

# World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

Topic A: Revitalizing worldwide tourism after the  
Covid-19 pandemic

Topic B: The impacts of over-tourism on historical and  
ecological sustainability



## Letter From the Chair

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)! We are so glad you chose this committee and hopefully you will enjoy and learn something new through this experience. This committee and especially the topics we will be discussing, are definitely some of the most relevant topics that you hear about. Firstly, people ask themselves when they will be able to see the beach again, fly to visit their family members, take a trip with family and even move into a college dorm in a country other than yours. The unknowing nature of the pandemic has certainly caused its toll on the lifestyle we live. But also the people that depend on those types of lifestyles. While starting to look into the topic to make the background guide, we came across a huge implication. The tourism industry is vital on a global and national level. Many countries depend on tourism for infrastructure and jobs. With the pandemic, this income has created massive repercussions to economies. When thinking about tourism, we urge delegates to think and reflect on whom it affects and how it affects them. Museum guides, airline workers, hotels, amusement parks, even the wonders of the world. Think about how your country depends on tourism, and use that drive to create a great futuristic resolution.

The second topic is just as important. Climate change is a topic that is constantly in the agenda of the United Nations. Many committees and task forces have been assigned to resolve this issue. But as most complex issues build up, there are different paths one can take to tackle a huge problem. Your task; looking at sustainability through tourism. We often don't think about our carbon footprint or consumption of water when in a hotel in a new place, but imagine how much trash is left by the pyramids in Mexico, the overuse of trains, airplanes and boats that release toxic gases and oils to our ecosystem, the beaches often destroyed and left drowning by the tourists' soda cans and lost flip-flops. When you look at this topic, we would love it if you would reflect how your own experiences have played a role in this.

We are thrilled to start hearing the discussions and ideas that come out of each of our delegates. Both topics are incredibly important for every country involved so make sure you make the best of it!

Regards,

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## **Committee Policies:**

### **Technology**

Because ASFMUN will be run online this year, delegates will be required to use their laptops and computers to participate in committees. The only websites delegates are allowed to use during committee sessions are Zoom, Google Docs, which delegates will be writing their working papers and resolutions, and any other sources that the Chair permits. Unless there is an emergency, delegates should not be using cellphones or other electronic devices that will give them an unfair advantage. If there is a concern that a delegate is breaking these rules, please contact any member of the Secretariat.

### **Zoom Guidelines**

All committees will use Zoom, and each committee will use the same Meeting ID and Passcode for every committee session. Delegates should never distribute the Meeting ID and Passcode to anybody else. In the meeting, delegates should change their display name to their position. For instance, a delegate representing Mexico should rename their display name to “Mexico”.

Moreover, delegates are expected to have their camera on at all times except when they are standing up, leaving a room, or having connection issues. While in moderated caucuses, delegates must keep their microphone muted until called on to speak.

Delegates should prepare their own placard in advance for roll call, points, motions, and voting.

[This Google Drive folder](#) will have instructions on how to make your own placard.

### **Position Papers:**

Position Papers are due on 11:59 pm of 2/22. Please send it in PDF format to

[felixm@asf.edu.mx](mailto:felixm@asf.edu.mx), [dominguezad@asf.edu.mx](mailto:dominguezad@asf.edu.mx), and [gutierrezj@asf.edu.mx](mailto:gutierrezj@asf.edu.mx). More details can be found on the Conference Information section of [our website](#).

### **Pre-writing and Plagiarism**

Pre-writing of clauses, language, working papers, and draft papers is strictly forbidden.

Delegates are welcome to use Google Drive to collaborate with other delegates when writing documents. However, they must not work on it outside of the conference.

Plagiarism is strictly prohibited and if any attempts are found, delegates will no longer be eligible for any awards.

