities afforded under the host country agreement.		when having the status of “experts” they shall be also entitled to the privileges and immunities provided for in Sections 19 and 20 of the Convention at a minimum. ⁵ Each specialized agency will specify the categories of officials to which the provisions of this article and of article VIII shall apply. It shall communicate them to the Governments of all States parties to this Convention in respect of that agency and to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The names of the officials included in these categories shall from time to time be made known to the abovementioned Governments (Section 18, Article VI, Convention) In addition to the privileges and immunities granted to officials, the Head of the Office, and his or her spouse and relatives dependent on him or her, shall be accorded the same privileges, immunities and facilities as are enjoyed by diplomatic agents and their families in the host State. All personnel of the Office shall be provided with a personal identity card certifying their status and the privileges and immunities afforded under the host country agreement.	
Transit 27. All personnel of the Office shall be granted facilities enabling them		The Working Group made no changes. Final text (GA24):	

to enter and leave the duty station and to be repatriated in times of international crisis. To this end, the host State shall issue to all Office personnel promptly, free of charge and without restrictions all necessary visas, permits and authorizations. 28. Likewise, the Host Country shall take appropriate measures to facilitate the entry into, sojourn in and departure of all representatives of Members of the Organization and any other persons who, by reason of their functions, must have access to the Office in an official capacity.		Transit All personnel of the Office shall be granted facilities enabling them to enter and leave the duty station and to be repatriated in times of international crisis. To this end, the host State shall issue to all Office personnel promptly, free of charge and without restrictions all necessary visas, permits and authorizations. Likewise, the Host Country shall take appropriate measures to facilitate the entry into, sojourn in and departure of all representatives of Members of the Organization and any other persons who, by reason of their functions, must have access to the Office in an official capacity.	
Security 29. Insofar as the premises of Regional Offices are inviolable, irrespective of their owner, no agent of the host State shall enter them without consent of the Secretary-General. 30. The host State shall take all necessary measures to ensure the safety and security of the building and premises of the Office and its personnel in line with the mandatory security standards required by UNDSS.		The Working Group made no changes. Final text (GA24): Security Insofar as the premises of Offices are inviolable, irrespective of their owner, no agent of the host State shall enter them without consent of the Secretary-General. The host State shall take all necessary measures to ensure the safety and security of the building and premises of the Office and its personnel in line with the mandatory security standards required by UNDSS.	
Meetings 31. The Convention and Annex XVIII shall be applicable in respect of meetings and conferences convened by the Organization in the host State. Without prejudice to the provisions of the Convention, all		The Working Group made no changes to the existing text. Final text (GA24): Meetings	

participants and persons performing functions in connection with a meeting or conference of the Organization in the host State shall enjoy such privileges and immunities, facilities and courtesies as are necessary for the independent exercise of their functions in connection thereto. 32. Meetings and conferences held outside of the premises of the Office shall require prior notification to the authorities of the host State.		The Convention and Annex XVIII shall be applicable in respect of meetings and conferences convened by the Organization in the host State. Without prejudice to the provisions of the Convention, all participants and persons performing functions in connection with a meeting or conference of the Organization in the host State shall enjoy such privileges and immunities, facilities and courtesies as are necessary for the independent exercise of their functions in connection thereto. Meetings and conferences held outside of the premises of the Office shall require prior notification to the authorities of the host State.	
Prevention of abuses 33. The privileges and immunities provided to the Organization and the personnel of the Office are only granted with a view to ensuring the effective fulfilment of the Organization's aims and purposes. The Secretary-General shall have the right and the duty to waive the immunity of any member of personnel if it would impede the course of justice and it can be waived without prejudice to the interests of the Organization. 34. The Organization and the host State shall cooperate in order to facilitate the proper administration of justice, assure the observance of police regulations and prevent any abuse in connection with the privileges, immunities, exemptions		The Working Group made no changes. Final text (GA24): Prevention of abuses The privileges and immunities provided to the Organization and the personnel of the Office are only granted with a view to ensuring the effective fulfilment of the Organization's aims and purposes. The Secretary-General shall have the right and the duty to waive the immunity of any member of personnel if it would impede the course of justice and it can be waived without prejudice to the interests of the Organization. The Organization and the host State shall cooperate in order to facilitate the proper administration of justice, assure the observance of police regulations and prevent any abuse in connection with the privileges, immunities, exemptions and	

and facilities granted to the Organization and its personnel.		facilities granted to the Organization and its personnel.	
Review of operations 35. The Organization will conduct evaluations as to ascertain whether an Office constitutes a significant contribution to the Organization's aims and objectives and will report periodically on the functioning and operations of Regional Offices to the General Assembly and the Executive Council.		The Working Group made no changes. Final text (GA24): Review of operations The Organization will conduct evaluations as to ascertain whether an Office constitutes a significant contribution to the Organization's aims and objectives and will report periodically on the functioning and operations of Offices to the General Assembly and the Executive Council.	
Procedure for the establishment of a Regional Office – steps to follow 36. Submission of an official letter of intent (application) of hosting a Regional Office by a Member State to the UNWTO's Secretariat and commitment to all requirements within the host country agreement; 37. Dissemination by the UNWTO Secretariat of an application among the Member States of the Region or inclusion the subject at the Regional Commission Meeting for its support and further recommendation. 38. Submission by the UNWTO Secretariat of the recommended application to the Executive Council for its endorsement, including any information relevant to the conclusion of the agreement for the hosting of the Office;	Procedure for the establishment of Regional and Thematic Offices – steps to follow (EC116), (CE/116/4(b)); 47. Submission of an official letter of intent (application) of hosting a Regional/Thematic Office by a Member State to the UNWTO's Secretariat and commitment to all requirements within the host country agreement; 48. For a Thematic Office only: Submission by the UNWTO Secretariat the application received from a member State (strictly responding to the key thematic approved in the Programme of Work by the General Assembly of the same biennial period) for the review and further recommendation of the Programme and Budget Committee, a subsidiary body of the Organization's Executive	Final text (WG): Procedure for the establishment of Regional and Thematic Offices – steps to follow Submission of an official letter of intent (application) by a Member State to host a Regional or Thematic Office, addressed to the Secretary-General of UN Tourism, along with a commitment to all requirements stipulated in the Host Country Agreement, including compliance with the applicable legal framework. Dissemination by the UN Tourism Secretariat among the Members of the corresponding Regional Commission(s) of the application and detailed proposal for hosting a Regional or Thematic Office — covering the proposed scope of work, financial aspects, and other relevant matters — prepared by the applicant country in consultation with the UN Tourism Secretariat, for subsequent recommendation by the Regional Commission(s), or inclusion of these	Two divergent views presented and additional comments: <u>China</u> China proposed an amendment to the wording in the 117th Executive Council report (CE/117/5) with the following formulation: "The application to host the Office should be submitted directly to the Executive Council by the UN Tourism Secretariat. The Member States of the corresponding regional commission shall be informed by the UN Tourism Secretariat of such application." (discussed at the Fourth and Fifth meetings of the Working Group). <u>Japan</u> Japan proposed amendment of the wording in the 116 th Executive Council report (CE/116/4(b)) with the following formulation: "When considering the establishment of a new Regional Office, it should be endorsed by consensus of the Regional commission meeting to which it belongs, before submitting

