



## In Memoriam: Rafeeuddin Ahmed

**Madrid, 3 March 2026**

With deep sadness, and on behalf of Ms. Shaikha Al Nuwais, Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization (UN Tourism), the global tourism community joins the UN family to mourn the passing of Mr. Rafeeuddin Ahmed. A distinguished diplomat, his career of more than three decades was defined by an unwavering dedication to multilateralism and the ideals of the United Nations.

Mr. Ahmed brought to his work an exceptional command of the intricacies of intergovernmental processes. Throughout his long service, including his role as Special Representative to the United Nations in New York, he became a vital bridge between institutions, Member States and Secretariat entities.

He was instrumental in advancing tourism as a development priority, advocating tirelessly in numerous forums — including the United Nations General Assembly, ECOSOC and the High-level Political Forum — to ensure that tourism-related actions and resolutions received the recognition they deserved. Among his most enduring achievements was his pivotal role in the transformation of the World Tourism Organization into a Specialized Agency of the United Nations, realized in 2003.

Beyond titles and milestones, it was Mr. Ahmed's character that left the deepest impression. A respected representative of Pakistan, to colleagues and friends, he was simply "Raffee" — gracious, principled, and unfailingly generous with his time and wisdom. Colleagues recall his thoughtful counsel, his ability to navigate complex negotiations with composure and tact, and his unwavering respect for the diversity within the UN family. He embodied the very spirit of international civil service: impartial, principled and guided by the common good. His legacy lives on in the strengthened voice of tourism within the global development agenda. And the impact of his work continues to resonate in conference halls, negotiated texts and partnerships forged in the service of sustainable development.

As we pay tribute to Mr. Rafeeuddin Ahmed (\*), we express our profound gratitude for his contribution, commitment and professionalism. He touched the lives of many within the United Nations and beyond, leaving behind a legacy defined not only by institutional achievements, but by humanity, wisdom and grace.

May he rest in peace.

*\* Note: A special commemoration of Mr. Ahmed's life and service will be held on Wednesday, 4 March, at 10:00 a.m. (EST) in the ECOSOC Chamber at United Nations Headquarters, hosted by the Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It will be an opportunity for colleagues, friends and family to honour a life devoted to diplomacy and to the advancement of the multilateral system.*

**UN Tourism is a specialized agency of the United Nations**

World Tourism Organization  
C/ Poeta Joan Maragall 42, 28020 Madrid, Spain – Tel: (34) 91 567 81 00 – [info@unwto.org](mailto:info@unwto.org) / [unwto.org](http://unwto.org)