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Report of the Director of the Regional Office for the Americas

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I. Introduction

1. This report presents an overview of the activities undertaken by the Regional Office for the Americas (ROAM), highlighting key achievements, ongoing initiatives and strategic priorities in alignment with the Draft Programme of Work 2025–2026.
2. The work of the Office has been guided by the Organization's strategic objectives, namely:
 - positioning tourism in the global agenda through advocacy, knowledge creation, policy guidance and diversification of services;
 - expanding the Organization through partnerships and resource mobilization; and
 - transforming delivery through more effective, results-oriented and agile approaches.
3. In this context, the Regional Office has focused on strengthening its operational capacity, supporting Member States, and advancing tourism as a key driver of sustainable, inclusive and resilient development in the Americas.

To support the delivery of these priorities, the Regional Office for the Americas contributes to the implementation of the Organization's Programme of Work through the following core functions:

- (a) Supporting Member States through technical cooperation, advisory services and capacity-building.
 - (b) Implementing regional and multi-country initiatives aligned with strategic priorities.
 - (c) Facilitating regional cooperation and intergovernmental coordination.
 - (d) Mobilizing partnerships and resources, including with international financial institutions and the private sector.
 - (e) Generating knowledge and policy guidance to support evidence-based decision-making.
 - (f) Representing UN Tourism in the Americas and strengthening its institutional positioning.
4. These functions are fully aligned with the Organization's programmatic priorities, including governance, sustainability, investment, innovation and human capital development.

II. Establishment and Operationalization of the Regional Office

5. Since its establishment, the Regional Office for the Americas has made significant progress in operationalizing its mandate and strengthening UN Tourism's presence in the region.
6. The inauguration of the Office marked an important milestone in positioning UN Tourism closer to its Members, reinforcing ownership, proximity and delivery capacity at the regional level, in line with the Organization's expansion strategy.

7. The Office secured fully equipped premises through a strategic partnership with an Affiliate Member, ensuring operational efficiency and optimized use of resources, in line with the Organization's emphasis on efficiency and resource optimization.
8. Core administrative, financial and operational systems were established, including procurement, service delivery mechanisms and coordination frameworks with Headquarters, enabling the Office to deliver effectively on its programme of work.
9. Team consolidation was achieved through the recruitment of specialized personnel, strengthening capacity across project management, administration, partnerships and programme delivery.

III. Institutional Framework and UN System Integration

10. The Office successfully secured legal recognition in Brazil, enabling UN Tourism to operate in full compliance with national frameworks while benefiting from privileges aligned with the United Nations system. This included the establishment of a fiscal identity and the ability to conduct financial operations locally, strengthening operational delivery and efficiency.
11. The Office has actively contributed to strengthening UN system coordination by engaging with the United Nations Resident Coordinator and participating in the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), in line with the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework.
12. In parallel, efforts have been undertaken to establish Service-Level Agreements and Common Back Office Services with UNDP and other UN entities, supporting more efficient, coordinated and scalable delivery models.

IV. Programme Delivery and Key Achievements

13. In line with the Programme of Work 2025–2026, the Regional Office has contributed to advancing UN Tourism's strategic objectives through the implementation of high-impact initiatives and support to Member States.
14. **Operationalization and delivery capacity**, enabling the Office to act as a regional platform for technical cooperation, knowledge dissemination and programme implementation. This includes the full establishment of administrative, financial and procurement systems, the recruitment of a multidisciplinary team, and the implementation of operational workflows aligned with Headquarters. Concrete outputs include the successful set-up of the Office infrastructure, the execution of procurement processes (e.g. office services and long-term arrangements), and the coordination of multi-country initiatives, positioning the Office as a functional delivery hub for the Americas.
15. **Strategic advocacy and positioning of tourism in the global agenda**, notably through the coordination and delivery of the Tourism Thematic Days at COP30 (Belém, Brazil). This included the design of the programme, high-level stakeholder engagement, and the organization of sessions convening over 1,000 participants from more than 60 countries. The initiative contributed to integrating tourism into global climate discussions, advancing key outputs such as the Plan to Accelerate Solutions (PAS), and ensuring continued visibility of tourism in future climate processes, including follow-up engagement towards COP31.
16. **Strengthening regional governance and cooperation**, particularly through structured engagement with MERCOSUR and its Member States. This included the development of a regional cooperation framework under Brazil's Pro Tempore Presidency, the organization of a high-level side event during the MERCOSUR Ministerial Meeting, and the identification of priority workstreams such as regional branding ("Visit South America"), nature-based tourism, and tourism linked to major events.
17. Additionally, progress was made in advancing the Jesuit Route as a coordinated transnational tourism product across Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay. A key milestone was the signing of the Cooperation Agreement between SENATUR and UN Tourism in March 2026, followed by the engagement of an Expert – Project Leader in early April 2026 to support implementation. The flagship deliverable of this initiative is the Action Plan for strengthening and managing the transnational tourism route.

