

## **Committee on Tourism and Sustainability**

**Twenty-second Meeting**

**CTS/22/SumConcl.  
Madrid, 22 January 2026**

---

### **Summary and Conclusions**

#### **Introduction**

---

1. The Committee on Tourism and Sustainability (CTS) convened its twenty-second meeting at UN Tourism Headquarters in Madrid on 22 January 2026, on the occasion of FITUR.
2. The meeting was chaired by H.E. Mr. William Rodríguez López, Minister of Tourism of Costa Rica, Chair of the CTS. Participation was at a very high level and included three Ministers, one Vice-Minister and one Principal Secretary, as well as Ambassadors and other senior government officials. Participation further included representatives, among others, of the Asian Development Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Sustainable Hospitality Alliance.
3. Representatives from seven out of the nine Member States serving for the period of 2023-2027 participated in the twenty-second meeting of the CTS: Costa Rica (Chair), Croatia (Vice-Chair), Egypt, Kenya, Portugal, Uruguay and Zimbabwe. In addition, Japan participated as an Observer.

#### **I. Welcome remarks by H.E. Ms. Shaikha N. Alnuwais, Secretary-General, UN Tourism**

---

4. The meeting was opened by the Secretary-General of UN Tourism, Ms. Shaikha N. Alnuwais, marking her first participation in a CTS meeting in her capacity as Secretary-General.
5. In her opening remarks, the Secretary-General formally welcomed the CTS Members and thanked the Chair for his leadership and commitment. She highlighted the strategic role of the CTS notably in shaping the agenda for the International Year of Sustainable and Resilient Tourism 2027, proclaimed by the UN General Assembly and to be facilitated by the World Tourism Organization. She further recalled the alignment of this work with the Organization's strategic direction.
6. She recalled the current global trends and challenges in terms of technological transformation, climate pressures on economies and livelihoods and widening global inequalities and highlighted the need for the United Nations to begin shaping thinking beyond 2030.
7. Understanding that sustainability and resilience are not end goals but, rather, they are a continuous process, she reiterated the opportunity provided by the International Year to enable UN Tourism, as the leading international tourism organization, to support Member States in positioning tourism as a truly transformative sector.

## **II. Welcome remarks by Chair of the CTS, H.E. Mr. William Rodríguez López, Minister of Tourism, Costa Rican Institute of Tourism**

---

8. The Chair of the CTS welcomed participants, thanked the presence of the Secretary-General which honored and strengthened the work of this Committee and underlined the importance of the Committee's role in guiding the preparations for the International Year, in line with the mandate entrusted to UN Tourism by the United Nations General Assembly.

9. The Minister began with setting the tone for one of the Organization's major initiatives and recalled that the United Nations General Assembly, at its 2024 session, declared 2027 as the International Year of Sustainable and Resilient Tourism, mandating UN Tourism to *facilitate the organization and implementation of the International Year, in collaboration with Governments, relevant organizations of the United Nations system, international and regional organizations, and other relevant stakeholders*, thus entrusting the Organization and its member States in the design and implementation of this International Year.

10. Against this background, he highlighted that this meeting marked the beginning of a structured process through which Member States, acting through the Committee on Tourism and Sustainability, will provide guidance on the preparations for the International Year of Sustainable and Resilient Tourism 2027.

11. The Minister also provided a preview of the discussion paper on the concept of *regenerative tourism* as a possible next step in advancing sustainability in the tourism sector, and thanked the Secretariat, particularly the Director of the Sustainable Tourism and Resilience Department, and its team, for preparing the Paper.

12. He further highlighted Costa Rica's recognition as a reference for sustainable tourism practices and its openness to further strengthen its sustainability through collective discussions and clear shared vision.

## **III. Adoption of the agenda**

---

13. The Committee adopted the agenda of the twenty-second meeting as proposed (see Annex)

## **IV. Preparations for the International Year of Sustainable and Resilient Tourism 2027**

---

### **14. Introduction, background and overall structure of the preparations for the International Year of Sustainable and Resilient Tourism (IYSRT 2027)**

- a) The Secretariat emphasized the importance of the consultation process with Member States to align with the priorities outlined by the Secretary-General, while at the same following the United Nations rules of the International Years.
- b) The Secretariat presented the proposed Road Map for the preparations of the International Year of Sustainable and Resilient Tourism 2027, outlining the overall process, governance arrangements, core thematic areas and an implementation-oriented approach.

- c) The Committee recalled that the International Year responds to a clear demand from Member States to strengthen the positioning of tourism sustainability and resilience within broader global development discussions, including reflections beyond 2030, and to move from dialogue towards coordinated and action-oriented delivery.
- d) The Committee emphasized the importance of establishing a clear and structured intergovernmental process from the outset, ensuring that the design and implementation of the International Year remain firmly Member State-driven and anchored in the Committee on Tourism and Sustainability.
- e) The Committee further agreed that the Steering Committee should be complemented by the association of the Chairs of the Regional Commissions, as well as selected partners, as appropriate.
- f) The Committee requested the Secretariat to report back to the CTS in a consolidated manner on the outcomes of the regional consultations and to prepare a detailed plan of action for submission to the next in-person CTS meeting in Zimbabwe in April 2026, for review and guidance and onward consideration by the Executive Council.

