UN Tourism Asia-Pacific Forum on Shaping the Future of Tourism Policy

Gangneung Convention Center,

17 December 2026, Gangneung, Gangwon Province, Republic of Korea

--external version, as of 24 Nov. 2026

Concept Note

Background

Tourism in Asia and the Pacific is evolving in a rapidly changing environment shaped by economic and geopolitical uncertainty, technological innovation, demographic change and shifting visitor preferences. Governments increasingly look to tourism not only as a driver of growth, employment and investment, but also as a tool to support balanced regional development, strengthen destination competitiveness, improve the well-being of host communities and build more resilient and sustainable economies and societies.

Co-organized by UN Tourism and the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of the Republic of Korea, the Forum is held as a side event of the 38th Joint Meeting of the Commission for East Asia and the Pacific (CAP) and the Commission for South Asia (CSA), and closes the 20th UN Tourism Asia-Pacific Executive Training Programme on Tourism Policy and Strategy, this year focused on "Rethinking Tourism Growth: Towards Balanced Regional Development".

The Forum offers Member States, partners and experts an opportunity to carry these discussions into an open, policy-oriented exchange.

The Forum is also timely as preparations advance for the International Year of Sustainable and Resilient Tourism 2027, proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in 2023.

Objectives

- Identify key tourism policy priorities for advancing balanced regional development, , with a focus on destination competitiveness, sustainability and resilience across Asia and the Pacific;
- Exchange experiences and good practices from Member States and relevant initiatives, including UN Tourism projects in the region, to identify practical approaches to developing emerging destinations, strengthening destination management and governance, and spreading the benefits of tourism more widely; and
- Explore opportunities for stronger cooperation among Member States and through UN Tourism to advance sustainable, resilient and inclusive tourism in the region, including in the lead-up to the International Year 2027.
- Present key findings from UN Tourism World Tourism Report, bringing together national tourism strategies, sector performance and global foresight under one framework to inform policy discussions.

Format, participation and registration

The Forum comprises a keynote presentation by UN Tourism, a high-level dialogue and a policy panel discussion, followed by the commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the Executive Training Programme. It is an open event and will be held in English with simultaneous interpretation into Korean. **International participants** are kindly requested to register through the registration link of the 38th CAP-CSA Joint Meeting through this link before 09 December 2026. **Domestic participants** are kindly requested to contact the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, Republic of Korea for registration.

Contact

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UN Tourism

38th CAP–CSA
UN Tourism Commission for East Asia and the Pacific & UN Tourism Commission for South Asia
Gangneung, Republic of Korea, 16 – 17 December 2026

Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism
Republic of Korea

Preliminary Programme

09:00–09:30 **Registration**

09:30–10:00 **Welcome and Opening Remarks**

- Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, Republic of Korea
- UN Tourism
- Gangwon Province

10:00–10:20 **Keynote Presentation: Tourism in Asia and the Pacific – Key Findings from the World Tourism Report**

UN Tourism will present key findings from the World Tourism Report, its flagship initiative assessing national tourism strategies and performance across the pillars of People, Planet, Prosperity and Governance. Drawing on the Report's policy benchmark, trends and foresight, the keynote will highlight the priorities and gaps in national strategies in the region, share scenarios towards 2050 and look into how a new governance model for tourism can translate into more balanced regional development and destination competitiveness.

Speaker: UN Tourism (TBC)

10:20–11:20 **Policy Dialogue on Shaping the Future of Tourism**

As tourism takes on a broader role in national economic and social development, while addressing environmental challenges, governments face important policy choices on how to foster sustainable and resilient growth, strengthen destination competitiveness and ensure that tourism benefits reach communities across their territories.

This high-level dialogue will bring together ministers and senior tourism leaders to discuss policy priorities for Asia and the Pacific, discuss strategic approaches to achieving more balanced regional tourism development beyond major gateways, and examine how tourism policies can be better coordinated across different sectors and levels of government. The dialogue will also look ahead to the International Year of Sustainable and Resilient Tourism 2027 as an opportunity for stronger cooperation across the region.

Moderator and Panelists: TBC

Guiding Questions:

1. In a context of economic uncertainty, geopolitical tensions, technological change and climate change, what are your top three tourism policy priorities for the coming years?
2. How can tourism policymakers contribute more effectively to balanced regional development, extending benefits beyond established tourism destinations? Can you share specific initiatives being implemented in your country and their impact, where available.
3. How do you coordinate tourism policies with other government sectors and regional and local authorities to advance these priorities?
4. How could stronger cooperation among Member States, including through UN Tourism, help advance shared priorities for sustainable and resilient tourism development in Asia and the Pacific, particularly in the context of the International Year of Sustainable and Resilient Tourism 2027?

11:20–11:40 **Coffee Break**

11:40–12:30 **Panel Discussion: Practical approaches Tourism as a Catalyst for Balanced Regional Development**

Translating tourism potential into tangible benefits for regional and local development requires effective policies, investment, and partnership. Drawing on practical experiences from across Asia and the Pacific, this panel will explore practical policy approaches to spreading the benefits of tourism beyond major gateways, enhancing the local economic impact from tourism, making better use of existing infrastructure and event legacies, strengthening regional and cross-border cooperation, and building skills and public-private partnerships that support resilient and sustainable destinations and communities across the region.

Moderator and Panelists: TBC

Guiding Questions:

1. What concrete initiatives (in aeras such as planning, incentives, connectivity, investment, financing, skills or governance) have been most effective in spreading visitors and benefits beyond major gateways in your country and how can their impact be measured?
2. How can regional and cross-border cooperation, including connectivity and visa facilitation, joint promotion and cultural links, help smaller and emerging destinations grow?
3. What role can skills, innovation and public-private cooperation play in building resilient regional destinations, from provincial areas to small island economies?

12:30–12:50 **20th ETP – Closing and 20th Anniversary Commemoration**

Commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the UN Tourism Asia-Pacific Executive Training Programme on Tourism Policy and Strategy.

12:50–13:00 **Closing Remarks**

- Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, Republic of Korea
- UN Tourism

Time TBC **Farewell Luncheon**

Afternoon **Technical Visits**