18. **Knowledge creation and policy support**, through the development of analytical products and regional initiatives supporting evidence-based decision-making. This includes the initiation of studies on tourism governance, tourism free trade zones, and mapping of financial instruments for the sector. In parallel, the Office contributed to the development of policy-oriented initiatives such as the “Regenerative Approaches for Climate Action in Tourism”, developed as a post-COP30 deliverable, providing practical guidance on how regenerative approaches can enhance climate action in tourism. The paper focuses on promoting ecosystem restoration, community resilience and sustainable development, while supporting Member States in integrating regenerative principles into tourism policies and practices.
19. **Mobilization of partnerships and resources**, including engagement with development finance institutions and the private sector, in line with the Organization’s objective of scaling up impact through partnerships. A key example is the collaboration with the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF) to design a data-driven methodology aimed at identifying tourism SMEs in Brazil and facilitating access to dedicated credit lines; and also the partnership with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) to advance capacity-building and scale up tourism investments across the region. This collaboration, focused on the Latin American Network for Tourism Investment Attraction, aims to strengthen institutional capabilities, facilitate knowledge exchange, and support the development of investment-ready projects. Additional efforts included engagement with UN system entities, multilateral partners and national authorities to advance joint programmes and co-financing opportunities.
20. **Expansion of the Affiliate Members network and strengthening of public-private collaboration**, reinforcing UN Tourism’s unique convening role. This included targeted outreach through participation in key industry events, the organization of dedicated seminars with national partners, and the convening of high-level networking platforms such as public-private partnership events during the MERCOSUR Ministerial Meeting and Rio Fashion Week. These efforts resulted in the admission of new Affiliate Members (including ABAV and ABIH), and the initiation of additional membership processes with key stakeholders such as Viagem Paraná, WAM hotels, Travel+ channel, and Fortesec.
21. **Advancement of sustainable aviation and decarbonization initiatives**, is being pursued through the Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF) – Macaúba Initiative, contributing to the Organization’s efforts to support climate action and the transition towards low-carbon tourism and transport systems in the Americas. In this context, UN Tourism will support the development of a SAF viability assessment based on macaúba feedstock, with the procurement process currently in the contracting phase of the selected company. The expected outputs include the preparation of a technical feasibility report on oil conversion pathways (HEFA), an economic viability analysis covering production costs, scalability and return on investment, and the formulation of policy and market recommendations to support regulatory frameworks, government incentives and the adoption of macaúba-based SAF. The initiative is also expected to strengthen coordination among public and private stakeholders and contribute to the development of enabling conditions for SAF production, positioning the region as a potential hub for innovation in aviation decarbonization.

V. Flagship activities or programmes

22. In line with the Programme of Work 2026–2027 and the priorities identified by Member States, the Regional Office for the Americas is advancing a portfolio of flagship initiatives aimed at delivering tangible and scalable impact across the region, while strengthening regional cooperation, sustainability, investment and inclusiveness in tourism.
23. Key initiatives include:
24. **Jesuit Route (Regional Multi-country Initiative)**
A transnational project involving Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Chile aimed at developing a coordinated, sustainable and high-quality tourism product. The initiative focuses on strengthening governance mechanisms, enhancing product development and mobilizing resources to position the Route as a competitive multidestination offering.

25. “Visit South America” Communication Strategy

A regional branding and promotion initiative designed to position South America as an integrated tourism destination in international markets. The strategy enhances digital presence, coordinated storytelling and the promotion of cross-border thematic routes, strengthening visibility, market positioning and cooperation among MERCOSUR+ countries.

26. Regenerative Tourism Pilot Programme (Uruguay)

A pilot technical cooperation project aimed at strengthening capacities for regenerative tourism, generating positive impacts on ecosystems, local communities and economies. The initiative is designed as a scalable and replicable model for implementation across MERCOSUR Member States and the broader region.

27. Investment Facilitation Programme for Tourism in the Americas

A regional programme designed to strengthen tourism investment by supporting Member States in improving their investment readiness and attractiveness. This includes the provision of strategic data and investment intelligence, the development and promotion of national and regional investment portfolios, and the facilitation of partnerships with multilateral development banks and private sector actors to enhance access to finance and improve the business environment.

28. Affiliate Members Expansion Programme for the Americas

An initiative aimed at strengthening and expanding the UN Tourism Affiliate Members network across the Americas by engaging key private sector, academic and institutional stakeholders. Through targeted outreach, participation in high-level events and the creation of collaboration platforms, the programme enhances knowledge exchange, fosters innovation and reinforces public-private partnerships in tourism development.

29. Technical Assistance for Accessible Tourism through Tactile Models and 3D-Based Capacity Building

The project aims to support a selected destination in the Americas in enhancing accessibility for people with visual impairments by developing tactile models of tourist attractions and establishing local technical capacity to sustain this work. The contracted company will provide technical assistance across the full project cycle, including implementation planning, on-site technical diagnosis and data collection, oversight of a local digital fabrication laboratory, development of tactile models using 3D technologies, and the design and delivery of capacity-building training for local professionals, ensuring knowledge transfer, sustainability, and potential replication in other destinations.

VI. Conclusion

30. The establishment of the Regional Office for the Americas represents a key milestone in advancing the Organization’s strategic objectives and enhancing its delivery capacity at regional level.
31. Through strengthened partnerships, knowledge creation, investment facilitation and programme delivery, the Office has contributed to positioning tourism as a driver of sustainable, inclusive and resilient development.
32. The Office also wishes to express its sincere appreciation to all Member States that have actively engaged and collaborated with its work to date. Their trust, openness and commitment have been instrumental in shaping and advancing its activities across the region. At the same time, the Office warmly invites other Member States to further engage and explore opportunities for cooperation, with a view to expanding the reach and impact of UN Tourism’s work in the Americas.
33. Moving forward, the Office will continue to scale up its activities in alignment with the Programme of Work 2026–2027, ensuring responsiveness to Member States’ priorities and reinforcing UN Tourism’s presence in the region.