## Committee Overview

The World Tourism Organization is an agency within the United Nations that is tasked with the “promotion of responsibility, sustainability and universally accessible tourism” (UNWTO). As an intergovernmental organization, the UNWTO has 159 nation states as well as other affiliate members. The specialized agency was formed officially in 1974, but it stemmed from the crisis after World War II. Apart from advocating for responsible sustainable and universally accessible tourism, the UNWTO also prioritizes: “mainstream tourism in the global agenda, improving tourism competitiveness and promoting sustainable tourism development (UNWTO). This committee is essential to the globalized climate and most of all the increased use of travel, exchange and its influence on the climate and communities.

The UNWTO General Assembly met for the first time in 1975 in Madrid, Spain, by invitation of the Spanish government. Here, the Assembly decided to establish its headquarters in Madrid, which still holds true today. Since then, the specialized agency has met at least twice every year, debating topics essential for the tourism section. In recent years, the UNWTO has focused more specifically the sustainable development of tourism, looking to mitigate its effects on the environment and to help eliminate poverty.

# **Topic A: Revitalizing worldwide tourism after the Covid-19 pandemic**

## **Topic A Background**

The year of 2020 and its events proved to be the most challenging to tourism worldwide. With the emergence and explosion of the COVID-19 virus, health measures and political restrictions halted tourism and placed limitations on what people could do. Millions of people missed chances to explore different cultures and customs. But more importantly, there was a clear loss of opportunities to create jobs, support businesses and kick-start development in underdeveloped areas.

Tourism is a vital part to the overall world economy both at a micro and macro level. Many countries such as the Maldives, Cambodia, Montenegro and Belize depend highly on tourism to fuel the countries' economy (Quartz). Evermore, small communities are also dependent on tourism for jobs and income. Think about the museum operators, the agencies, the transportation services and the artisans whose clientele are mostly tourist exploring and learning about their distinct community and history. With the pandemic bringing global tourism to a complete standstill, there is a necessity to restart world tourism while accounting for the impacts of COVID-19

## **Topic history:**

A massive pandemic is hard to be accounted for when it becomes a crisis hard to control. Nevertheless, the United Nations along with the World Tourism Organization were some of the few organizations that were tasked with providing aid, solutions, and plans for the revitalization of nations.

In March 2020, after the pandemic was officially declared, the UNWTO Global Tourism Crisis Committee was created. This committee was charged with implementing a crisis plan to reactivate tourism after the COVID-19 pandemic.

For example, at the end of December, the committee met to discuss the acceleration of “international cross-border travels principles and protocols in view of a safe and seamless restart to tourism” with the aid of the WHO and ECDC (UNWTO).

In the beginning of the emergence of the pandemic, the UNWTO came out with a detailed plan summary of the impacts and necessary procedures to respond to the pandemic. In this publication, the UNWTO stated that the virus outbreak represents an added downside risk in the context of a weaker world economy, geopolitical, social and trade tensions, as well as uneven performance among major outbound travel markets' ' (UNWTO). Additionally, the committee also estimated that the global international tourist arrivals would decline between 20%-30% down from the estimated 3% growth.

The UNWTO, through the publication, called for:

- “Financial and political support for recovery measures targeting the tourism sector in the most affected countries;
- Recovery measures and incentives to be planned and implemented in coordination with international development and donor organizations; and
- Tourism support to be included in the wider recovery plans and actions of affected economies.”

### **Recent Developments:**

There are currently two vaccines being introduced to the public. The Moderna and the Pfizer vaccine against the COVID-19 virus is being introduced to the public, however with very limited dispersion and availability (WHO). With the emergence of the vaccine, there are limitations to the availability of these vaccines in lower developed countries and minority populations. The emergence of the vaccine must be taken into account when discussing the revitalization of tourism. The vaccine, as well as advance medical care and investigation about the virus is essential to assure safe and healthy travel in the future.