39. Submission by the UNWTO Secretariat of the endorsed application to the General Assembly for its ratification.	Council Unlike a Regional Office, the application for the establishment of a Thematic Office is not a subject to the inclusion in the agendas of the respective Regional Commission meetings. 49. Dissemination by the UNWTO Secretariat of an application among the Member States of the Region or inclusion the subject at the Regional Commission Meeting for its support and further recommendation. 50. Submission by the UNWTO Secretariat of the recommended application to the Executive Council for its endorsement, including any information relevant to the conclusion of the agreement for the hosting of the Office. 51. Submission by the UNWTO Secretariat of the endorsed application to the General Assembly for its ratification. (EC117), (CE/117/5, Annex I) - The State wishing to host the Office must submit a letter of the Secretary-General undertaking to comply with the required legal framework. - The application to host the Office must be recommended by the corresponding regional commission for	documents in the agenda of the corresponding Regional Commission meeting(s) for discussion and subsequent recommendation. In the case of Thematic Offices, in addition to the recommendation of the corresponding Regional Commission(s), the Secretariat shall also disseminate the application and detailed proposal among the Members of the Programme and Budget Committee (PBC), for subsequent recommendation by the PBC, or include them in the agenda of the PBC for discussion and subsequent recommendation. Submission by the UN Tourism Secretariat of the recommended application to the Executive Council for its endorsement, including any information relevant to the conclusion of the agreement for the hosting of the Office. Submission by the UN Tourism Secretariat of the endorsed application to the General Assembly for its ratification.	to the Executive Council and the General Assembly, consistent with past practice. If considering a new office in a region where a Regional Office already exists, the division of roles with the existing Regional Office should be fully discussed in the regional commission. The General Assembly and the Executive Council consider the establishment of such an office only after it is endorsed by the Regional Commission." (discussed at the Fourth and Fifth meetings of the Working Group). Comment received from Japan following the Fourth and Fifth meetings of the Working Group Japan submitted that "We support the recently expressed Secretariat's views that it is of critical importance to ensure a broader discussion on a wide ranges of relevant matters and concerns in the corresponding regional commission before establishing new regional office, in line with the report on the "Establishment of UNWTO Regional Offices" of the 24th session of the General Assembly and the "Report on the status on the legal and operational framework for the establishment of UNWTO Regional and Thematic Offices." Otherwise, it may result in duplication and inefficiency of operations and could adversely affect UN Tourism's human and financial resources. In particular, when a new regional office is going to be established in the region subject to the jurisdiction of an existing one, we are of the view that sufficient consultations on the division of roles between the existing and the new offices should be exhausted within the corresponding regional commission, as this would serve the interests of UN Tourism, and the sequence of procedures—deliberations in the regional commission, endorsement by the Executive
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	submission to the Executive Council. - The establishment of the Office must be approved by the General Assembly upon endorsement by the Executive Council.	Council, and reporting to the General Assembly—is indispensable for ensuring the transparency of the Organization. Japan also concurs with the Resolution 763 “Progress report on the establishment of the UNWTO Regional and Thematic Offices (A/25/9 rev.1)” adopted in the 25th General Assembly; namely that the establishment of a new regional office must be recommended by the corresponding regional commission before being submitted to the Executive Council and subsequently to the General Assembly. 16. in accordance with the conditions applying to UNWTO Regional and Thematic Offices pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 656(XXI) and 740(XXIV), <u>an application to host an Office must be recommended by the corresponding regional commission for submission to the Executive Council for endorsement prior to being ultimately submitted for approval by the General Assembly.</u> Accordingly, Uzbekistan’s application will be examined by the Commission for Europe at its 65th meeting to be held on 16 October 2023.” Comment received from China following the Fourth and Fifth meetings of the Working Group China submitted that “Following the 4th and 5th Meeting of the Working Group on UN Tourism Regional and Thematic Offices and the request raised by China, according to the Agenda Item 10 “Establishment of UNWTO Regional Offices” adopted by the 24th General Assembly (A/24/10 Rev.1) point 37, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of China would like to request the Secretariat
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			to disseminate China's application among member states of Commission for East Asia and the Pacific and Commission for South Asia for their support and recommendation, in order to submit it to the 124th Executive Council and the 26 session of the General Assembly for endorsement." China also replied to the comments submitted by Japan following the fourth and fifth meetings of the Working Group that "1. According to General Assembly resolutions 656(XXI) and 740(XXIV), an application to host an Office requires "Dissemination by the UNWTO Secretariat of an application among the Member States of the Region or inclusion the subject at the Regional Commission Meeting for its support and further recommendation", "Submission by the UNWTO Secretariat of the recommended application to the Executive Council for its endorsement, including any information relevant to the conclusion of the agreement for the hosting of the Office", and "Submission by the UNWTO Secretariat of the endorsed application to the General Assembly for its ratification". The above resolutions clearly states that the Executive Council and the General Assembly are the bodies to decide on the establishment of a regional office. The Secretariat should disseminate the application among the member states of the regional commission, whether a result could be reached, the application should be submitted to the Executive Council and the General Assembly for approval, which is also agreed by the legal counsel and reached as decisions during our last working group meeting. 2. At present, no official regional office in the Asia Pacific region has been approved by the
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			Executive Council and the General Assembly, because no country in the region has yet signed the Host Country Agreement and committed to complying with the operational and legal framework of regional office of UN Tourism. Currently, there is no such problem as duplication or roles division. Additionally, there is no restriction limiting the establishment to only one regional office within the same region. 3.The purpose of establishing a regional office is to serve the member states and the development of UN Tourism. With the continuing input of the Host country, the office, as part of the Organization, will further contribute to the prosperity of the International Tourism sector. We believe it will only improve the efficiency and truly assist the Secretariat to lay the groundwork for future development.”
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Annex III - Comments received from Japan (21.10.2025) during the circulation of the draft Final Report among the Working Group Members under the 72-hour silence procedure (extract of comments received)

