UN Tourism

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Agenda item 12
Report of the Affiliate Membership

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Affiliate Member Activities, Initiatives and Outcomes since the 126th Executive Council

Executive summary

The purpose of this document is to inform the Executive Council of the main outcomes of the Affiliate Membership since its 126th session, held in Toledo, Spain, on 10-11 June 2026.

During the reporting period, the Secretariat focused on strengthening institutional engagement of the Affiliate Members through knowledge exchange and joint initiatives aligned with the priorities of UN Tourism and its Member States.

Particular emphasis was placed on (a) the Affiliate Members' participation in the activities scheduled to celebrate the International Year of Sustainable and Resilient Tourism 2027 and (b) sports tourism as a driver of development, investment, and territorial transformation, drawing on Affiliate Members' expertise to promote sustainable destination development, investment and lasting benefits for local communities.

UN Tourism

DRAFT DECISION[1]

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(document CE/127/12)

The Executive Council,

Having examined the report of the Affiliate Membership on its main activities, initiatives and outcomes since the 126th session of the Executive Council,

1. *Thanks* the Chair of the Board of Affiliate Members, the Secretariat and the Affiliate Members and Public-Private Collaboration Department for the report, and commends the Affiliate Members on their contribution to UN Tourism's activities;

2. *Encourages* the Secretariat to continue pursuing a targeted and quality-driven expansion of Affiliate Membership;

3. *Invites* the Board of Affiliate Members to continue working with the Committee on Matters Related to Affiliate Membership to strengthen Affiliate Members' participation in the Organization's activities, including the preparations for the International Year of Sustainable and Resilient Tourism 2027; and

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to further strengthen cooperation between Affiliate Members and Member States through concrete initiatives aligned with the Programme of Work.

[1] This is a draft decision. For the final decision adopted by the Executive Council, please refer to the Decisions document issued at the end of the session.

I. Strengthening the Affiliate Membership network and governance

1. Affiliate Members connect UN Tourism with the private sector, academia, destinations and other tourism stakeholders, providing a platform for public-private collaboration and the integration of industry expertise into the Organization's work.

2. The Affiliate Members and Public-Private Collaboration Department has continued to support the initiatives of the Affiliate Members and partners included in the Programme of Work for 2026-2027, to unlock the full potential of tourism for destinations, businesses, communities and travelers.

3. During the reporting period, the Secretariat and the Affiliate Members Board worked together to strengthen the institutional engagement of the Affiliate Members through knowledge exchange and joint initiatives aligned with the priorities of UN Tourism and its Member States.

4. Through an interdepartmental working group, efforts have been channeled to align private investment from Affiliate Members with the policy needs of Member States, ensuring that such investment addresses real development priorities and generates tangible value: stronger destinations, more competitive businesses, better opportunities for people, and more resilient tourism economies.

II. Participation of Affiliate Members in Regional Commissions

5. Affiliate Members continued to engage in UN Tourism's statutory meetings across the regions, strengthening dialogue with Member States and highlighting the contribution of the private sector to regional tourism development.

6. At the 69th Regional Commission for Africa (Mahé, Seychelles, 2-4 July 2026), the Affiliate Members were represented by the Zanzibar Association of Tourism Investors (ZATI), a Member of the Board of Affiliate Members, with the participation of other Affiliate Members as observers.

III. Delivering value through knowledge and thematic work: Sports Tourism

7. Sports tourism remained a priority area of collaboration, bringing together public authorities, destinations, sports organizations, and tourism businesses to examine destination development, investment, and benefits for local communities.

8. UN Tourism organized the 4th World Sports Tourism Congress in Mexico City from 7 to 9 September 2026, in collaboration with the Secretariat of Tourism of Mexico, the Secretariat of Tourism of Mexico City, the Mexico City Tourism Promotion Fund and Affiliate Member CONCANACO SERVYTUR, and with the participation of Members States Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Mexico, Portugal and Uruguay. This was the first edition of the Congress held outside of Europe. In the context following the FIFA World Cup 2026, the Congress addressed sports tourism as a driver of development, investment, and territorial transformation. Discussions covered mega-event impact and legacy; innovation, technology, and visitor experience; active tourism; commercialization, sponsorship, and business models; governance and public-private collaboration; sustainability, inclusion, and accessibility; and destination branding. The message was that sport tourism is no longer a niche segment. It is increasingly connected to national tourism strategies, city positioning, investment decisions, infrastructure planning, community development and international promotion.