### **Resolution Focus**

Throughout the conference and in the resolution writing process, we would like to see debate centered around multiple topics, including:

- The implementation of safety and sanitation regulations to ensure safe and limited tourism during and shortly after the passing of the pandemic
  - The possibility of lifting or easing restrictions on tourism as a way to continue economic growth
- Details surrounding how aid will be given to different countries or areas economically suffering due to the decline of tourism
- The effects of mass COVID-19 vaccinations on global tourism
- How the UNWTO or individual governments will promote tourism in the future, both later throughout the pandemic and after it is over

**Questions to Consider:**

1. The rhetoric, mostly examined in the US context, of anti-mask and anti vaccines may become a challenge when looking at the necessary procedures to revitalize global tourism. How can UNWTO address the ignorant rhetoric?
2. While the use of masks and PPE have become a new normal for most of the world, many countries lack the infrastructure to have accessible protective gear for all of their citizens. What can the UNWTO do to increase accessibility? (feel free to branch out of the committee and look at different supranational organizations)
3. How might anti-vaccination sentiments in your country hinder its ability to directly contribute to the challenge of reactivating tourism?
4. How has your country dealt with the pandemic? Were there political lockdowns? Closing of borders? Make sure you are aware of your country profile and the implications to the topic.
5. There are many workers that make up the tourism sector workforce. This includes people working at airline companies, hotel staff and managers, and other stakeholders. How can governments support these workers during the pandemic?



**Key Players:** The list below includes some information on key players of the COVID-19 pandemic and their relation to tourism. As many countries are currently facing similar challenges due to the pandemic, delegates should also consider the positions of international stakeholders such as tourists, governments, and workers.

- **Australia:** With a population of more than 25 million, Australia is one of the countries with the least infection rates and deaths. Just 27912 confirmed cases and 908 deaths as of December 1, 2020, according to their national data. Additionally, in Australia the “economic downturn during the pandemic has also been less pronounced than in many comparable economies, and it is now moving into a “COVID-19 normal” phase of recovery.” (McKinsey and Company). The success can be attributed to being an island nature which can easily close borders, and the effective policies and leadership strategies that have been implemented both in private and public sectors. We advise delegates to look at the Australian response as examples of methods that seem to be successful for now.
- **The US:** The United States has been of major focus of impotent leadership during the coronavirus outbreak. During the year 2020, The Trump administration In the beginning of the outbreak, the president downplayed the severity and threat of the pandemic. Even encouraging followers to consume hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine as a cure. While politically, the administration did not respond responsibly to the crisis, it is important to know the use of civil society to spread information and educate others through social media and propaganda. US delegates should tackle this topic by acknowledging both the Trump administration and the promises and agenda of President Biden.
  - As of January 2021, individuals wanting to fly to the US must take a negative COVID-19 test.
- **European Union:** Countries within the European Union have restricted the migratory regulation from international and national borders. As of January 2021, individuals flying to the EU must have received the COVID-19 vaccine.

### Key Terms:

- **Medical Apartheid:** While not the first time in the history of the world, medical apartheid a term that describes how medical supplies and care during emergencies be tested on minorities and often minorities do not get the medicine that they require. The accessibility of medicine, and in this case the COVID-19 vaccine, is essential to assure the revival of world tourism.
- **PPE (personal protective equipment):** The clothing, instruments, masks, clothing, goggles and protective equipment used to protect oneself from the virus.

## Topic B: The impacts of over-tourism on historical and ecological sustainability

### Topic B Background

Although tourism very commonly relies on the aesthetics of the environment and natural landscape, in excess, it is known to have extremely detrimental impacts on the very environment this industry depends on. When massive crowds gather at popular natural tourist attractions, it is imperative that tourists are respectful towards the flora and fauna of the area, as not doing so could eventually lead to the destruction of such ecosystem. On the other hand, when tourist attractions are cultural-based, the tourists must treat the local residents, their culture, historical or archaeological sites, and monuments with respect. The question is: how can the UNWTO ensure that tourism occurs sustainably and without harm to the environment or the historical cultures of different locations?

The UNWTO predicts that, by 2030, the international flow of tourists will surpass two billion people. This number is excessively high in comparison to the few popular tourist locations around the world. Due to this, many iconic tourist cities like Paris, New York City, Bangkok, Venice, Tokyo and many others are facing an overwhelming presence of tourists. This problem has only grown in recent years due to the rise of social media culture, which has a large impact over the tourism industry by influencing which destinations people decide to travel to.