1 Introduction

- First of all, Japan wishes to extend its deepest appreciation to the UN Tourism Secretariat for its dedicated efforts.
- In response to the Note Verbale dated 15 October 2025 circulated by the UN Tourism for the examination of the draft Final Report of Working Group on UN Tourism Regional and Thematic Offices, Japan hereby submits the following comments.

2 Financial Resources (NOTE on Page 2 of the draft Final Report)

- We have concern that if the financial resources of the UN Tourism organization are used as funding for the establishment of regional/thematic offices in member states, it may lead to a decrease in financial resources within the UN Tourism organization and a proliferation of regional/thematic offices.
- Taking into account the efforts made under the UN80 Initiative, when allocating UN Tourism's core funds for the establishment of regional/thematic offices, it is desirable to allocate them after examining "the global layout of the Offices and clarifying their respective scope of work under the premise of full consideration of regional balance", as mentioned in paragraph 15 of the draft Final Report.

3 The Process of the Establishment of Regional Offices (Paragraph 7 on Page 4, Paragraph 15 on Page 5, Annex 2 Comparative Chart on Page 13 and 31-34)

- The process of establishing regional offices was discussed at the 4th and 5th Meetings of the Working Group on UN Tourism Regional and Thematic Offices held on 23 September 2025. In the said Meetings, there was not much support from the participating countries for the claim that discussion at the corresponding regional commission is unnecessary. In other words, we have not reached the conclusion at all that it suffices to disseminate application documents and solicit opinions from member countries of the regional commission when establishing a new office.
- Having said that, Japan believes that, according to the UN Tourism documents, it is a prerequisite for the establishment of regional offices that prior consultations are held at the regional commission to which the member state intending to establish a regional office belongs.
- As explained in the written comments, "Report on the status on the legal and operational framework for the establishment of UNWTO Regional and Thematic Offices" contained in the Decision of the 117th Executive Council in 2022 (Appendix 1) states that "The application to host the Office must be recommended by the corresponding regional commission for submission to the Executive Council."
- In addition, "Progress report on the establishment of the UNWTO Regional and Thematic Offices" of the 2023 General Assembly (Appendix 2) states that "an application to host an Office must be recommended by the corresponding regional commission for submission to the Executive Council for endorsement prior to being ultimately submitted for approval by the General Assembly." These documents should not be ignored.
- On a different note, the 2015 General Assembly Resolution 656 is cited in the Comments from China dated 8 October 2025 as the basis for the claim that "Dissemination by the UNWTO Secretariat of an application among the Member States of the Region" would suffice when establishing a new regional office, but there is no such sentence in the said resolution.
- With respect to the 2021 General Assembly Resolution 740 (Appendix 3) that is also cited, its Attachment states that "Dissemination by the UNWTO Secretariat of an application among the Member States of the Region or inclusion the subject at the Regional Commission Meeting for its support and further recommendation" is one of the steps to follow for the establishment of a Regional Office, and this procedure leaves certain ambiguity. On this point, the concrete step to follow has been clarified by the aforesaid Decision of the 2022 Executive Council and 2023 Progress Report.

◦Furthermore, practices of member states subsequent to the 2021 General Assembly Resolution also support the view of Japan. Specifically, for Brazil, Morocco, Uzbekistan, and Uruguay, where the process of establishing regional/thematic offices is already underway, the establishment of regional/thematic offices has been on the agenda at their corresponding regional commissions. This means that the discussion at the regional commission has been held as a step to follow towards the establishment of new offices.

◦It should be also underlined that the UN Tourism Secretariat has expressed in writing the view that it is important to fully consult at the regional commission before establishing a regional office (Appendix 4).

◦In view of the above, it is prerequisite procedures that deliberations at the corresponding regional commission are held for the establishment of a regional office, both in documents and in practice. Should any country establishing a new regional office in future be exempted from deliberations at the corresponding regional commission, it would be unfair in relation to such countries as Brazil, Morocco, Uzbekistan and Uruguay which have adhered to due process, and may undermine equality among member states.

◦Notably, as there has been no precedent of multiple regional offices being established within the same region, a proposal to establish a new regional office within the jurisdiction of an existing one must be given careful consideration. Otherwise, regional offices could be rampantly established in various regions without being adequately scrutinized in their corresponding Regional Commissions, which could have adverse effects on UN Tourism's human and financial resources.

4 Regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific (RSOAP) in Nara, Japan (Paragraph 7 on Page 4, Paragraph 15 on Page 5, Annex 2 Comparative Chart on Page 13 and 31-34)

◦The comments from China cited in the draft Final Report states that "At present, no official regional office in the Asia Pacific region has been approved by the Executive Council and the General Assembly." We would like to point out that this statement is contradicted with the facts.

◦First and foremost, prior to the establishment of the Regional Office in Japan (RSOAP), Japan conducted presentation at the WTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific and the WTO commission for South Asia in 1993, and then the Regional Commissions (with China being a member thereof) jointly decided to "recommend to the Executive Council that the Regional office should be located in the territory of Japan" (Appendix 5).

