

Inaugural Meeting of the Interinstitutional Working Group on Tourism and Climate Action

7 November 2025

14:30-15:30hrs, Room Omsiat 1

Mandarin Oriental Hotel, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Meeting Minutes

1. Welcome remarks

The meeting was opened by Ms. Ana Carla Lopes, Vice Minister of Tourism of Brazil, Chair of the Executive Council, and Ms. Zoritsa Urosevic, Executive Director, UN Tourism. Both highlighted the urgency of accelerating climate mitigation and adaptation in tourism and welcomed the formal establishment of the Working Group, noting the participation of 29 Member States, as follows:

Africa	Americas	Asia Pacific	Europe	Middle East
	Antigua &			
Cabo Verde	Barbuda	Malaysia	Armenia	Libya
Eswatini	Brazil	Maldives	Spain	Syria
Gambia	Colombia	Nepal	Switzerland	
Ghana	Costa Rica	Pakistan	Türkiye	
Guinea				
Ecuatorial	Peru	Palau	Ukraine	
Kenya	Uruguay	Philippines		
Nigeria		Sri Lanka		
South Africa				
Tunisia				

2. Adoption of the agenda and recap of the Terms of Reference of the Interinstitutional Working Group

The agenda was adopted. Mr. Dilyor Khakimov, Director, Institutional Relations, Partnerships and Advocacy (IRPA), UN Tourism, recalled the key elements of the Terms of Reference, including the focus on mitigation and adaptation, the preparation of a two-year work plan, annual reporting to the Executive Council, and coordination with the Committee on Tourism and Sustainability.

Note: The Executive Council took note of the [Terms of Reference of the Interinstitutional Working Group on Tourism and Climate Action](#) during its 124th Session in Riyadh (November 2025)

3. Election of the Chair and Vice-Chair

Brazil, having submitted its candidature in advance, was elected Chair by acclamation. **Maldives and Antigua and Barbuda** were elected Vice-Chairs.

4. Words from elected Chair and Vice-Chair

Mr. João Viegas, Advisor to the Minister, Ministry of Tourism of Brazil (Chair), reaffirmed Brazil's commitment to ensuring the Working Group delivers practical guidance to Member States on climate action in tourism and noted that the establishment of the Working Group would be reflected in the context of COP30.

Dr. Abdulla Niyaz, Minister of State for Tourism, Ministry of Tourism and Environment, Maldives, and Mr. St. Clair Soleyn, Director of Policy and Planning, Ministry of Tourism, Civil Aviation, Transportation and Investments, Antigua and Barbuda (Vice-Chairs), highlighted the particular vulnerabilities of island and coastal destinations and stressed the need to accelerate adaptation, innovation and international cooperation.

5. Overview of key topics and involvement of external entities as observers

Ms. Virginia Fernandez-Trapa, Programme Coordinator, Climate Action and Circularity, IRPA, UN Tourism, presented relevant initiatives under the One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme, implemented with UNEP and in collaboration with UNFCCC, as potential tools to support the Working Group. These include the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism, the Global Tourism Plastics Initiative, the Global Roadmap for Food Waste Reduction in Tourism, and the Food for Good initiative on sustainable food systems. **Members were invited to participate in the ongoing survey on food systems in tourism.**

Note: The survey is available [HERE](#) and ongoing until 15 January 2025.

6. Round of interventions from participants

The following Members intervened during the discussion:

- H.E. Mr. Sos Avetisyan, Ambassador of Armenia, highlighted climate impacts on mountain regions and biodiversity and noted Armenia's role as host of Biodiversity COP17 in 2026.
- Mr. Francisco Sanches Martins, Senior Advisor to the Minister, Ministry of Tourism and Transport of Cabo Verde, emphasized water stress in island contexts and the links between climate action and food systems, noting Cabo Verde's role as a pilot country under the Food for Good initiative.
- H.E. O.L. Ameerajwad, Ambassador of Sri Lanka, underlined the importance of collective action to enhance tourism resilience, referring to ecotourism and mangroves as key adaptation measures.

- Ms. Miranda-Pastrana, First Secretary and Consul of the Embassy of the Philippines in Spain, described the climate crisis as an issue of national survival and stressed the importance of community-based adaptation.
- Ms. Mouna Mathlouthi Gliss, Director for Studies and International Cooperation, Ministry of Tourism and Handicrafts of Tunisia, highlighted the need for responsible tourism and adaptation in coastal destinations.
- H.E. Pablo Meloni, Ministry of Tourism of Uruguay, emphasized the value of the Working Group as a platform for sharing best practices and policy recommendations.
- Ms. Natalya Tabaka, Head, State Agency for Tourism Development of Ukraine, stressed the importance of integrating climate action into recovery efforts, including climate-smart construction and efficient energy and waste management.
- H.E. Amb. Nairimas Ole Sein, Kenya Permanent Representative to UN Tourism, referred to droughts and floods as key risks and highlighted Kenya's efforts to address plastic pollution.
- Ms. Yong Ee Chin, Undersecretary, Tourism Policy Affairs Division, Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture of Malaysia, underlined the role of the Working Group as a platform for sharing strategies on responsible and sustainable tourism.
- H.E. Mrs. Regina Appiah-Sam, Ambassador of Ghana, emphasized challenges in measuring climate impacts on coastal destinations and called for accelerated action on mangrove restoration, community-based conservation, renewable energy, resilient infrastructure and bankable ecosystem approaches.
- Ms. Mariana Garita, Head of Tourism Sustainability, Instituto Costarricense de Turismo (Costa Rica), highlighted the relevance of One Planet initiatives and called for coordination with the Committee on Tourism and Sustainability, chaired by Costa Rica until 2027.
- Ms. Samukelisiwe Mpimbili-Dlamini, Senior Tourism Officer, Ministry Of Tourism and Environmental Affairs - Eswatini, reiterated the importance of collective action and the links between climate action and biodiversity. Further to that she highlighted the need to come up with a clear action plan to ensure the implementation of the climate action.

Representatives from Gambia, Equatorial Guinea, Palau, Peru, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland and Syria were also present.

Absences were noted from Colombia, Libya, Nigeria, Nepal, Pakistan and Türkiye.

7. Closing remarks

The Chair outlined the following next steps:

- The outcomes of the meeting will be presented to the Executive Council, including an invitation to additional Member States to join the Working Group.
- New applications from Member States may be considered on a rolling basis, and Members will be kept informed accordingly.
- The Working Group and the outcomes of the meeting will be reported in the context of COP30 as a mechanism for enhanced governance of climate action in tourism.
- The Secretariat (IRPA Department) will consolidate the priority topics highlighted by Members.
- The Secretariat (IRPA Department) will support the development of a two-year work plan, aligned with the priorities identified and operating in accordance with the Programme of Work and budget of the Organization.

- **Members were invited to contribute to the work plan and to designate a technical focal point, sharing contact details with the Secretariat.**
- The Secretariat will engage with UNEP and UNFCCC and report back, while **Members may propose additional institutions for engagement ahead of the next meeting.**
- An indicative timeframe for the next meeting will be proposed.