#### **15. Lessons learned from the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development 2017**

- a) The Secretariat, represented by the Regional Director for Europe, shared experiences from implementing the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development in 2017, to allow a reflection on what worked well, what can be considered and further developed for the preparation of the International Year 2027.
- b) Success factors included reaching out to other International Organizations and creating a Steering Committee encompassing all 4 corners of the world (from the public, private and civil sectors and academia) to ensure the widest coverage possible of the implementation of the IY2017.

#### **16. National Committees: Role, functions and expectations under IYSRT 2027**

- a) The Secretariat outlined how Member States could implement the International Year 2027 at the national level through National Committees, as practical coordination platforms to support nationally relevant preparation, observance, and follow-up.
- b) The Secretariat highlighted that this approach aligns with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) resolution 1980/67 on *International Years and anniversaries*, which places national leadership at the center, with international action playing a complementary role.
- c) Regarding the composition of the National Committees, the Secretariat emphasized that they should be as inclusive and representative as possible, with participation extending to relevant public ministries and institutions, reflecting both the cross-cutting nature of tourism and the sustainability and resilience themes of the International Year.
- d) As Ministers of Tourism and heads of tourism administrations Member States were encouraged to implement the International Year within their countries, engaging public authorities, the private sector, communities and local stakeholders.
- e) The Committee encouraged the establishment of National Committees, or as appropriate, as the primary mechanism for implementation of the International Year at national level, with a view to

ensuring ownership, coordination and engagement of relevant public authorities and stakeholders.

- f) The Committee agreed that structured consultations through the Regional Commissions in 2026 would constitute the backbone of the preparation process, allowing Member States to provide inputs on thematic priorities, governance arrangements and national implementation modalities.

#### **17. Capacity building and standards under IYSRT 2027**

- a) The Secretariat presented initial considerations on capacity-building as a central component of the International Year.
- b) The Committee underlined that capacity-building under the International Year should be approached as an implementation-oriented process, moving beyond stand-alone training activities and focusing on the translation of policy frameworks into practical application, supported by follow-up mechanisms.
- c) The Committee encouraged the Secretariat to further develop guiding considerations for capacity-building initiatives on sustainable and resilient tourism, aimed at different target groups and designed to be adaptable, replicable and scalable across countries and regions.
- d) The Committee requested that an initial outline or conceptual framework on capacity-building be presented for discussion and guidance at the next CTS meeting in Zimbabwe.

#### **V. Discussion on regenerative tourism**

---

18. The Secretariat presented a discussion paper on regenerative tourism, with a view to supporting an informed and structured exchange among Member States.

19. The Committee welcomed the opportunity to initiate a collective discussion on this emerging concept and underlined the importance of developing a shared understanding grounded in sustainability principles and applicable across different national and regional contexts.

20. The Committee requested the Secretariat to take note of the comments raised and to reflect them in further work, with a view to continuing consultations at the next in-person CTS meeting.

#### **VI. Place and date of the next meetings**

---

21. The Committee took note that the next in-person meeting of the CTS will be hosted by Zimbabwe in April 2026.

22. The Committee further took note that, on the margins of the present meeting, the Secretary-General and the Minister of Tourism and Hospitality Industry of Zimbabwe signed the agreement hosting the next in-person CTS meeting.

#### **VII. Closing remarks**

---

23. The Chair of the CTS thanked Members for their active participation and constructive engagement and invited the Secretariat to proceed with the agreed next steps, in line with the guidance provided by the Committee.

---

## ANNEX

### Committee on Tourism and Sustainability

Twenty-second meeting

CTS/22/prov.ag  
Madrid, 22 January 2026

UN Tourism HQ, Calle Poeta Joan Maragall 42, 28020 Madrid

Partnership Room, 9th Floor, 08.00 – 10.00

#### Agenda

1. Welcome remarks
  - By *H.E. Ms. Shaikha N. Alnuwais*, Secretary-General, UN Tourism
  - By Chair of the CTS, *H.E. Mr. William Rodríguez López*, Minister of Tourism, Costa Rican Institute of Tourism
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. Presentations and discussions by the Secretariat on the International Year of Sustainable and Resilient Tourism 2027
  - (i) Introduction, background and overall structure of the preparations for the International Year of Sustainable and Resilient Tourism (IYSRT 2027)  
Dr. Dirk Glaesser, Director, Sustainable Tourism and Resilience
  - (ii) Lessons learned from the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development 2017  
Ms. Cordula Wohlmuther, Regional Director for Europe
  - (iii) National Committees: Role, functions and expectations under IYSRT 2027  
Ms. Sofía Gutiérrez, Deputy Director, Sustainable Tourism and Resilience
  - (iv) Capacity building and standards under IYSRT 2027  
Ms. Vanessa Satur, Programme Coordinator, Sustainable Tourism and Resilience
4. Presentation of the Discussion Paper on Regenerative Tourism
  - Discussions
5. Place and date of the next in-person meeting of the Committee on Tourism and Sustainability
  - Signing ceremony for Hosting agreement with Zimbabwe
6. Other issues
7. Closing remarks