◦This decision was subsequently endorsed by the 1993 Executive Council Decision (Appendix 6), the 1993 General Assembly Resolution 305 (Appendix 7) and the 1993 General Assembly Resolution 319 (Appendix 8), and the Office was officially established in 1995.

◦As explicitly recognized in the 2021 General Assembly Resolution 740 (Appendix 3), the RSOAP is "The first Regional Office" of the UN Tourism. Over the past 30 years, the Office has played a role in promoting tourism development, sustainable tourism and tourism resilience in the Asia-Pacific region.

5 Conclusion

◦In the light of the foregoing, Japan respectfully requests that the Final Report be revised accordingly.

Appendix

1 "Report on the status on the legal and operational framework for the establishment of UNWTO Regional and Thematic Offices" decided at the 117th Executive Council

"The application to host the Office must be recommended by the corresponding regional commission for submission to the Executive Council"

https://pre-webunwto.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2022-10/CE117_05_Report_Status_Legal_Operational_Framework_Regional_and_Thematic_Offices_En.pdf?VersionId=WkE7cSMdaSEMufMIVa_bs6QWcRpL6.Wr

2 “Progress report on the establishment of the UNWTO Regional and Thematic Office” adopted in the 25th General Assembly

16. in accordance with the conditions applying to UNWTO Regional and Thematic Offices pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 656(XXI) and 740(XXIV), an application to host an Office must be recommended by the corresponding regional commission for submission to the Executive Council for endorsement prior to being ultimately submitted for approval by the General Assembly. Accordingly, Uzbekistan’s application will be examined by the Commission for Europe at its 65th meeting to be held on 16 October 2023.

https://pre-webunwto.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2023-10/A25_9_Proggress%20report%20on%20UNWTO%20Regional%20and%20Thematic%20Offices_rev1_En.pdf?VersionId=DTJ.c6Jy.WkdCKtLrq0nz74f.sAftuAj

3 The Resolution 740 “Establishment of UNWTO Regional Office”

(Attachment)

9. The first Regional Office, the UNWTO Regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific, was established in 1995 in Osaka, Japan, to assist with the development and promotion of tourism in the region. In 2012, the office moved to its current location in Nara, Japan.

Procedure for the establishment of a Regional Office – steps to follow

37. Dissemination by the UNWTO Secretariat of an application among the Member States of the Region or inclusion the subject at the Regional Commission Meeting for its support and further recommendation.

(https://pre-webunwto.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2021-12/A24_10_Establishment_Regional%20Offices_rev.1_En.pdf?VersionId=N.5jhgFVNYwjyq32zWN1aXy2gpR7kLI3)

4 Comments of Japan and Secretariat

The Comment of Japan	The Comment of Secretariat
Japan Verbal comments received during the 116th session of the Executive Council: Expressed belief that the establishment of a new regional office should be endorsed by consensus of the regional commission meeting to which it belongs before submitting to the Executive Council and the General Assembly. In particular, if considering a new office in a region where a regional office already exists, it serves all Members interest to obtain the endorsement of the regional commission after fully discussing the division of laws with the existing regional offices. Written comments receive prior to the 116th session of the Executive Council: Considered that it is necessary to discuss respective functions and roles of the regional offices and also interrelationship between them before such establishing new offices since it may result in duplication and inefficiency of operations and could adversely affect UN Tourism's human and financial resources. As one of the largest financial contributors to UN Tourism, expressed that they will continue to seek clarification from the Secretariat on this point. Expressed belief that it is important that new offices will be established after thorough discussion and support by the Member States. Therefore, proposed the following text to be added to the paragraph 49 of the legal and operational framework for the establishment of UN Tourism Regional Offices. [Proposed text to be added in paragraph 49] "When considering the establishment of a new Regional Office, it should be endorsed by consensus	Japan's consideration and proposal is closely interlinked with the viewpoint of the Secretariat. While elaborating from the initial stage the procedure for the establishment of a regional office—as outlined in the report on the "Establishment of UNWTO Regional Offices" of the 24th session of the General Assembly (A/24/10 rev.1, p.7)—and subsequently refining it by including it in Annex I (p.8) of the "Report on the status on the legal and operational framework for the establishment of UNWTO Regional and Thematic Offices" (GE/117/5), the Secretariat's primary consideration was to ensure that the entire process of establishing the offices is fully based on the need to submit any application to those statutory organs and their subsidiary bodies whose engagement in the phases of discussion, consultation, endorsement, and approval is of critical importance. The Secretariat believes that having a broader discussion of any application for hosting regional or thematic offices during the corresponding regional commission meeting—or meetings, in the case of thematic offices where the scope of the Office may encompass more than one region—will ensure that: (1) Member States' concerns, needs, and proposals are addressed transparently; (2) the rationale for the number of offices, as well as their scope of work and other functions, is defined in the best and most optimal way; and (3) the establishment of offices is well-coordinated, including their interrelationships with other existing or upcoming offices, and serves the needs of Member States to comply with the biennium Programme of Work approved by the General Assembly every two years. As for the proposed text of Japan to be added in paragraph 49, namely:
of the Regional commission meeting to which it belongs, before submitting to the Executive Council and the General Assembly, consistent with past practice. If considering a new office in a region where a Regional Office already exists, the division of roles with the existing Regional Office should be fully discussed in the regional commission. The General Assembly and the Executive Council consider the establishment of such an office only after it is endorsed by the Regional Commission." Written comments receive prior to the 116th Executive Council session: Expressed view that when a country proposes to establish a new regional office, that the proposal should be endorsed by consensus at the meeting of the regional commission to which it belongs, before submitting the proposal to the Executive Council and the General Assembly, in order to be consistent with past practice. Expressed belief that this process contributes to smooth review and endorsement at the Executive Council and the General Assembly. If the proposal aims for the establishment of a new office in a region where a regional office already exists, the division of roles with the existing regional office should be fully discussed in the regional commission. The General Assembly and the Executive Council consider the establishment of such an office only after it is endorsed by the regional commission by consensus.	"When considering the establishment of a new Regional Office, it should be endorsed by consensus of the Regional Commission Meeting to which it belongs, before submitting to the Executive Council and the General Assembly, consistent with past practice. If considering a new office in a region where a Regional Office already exists, the division of roles with the existing Regional Office should be fully discussed in the Regional Commission. The General Assembly and the Executive Council consider the establishment of such an office only after it is endorsed by the Regional Commission."— it is entirely up to the Working Group to decide how to proceed further, subject to reflection in the final report of recommendations.