9. UN Tourism organized the International Sports Tourism Forum on 29 September 2026 at La Rural, within the International Tourism Fair FIT Latin America in Buenos Aires, in collaboration with Affiliate Members FAEVYT and the Buenos Aires Tourism Board (Argentina). The Forum brought together public authorities, destinations, sports organizations, tourism companies, and leading figures from the sports sector. The Forum addressed the development and positioning of sporting events, growth in sports-related travel, the economic, social, and territorial impact of sports tourism, and the role of infrastructure and innovative business models in destination development. Its programme also connected perspectives from professional sport with tourism management and investment.

10. UN Tourism strengthened its work on sports tourism through its participation in two major events in Madrid. The World Motorsport Tourism Congress, organized by the RACE Foundation in collaboration with Affiliate Member FIA (France) and UN Tourism, held on 15-16 June 2026 brought together international experts to explore the economic, social, and environmental impact of motorsport tourism and its potential for destination positioning, innovation, and long-term legacy. At Sports Summit Madrid 2026 (17-18 June 2026), organized by Affiliate Member MADCUP (Spain), UN Tourism further highlighted sports tourism as a driver of destination development, partnerships, and economic opportunities, with Affiliate Members actively contributing to the discussions.

11. These initiatives reinforced the contribution of Affiliate Members to UN Tourism's work on sports tourism, connecting industry expertise with public policy priorities and promoting approaches that translate sporting activity into lasting value for destinations.

Other thematic areas

12. UN Tourism ensured institutional representation and high-level engagement at Tourism Expo Japan 2026, held in Tokyo from 24 to 27 September, organized by Affiliate Members Japan Travel and Tourism Association (JTTA) and Japan Association of Travel Agents (JATA), together with the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO). UN Tourism participated in key moments of the programme, reinforcing its engagement with Affiliate Members and key tourism stakeholders in Japan.

13. At the Sindepat Summit in Rio de Janeiro, UN Tourism showcased Affiliate Member Grupo Xcaret (Mexico) as an example of integrated and sustainable theme park and tourism development. The session highlighted how its model combines theme park experiences with innovation, environmental sustainability, biodiversity conservation, and community engagement, demonstrating how attractions can generate economic opportunities while protecting natural and cultural assets.

14. UN Tourism and Affiliate Member ATREVIA (Spain) released new episodes of the ON THE GO podcast, dedicated to health, wellness, and thermal tourism. Featuring representatives of the Affiliate Member European Historic Thermal Towns Association (EHTTA) (Belgium), the podcast examined preventive health, wellbeing, healthy longevity, destination diversification and the preservation of thermal heritage.

15. UN Tourism participated in World Camping Day 2026 and the F.I.C.C. General Assembly in Bad Griesbach, Bavaria (29 June 2026), strengthening collaboration with long-standing Affiliate Member International Federation of Camping, Caravanning and Autocaravaning A.I.S.B. (Belgium). UN Tourism highlighted the contribution of camping and caravanning to sustainable and nature-based tourism, including opportunities linked to astrotourism, wellness and thermal tourism.

16. At the Future Hospitality Summit in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, UN Tourism reinforced the role of sports tourism as a driver of destination development and investment. The participation of Affiliate Member Jeddah Central Development Company (Saudi Arabia) further highlighted the contribution of Affiliate Members and public-private collaboration to the development of the tourism sector.

17. At the 6th Halal Travel Global Summit (18 June 2026, Singapore), organized by Affiliate Member CrescentRating (Singapore), UN Tourism underlined that the halal and Muslim-friendly travel segment is much more than a market opportunity, being closely linked to service quality, cultural understanding, accessibility, trust and the capacity of destinations to respond to the needs of increasingly diverse travellers.

IV. Contribution to UN Tourism strategic objectives

18. In conclusion, the activities reported contributed to the Organization's strategic objectives through:

(a) Objective 1 (Leadership): sharing Affiliate Members' expertise on sports tourism, sustainable tourism models, nature-based experiences and health, wellness, and thermal tourism.

(b) Objective 2 (Expansion): analysing new candidatures for Affiliate Membership and strengthening relationships with public and private stakeholders through institutional participation and bilateral dialogue.

(c) Objective 3 (Transformation): reinforcing Affiliate Members' participation in institutional processes and connecting their contributions with UN Tourism priorities, including preparations for the International Year of Sustainable and Resilient Tourism 2027.

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