5 Decision 2 by the 10th WTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific and the WTO commission for South Asia (CPA/CSA/DEC/2(X))

Establishment of a support office for the Asian Region

The Commissions,

2. Recommend to the Executive Council that the Regional Office should be located in the territory of Japan.

(<https://webunwto.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2019-12/csacap10decisions.pdf>)

6 The Decision 5 of the 46th Executive Council (CE/DEC/ 5 (XLVI))

The Executive Council,

Having been informed that the tenth joint meeting of the WTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific and the WTO Commission for South Asia, held on 1 October 1993, recommended that the Regional Support Office for the Asia and Pacific region should be located in Japan,

5. Decides to refer this recommendation to the General Assembly for approval.

(https://webunwto.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/imported_images/45603/046dec.pdf)

7 The Resolution 305 of the 10th General Assembly (A/RES/305 (X))

The General Assembly,

4. Records with satisfaction the strengthening under way of the Organization's presence in the field, as called for at its ninth session, and approves the entering of a new stage in this regard with the opening, on an experimental basis, of a regional support office for Asia and the Pacific, established in Japan.

(https://webunwto.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/imported_images/45233/10res.pdf)

8 The Resolution 319 of the 10th General Assembly (A/RES/319 (X))

The General Assembly,

Having been informed that, at their joint meeting in Bali on 1 October 1993, the Regional Commissions for South Asia and for East Asia and the Pacific decided that Japan should host the Regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific,

(https://webunwto.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/imported_images/45233/10res.pdf)

Annex II: Comments and feedback received from Members of the Commission for East Asia and the Pacific (CAP) and the Commission for South Asia (CSA) regarding the application of the People's Republic of China to host a UN Tourism Regional Office in Shanghai (extract from emails and other documentation)

Republic of Korea (28.10.2025)

I would like to provide comments regarding China's application to host a Regional Office in Shanghai, as follows:

The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of the Republic of Korea deeply appreciates the initiative of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China and its willingness to further contribute to the development of tourism in the Asia and the Pacific region through the proposed establishment of a Regional Office.

However, the Ministry is of the view that this matter would benefit from further discussion and consultation at the Regional Commission level, to allow Member States to exchange views and ensure full transparency in the member-driven decision-making process.

Accordingly, the Ministry wishes to inform that it is not in a position, at this stage, to join a recommendation for submission to the 124th session of the Executive Council and the 26th session of the General Assembly.

Should you require any further communication or clarification regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Official from the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism

Islamic Republic of Iran (28.10.2025)

With reference to your communication regarding China's application to host a UN Tourism Regional Office for East Asia and the Pacific – South Asia in Shanghai, I am pleased to convey the position of the Tourism Deputy of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

After due consideration, the Tourism Deputy has expressed its agreement with the establishment of the proposed UN Tourism Regional Office in Shanghai, China. The Deputy has also indicated support for this initiative within the framework of the Commissions for East Asia and the Pacific and for South Asia, recognizing its potential to facilitate cooperation and communication among the member countries of the respective regions.

Accordingly, the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts of Islamic Republic of Iran supports China's application to host the Regional Office, in line with the broader objectives of promoting regional tourism development and strengthening collaboration among UN Tourism member states.

Official from the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts

Japan (28.10.2025)

○First of all, Japan wishes to extend its deepest appreciation to the UN Tourism Secretariat for its dedicated efforts. In response to the Secretariat's request dated 10 October 2025 to examine the application of China to host a Regional Office, Japan hereby submits the following comments.

1 The Process of the Establishment of Regional Offices

○The process of establishing regional offices was discussed at the 4th and 5th Meetings of the Working Group on UN Tourism Regional and Thematic Offices held on 23 September 2025. In the said Meetings, there was not much support from the participating countries for the claim that discussion at the corresponding regional commission is unnecessary. In other words, we have not reached the conclusion at all that it suffices to disseminate application

documents and solicit opinions from member countries of the regional commission when establishing a new office.

○Therefore, the circulation of the application documents in question should not be construed as constituting a part of the process towards establishing a regional office. At the same time, Japan's submission of opinions this time should not be interpreted as implicitly approving the claim that this opinion-solicitation is a step towards establishing a new regional office.

○Having said that, Japan believes that, according to the UN Tourism documents, it is a prerequisite for the establishment of regional offices that prior consultations are held at the regional commission to which the member state intending to establish a regional office belongs.

○As explained in the written comments, "Report on the status on the legal and operational framework for the establishment of UNWTO Regional and Thematic Offices" contained in the Decision of the 117th Executive Council in 2022 (Appendix 1) states that "The application to host the Office must be recommended by the corresponding regional commission for submission to the Executive Council."

○In addition, "Progress report on the establishment of the UNWTO Regional and Thematic Offices" of the 2023 General Assembly (Appendix 2) states that "an application to host an Office must be recommended by the corresponding regional commission for submission to the Executive Council for endorsement prior to being ultimately submitted for approval by the General Assembly." These documents should not be ignored.

○On a different note, the 2015 General Assembly Resolution 656 is cited in the Comments from China dated 8 October 2025 as the basis for the claim that "Dissemination by the UNWTO Secretariat of an application among the Member States of the Region" would suffice when establishing a new regional office, but there is no such sentence in the said resolution.

○With respect to the 2021 General Assembly Resolution 740 (Appendix 3) that is also cited, its Attachment states that "Dissemination by the UNWTO Secretariat of an application among the Member States of the Region or inclusion the subject at the Regional Commission Meeting for its support and further recommendation" is one of the steps to follow for the establishment of a Regional Office, and this procedure leaves certain ambiguity.

○However, the aforesaid Decision of the 2022 Executive Council, made after the 2021 General Assembly Resolution, clearly states that the "application to host the Office must be recommended by the corresponding regional commission". In the light of this 2022 Executive Council Decision, it has been already clarified that mere dissemination of an application among the Member States of the Region does not suffice. This understanding is also endorsed by the aforementioned 2023 Progress Report which reiterates the same position as the 2022 Executive Council Decision.

○Furthermore, practices of member states subsequent to the 2021 General Assembly Resolution also support the view of Japan. Specifically, for Brazil, Morocco, Uzbekistan, and Uruguay, where the process of establishing regional/thematic offices is already underway, the establishment of regional/thematic offices has been on the agenda at their corresponding regional commissions. This means that the discussion at the regional commission has been held as a step to follow towards the establishment of new offices.

*Annotation: It is unclear whether discussions were held at the corresponding regional commission when opening the Riyadh office. However, at the time of the office's opening (May 2021), the General Assembly Resolution 740 (November-December 2021) had not yet been adopted, and the said opening had to be carried out under the circumstances where a consented due process was non-existent. This means that it was infeasible at that time for

the Riyadh office to foresee the presently applicable due process (i.e. discussion at the Corresponding Regional Commission) consolidated only after its opening. Hence, we should rather examine how countries have carried out the procedures for the establishment of offices after the adoption of the 2021 General Assembly Resolution 740.

○It should be also underlined that the UN Tourism Secretariat has expressed in writing the view that it is important to fully consult at the regional commission before establishing a regional office (Appendix 4).

○In view of the above, it is prerequisite procedure that deliberations at the corresponding regional commission are held for the establishment of a regional office, both in documents and in practice. Should any country establishing a new regional office in future be exempted from deliberations at the corresponding regional commission, it would be unfair in relation to such countries as Brazil, Morocco, Uzbekistan and Uruguay which have adhered to due process, and may undermine equality among member states.

○Notably, as there has been no precedent of multiple regional offices being established within the same region, the present proposal to establish a new regional office within the jurisdiction of an existing one must be given careful consideration. Otherwise, regional offices could be rampantly established in various regions without being adequately scrutinized in their corresponding Regional Commissions, which could have adverse effects on UN Tourism's human and financial resources.

2 Regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific (RSOAP) in Nara, Japan

○China claimed in its comments dated 8 October 2025 that "At present, no official regional office in the Asia Pacific region has been approved by the Executive Council and the General Assembly." We would like to point out that this statement is contradicted with the facts.

○First and foremost, prior to the establishment of the Regional Office in Japan (RSOAP), Japan conducted presentation at the WTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific and the WTO commission for South Asia in 1993, and then the Regional Commissions (with China being a member thereof) jointly decided to "recommend to the Executive Council that the Regional office should be located in the territory of Japan" (Appendix 5).

○This decision was subsequently endorsed by the 1993 Executive Council Decision (Appendix 6), the 1993 General Assembly Resolution 305 (Appendix 7) and the 1993 General Assembly Resolution 319 (Appendix 8), and the Office was officially established in 1995.

○Since then, RSOAP has played a role in promoting tourism development, sustainable tourism and tourism resilience in the Asia-Pacific region and has gained recognition within UN Tourism as the regional office for Asia-Pacific. The 2021 General Assembly Resolution 740 (Appendix 3) also explicitly recognizes the RSOAP as "the first Regional Office" of the UN Tourism.

3 Conclusion

○In the light of the foregoing, Japan believes that thorough deliberations and the subsequent recommendation at the joint meetings of the Regional Commission for East Asia and the Pacific and the Regional Commission for South Asia to be held after 2026 are indispensable before any further steps are taken. Thus, the submission of the present opinion by Japan

constitutes the “objection” referred to in the Note Verbale dated 10 October 2025 circulated by UN Tourism.

1 “Report on the status on the legal and operational framework for the establishment of UNWTO Regional and Thematic Offices” decided at the 117th Executive Council

“The application to host the Office must be recommended by the corresponding regional commission for submission to the Executive Council”

(https://pre-webunwto.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2022-10/CE117_0_5_Report_Status_Legal_Operational_Framework_Regional_and_Thematic_Offices_En.pdf?VersionId=WkE7cSMdaSEMUfVlVa_bs6QWcRpL6.Wr)

2 “Progress report on the establishment of the UNWTO Regional and Thematic Office” adopted in the 25th General Assembly

16. in accordance with the conditions applying to UNWTO Regional and Thematic Offices pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 656(XXI) and 740(XXIV), an application to host an Office must be recommended by the corresponding regional commission for submission to the Executive Council for endorsement prior to being ultimately submitted for approval by the General Assembly. Accordingly, Uzbekistan’s application will be examined by the Commission for Europe at its 65th meeting to be held on 16 October 2023.

(https://pre-webunwto.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2023-10/A25_9_Prog%20report%20on%20UNWTO%20Regional%20and%20Thematic%20Offices_rev1_En.pdf?VersionId=DTJ.c6Jy.WkdCKtLrq0nz74f.sAftuAj)

3 The Resolution 740 “Establishment of UNWTO Regional Office” (Attachment)

9. The first Regional Office, the UNWTO Regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific, was established in 1995 in Osaka, Japan, to assist with the development and promotion of tourism in the region. In 2012, the office moved to its current location in Nara, Japan.

Procedure for the establishment of a Regional Office – steps to follow

37. Dissemination by the UNWTO Secretariat of an application among the Member States of the Region or inclusion the subject at the Regional Commission Meeting for its support and further recommendation.

(https://pre-webunwto.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2021-12/A24_10_Establishment_Regional%20Offices_rev.1_En.pdf?VersionId=N.5jhgFVNYwjyq32zW_N1aXy2gpR7kLI3)

Comments of Japan and the Secretariat

The Comment of Japan

The Comment of Secretariat

Japan	Verbal comments received during the 116th session of the Executive Council: Expressed belief that the establishment of a new regional office should be endorsed by consensus of the regional commission meeting to which it belongs before submitting to the Executive Council and the General Assembly. In particular, if considering a new office in a region where a regional office already exists, it serves all Members interest to obtain the endorsement of the regional commission after fully discussing the division of laws with the existing regional offices. Written comments receive prior to the 116th session of the Executive Council: Considered that it is necessary to discuss respective functions and roles of the regional offices and also interrelationship between them before such establishing new offices since it may result in duplication and inefficiency of operations and could adversely affect UN Tourism's human and financial resources. As one of the largest financial contributors to UN Tourism, expressed that they will continue to seek clarification from the Secretariat on this point. Expressed belief that it is important that new offices will be established after thorough discussion and support by the Member States. Therefore, proposed the following text to be added to the paragraph 49 of the legal and operational framework for the establishment of UN Tourism Regional Offices. [Proposed text to be added in paragraph 49] "When considering the establishment of a new Regional Office, it should be endorsed by consensus	Japan's consideration and proposal is closely interlinked with the viewpoint of the Secretariat. While elaborating from the initial stage the procedure for the establishment of a regional office—as outlined in the report on the "Establishment of UNWTO Regional Offices" of the 24th session of the General Assembly (A/24/10 rev.1, p.7)—and subsequently refining it by including it in Annex I (p.8) of the "Report on the status on the legal and operational framework for the establishment of UNWTO Regional and Thematic Offices" (CE/117/5), the Secretariat's primary consideration was to ensure that the entire process of establishing the offices is fully based on the need to submit any application to those statutory organs and their subsidiary bodies whose engagement in the phases of discussion, consultation, endorsement, and approval is of critical importance. The Secretariat believes that having a broader discussion of any application for hosting regional or thematic offices during the corresponding regional commission meeting—or meetings, in the case of thematic offices where the scope of the Office may encompass more than one region—will ensure that: (1) Member States' concerns, needs, and proposals are addressed transparently; (2) the rationale for the number of offices, as well as their scope of work and other functions, is defined in the best and most optimal way; and (3) the establishment of offices is well-coordinated, including their interrelationships with other existing or upcoming offices, and serves the needs of Member States to comply with the biennium Programme of Work approved by the General Assembly every two years. As for the proposed text of Japan to be added in paragraph 49, namely:
	of the Regional commission meeting to which it belongs, before submitting to the Executive Council and the General Assembly, consistent with past practice. If considering a new office in a region where a Regional Office already exists, the division of roles with the existing Regional Office should be fully discussed in the regional commission. The General Assembly and the Executive Council consider the establishment of such an office only after it is endorsed by the Regional Commission." Written comments receive prior to the 116th Executive Council session: Expressed view that when a country proposes to establish a new regional office, that the proposal should be endorsed by consensus at the meeting of the regional commission to which it belongs, before submitting the proposal to the Executive Council and the General Assembly, in order to be consistent with past practice. Expressed belief that this process contributes to smooth review and endorsement at the Executive Council and the General Assembly. If the proposal aims for the establishment of a new office in a region where a regional office already exists, the division of roles with the existing regional office should be fully discussed in the regional commission. The General Assembly and the Executive Council consider the establishment of such an office only after it is endorsed by the regional commission by consensus.	"When considering the establishment of a new Regional Office, it should be endorsed by consensus of the Regional Commission Meeting to which it belongs, before submitting to the Executive Council and the General Assembly, consistent with past practice. If considering a new office in a region where a Regional Office already exists, the division of roles with the existing Regional Office should be fully discussed in the Regional Commission. The General Assembly and the Executive Council consider the establishment of such an office only after it is endorsed by the Regional Commission."—it is entirely up to the Working Group to decide how to proceed further, subject to reflection in the final report of recommendations.

5 Decision 2 by the 10th WTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific and the WTO commission for South Asia (CPA/CSA/DEC/2(X))

Establishment of a support office for the Asian Region The Commissions.

2. Recommend to the Executive Council that the Regional Office should be located in the territory of Japan.

(<https://webunwto.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2019-12/csacap10decisions.pdf>)

6 The Decision 5 of the 46th Executive Council (CE/DEC/ 5 (XLVI))

The Executive Council,

Having been informed that the tenth joint meeting of the WTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific and the WTO Commission for South Asia, held on 1 October 1993, recommended that the Regional Support Office for the Asia and Pacific region should be located in Japan,

5. Decides to refer this recommendation to the General Assembly for approval. (https://webunwto.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/imported_images/45603/046dec.pdf)

7 The Resolution 305 of the 10th General Assembly (A/RES/305 (X))

The General Assembly,

4. Records with satisfaction the strengthening under way of the Organization's presence in the field, as called for at its ninth session, and approves the entering of a new stage in this regard with the opening, on an experimental basis, of a regional support office for Asia and the Pacific, established in Japan.

(https://webunwto.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/imported_images/45233/10res.pdf)

8 The Resolution 319 of the 10th General Assembly (A/RES/319 (X))

The General Assembly,

Having been informed that, at their joint meeting in Bali on 1 October 1993, the Regional Commissions for South Asia and for East Asia and the Pacific decided that Japan should host the Regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific, (https://webunwto.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/imported_images/45233/10res.pdf)

India (28.10.2025)

This has reference to UN Tourism's communication No. NV/OFSG/30/2025 dated 10 October 2025 regarding the proposal to host a Regional Office in Shanghai, China.

It may be recalled that during the 4th Meeting of the G20 Tourism Working Group and the G20 Tourism Ministers' Meeting held in Goa from 19–21 June 2023 under India's G20 Presidency, a bilateral meeting took place between the Hon'ble Minister of Tourism, Government of India, and the Secretary-General, UNWTO. During this meeting, both sides discussed the possibility of establishing a UNWTO Regional Office in New Delhi to serve the South and Southeast Asia region. The matter remains under active consideration and has not yet been concluded.

At present, UNWTO maintains a Regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific, which was originally established in Osaka in 1995 and later relocated to Nara, Japan, in 2012. In addition, a Regional Office for the Middle East was established in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in 2021.

Given that a Regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific already exists in Japan and that discussions regarding possibilities of establishing a UNWTO Regional office in New Delhi is still under consideration,

India may not be in a position to endorse the proposal for establishing another UNWTO Regional Office in the region.

This issues with the approval of the competent authority.

Official from the Ministry of Tourism

Indonesia (28.10.2025)

On behalf of the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Indonesia, we acknowledge receipt of the Note Verbale from China concerning the intention to establish a Regional Office in Shanghai.

We welcome China's initiative to expand the UN Tourism presence in the region and have reviewed the proposal for the new office. We appreciate its long contributions to the work of UN Tourism and its commitment to fully cover the operational costs of the proposed Regional Office.

As a member of the Commission for East Asia and the Pacific, we must underscore the importance of collective decision-making on such matters. We also recognize that a Regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific has been established in Nara, Japan, since 1995.

Therefore, we believe it is essential to first convene a discussion within the regional commission to facilitate an exchange of views among member states. This discussion would aim to clearly distinguish the function and mandate of the existing office in Japan and the proposed new office in Shanghai.

Accordingly, we propose that this initiative be discussed at the joint CAP-CSA meeting prior to its submission to the Executive Council meeting and General Assembly for final consideration.

Should you require further information or clarification regarding our position, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Best regards,

Official from the Ministry of Tourism

People's Republic of China (30.10.2025)

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism of China would like to thank the Secretariat and the relevant member states for their support, engagement and efforts in the process of the application to establish a Regional Office in Shanghai.

We noted comments from relevant countries and hereby provide the following comments.

1. China remains committed to supporting the work of UN Tourism and will cover all the expenses of the Regional Office in Shanghai.

The Regional Office in Shanghai will be financed by China through a voluntary contribution. It will increase the financial resources of the UN Tourism, which will further contribute to the prosperity of the International Tourism sector. We believe it will only improve the efficiency and truly assist the Secretariat to lay the groundwork for future development.

2. The process of establishing a Regional Office in Shanghai is fully aligned with the relevant UN Tourism resolutions. This proposal has received recognition from the Secretariat and the overwhelming majority of Member States.

The comments from certain country, for example, "there was not much support from the participating countries for the claim that discussion at the corresponding regional commission is unnecessary at the 4th and 5th Meetings of the Working Group on UN Tourism Regional and Thematic Offices held on 23 September 2025" and "there is no such sentence in the said resolution for the claim that *Dissemination by the UNWTO Secretariat of an application among the Member States of the Region*", are contradictory to the facts and misleading.

According to General Assembly resolutions 656(XXI) and 740(XXIV)(paragraph 37 on page 7), an application to host an Office requires “Dissemination by the UNWTO Secretariat of an application among the Member States of the Region or inclusion of the subject at the Regional Commission Meeting for its support and further recommendation”, “Submission by the UNWTO Secretariat of the recommended application to the Executive Council for its endorsement, including any information relevant to the conclusion of the agreement for the hosting of the Office”, and “Submission by the UNWTO Secretariat of the endorsed application to the General Assembly for its ratification”.

The proposal from China has been disseminated by the Secretariat among the member states of East Asia and the Pacific and of South Asia, and will be reviewed during the 124th Session of the Executive Council and the 26th Session of the UN Tourism General Assembly, held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, from 7 to 11 November 2025. We are also scheduled to brief our detailed plan on the operation of the Regional Office at the Joint Commission Meeting for East Asia and the Pacific and for South Asia in 2026, in order to consult with the commission member states, and accommodate comments and proposals for the work plan of the Regional Office in Shanghai.

China is pleased to note that the consultation process with the member states of commissions has demonstrated clear and broad-based support for the proposal. 25 out of 29 countries supported or raised no objection, signifying the proposal has secured the recommendation of the majority of countries.

With a solid development foundation, vast market resources, extensive experience in hosting international organizations, as well as an open and inclusive partnership network, and Shanghai as a world-renowned port city and tourist destination, China has full confidence and capability to fulfill the responsibilities of hosting a UN Tourism Regional Office in Shanghai. We regard this as a significant opportunity to enhance practical cooperation with all Member States and the UN Tourism, advancing our shared interests and contributing to the sustainable development of tourism both in the Asia-Pacific region and worldwide.

3. At present, no official regional office in the Asia Pacific region has been approved by the Executive Council and the General Assembly, because no country in the region has yet signed the Host Country Agreement and committed to complying with the operational and legal framework of the Regional Office of UN Tourism.

Regional office and supporting office are not the same type of entity. According to General Assembly resolutions 656(XXI) and 740(XXIV), a Category 1 entity requires a Host Country Agreement. It is our understanding that without an HCA, any office would not be qualified to become a Category 1 office. We believe that the Secretariat will and should act in accordance with the GA resolutions. We would also like to point out that there is no restriction limiting the establishment to only one regional office within the same region.

The purpose of establishing a regional office is to serve the member states and the development of the UN Tourism. China has long provided firm support to the work of the UN Tourism, and we propose to establish the Regional Office in Shanghai, which will be financed by China and carry out the mandate assigned by the General Assembly with the work plan proposed by the UN Tourism Secretariat and fully consulted with all relevant member states. We believe it will make greater contributions to the prosperity and development of the international tourism sector.

Ministry of Culture and Tourism

1. Re: draft Resolution proposed in the Report on the Regional and Thematic Offices (A/26/8)
To add the following phrase after para 20.

... Regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific as Category I entity / under the model of Category I entity

2. Re: V. of the Report A/26/8

Japan requests the Secretariat to add the following sentence (fact) in the end of paragraph 55.

... the Organization's interests. Demonstrating Japan's commitment thereto, the Government of Japan concluded the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies of 1947 and its Annex XVIII in 2020 in line with the Conditions applying to Category entities referred to in the Resolution 656(XXI).