The negative impacts of over-tourism include environmental and cultural aspects, and both of these usually result in the decline of the quality of life for tourists.

### **Topic History:**

The idea of over-tourism is still a relatively new concept, in fact, the term was first coined in 2016 and officially recognized by the Oxford Dictionary in 2018. Nevertheless, the negative impacts of excessive tourism have been recognized for several decades, which is why the World Tourism Organization first took part in the World Summit for Sustainable Development in 2002, the same year in which Quebec held the World Summit for Ecotourism. The UNWTO, although having recognized the importance of discussing the issue about 20 years ago, has been most active in recent years due to how much global tourism has grown. Tourism plays a significant role in the 2030 Agenda, as it impacts, both in direct and indirect manners, all 17 goals in some way. Specifically, tourism is most relevant in Goals 8, 12, and 14, which aim to achieve “sustainable economic growth, sustainable consumption and production, (SCP) and the sustainable use of oceans and marine resources, respectively” (UNWTO).

Over-tourism could lead to a depletion of natural resources, as it increases the rates of consumption in areas where resources may be scarce. In Asia, for instance, the average use of water for a guest in one day is 677 Liters, which is over six times as much than for Asian inhabitants. This puts a strain on the natural resources of a region, which could lead to shortages and the degradation of water supplies. Due to the fact that tourism requires additional infrastructure such as airports, roads, roads, shops, and restaurants, land resources often suffer as a result. This has led to increased deforestation for land clearing and construction purposes linked to tourist facilities (Stainton). As a result, some countries have started putting restrictions in place to protect historical and natural landmarks that would otherwise be damaged in some form by tourists. One such example is Peru’s Machu Picchu, an ancient citadel and one of the world’s wonders, which is damaged everyday by the influx of thousands of tourists (before COVID-19). In 2017, the Peruvian government responded by limiting access and enforcing stricter rules surrounding entry and time of visits in order to preserve this landmark that holds much importance to Peruvian culture and history (Leadbeater).

**Past UN Action:**

The UNWTO has published two volumes of a report called “‘Overtourism’? - Understanding and Managing Urban Tourism Growth Beyond Perceptions”. The first volume of this report was published on the 24 of September of 2018 and it includes 11 strategies and 68 measures that were proposed by the UNWTO in order to help control and understand the increase in tourism around the world. These strategies were created to benefit both residents of frequently visited areas and the people visiting those areas. To make sure of this, the report includes an analysis of the views of residents in regards to tourism in eight European cities. The second volume of this report was published during the month of January of 2019 and consists of 18 case studies from cities in the Americas, Asia and the Pacific, and Europe. The topic of these case studies is how each city has been implementing the 11 strategies to understand and control over tourism that were proposed in the first volume of this report.

The UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) and UNWTO released a collaborative report in 2017 by the title of *Tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals – Journey to 2030*. This report was crafted with the objective of informing, empowering and encouraging tourism stakeholders to align policies with the Sustainable Development Goals. These goals are recognized as one of the UN’s main priorities for the development of tourism, and that action must be taken in order to shift towards a more sustainable tourism. The guide acknowledges how, as one of the most important economic sectors in the world, tourism “can help preserve the natural and cultural heritage assets upon which it depends, empower host communities, generate trade opportunities, and foster peace and intercultural understanding” (UNWTO and UNDP). This report is based on the analysis of 64 countries’ National Voluntary Reviews on the Sustainable Development Goals and the social activities of 60 global tourism companies. Lastly, the document addresses how this issue cannot be solved only through political means, but also through a better financing framework that allows for the investment in new and greener technologies.

**Recent Developments:**

Due to the national lockdowns in many countries and the decrease in tourism around the world because of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is expected that there will be a boom in tourism around the world as it becomes safe to travel again. This has caused an increased interest in strategies and ideas to manage the increased tourism brought about by the end of this pandemic. Policy makers and city officials are as of now focused on ways to rapidly bring back tourism without returning to the same issues of over-tourism that have been so prevalent in the past.

Aside from the COVID-19 pandemic, there are other recent developments that should be taken into consideration during the conference. One instance is the rise of anti-tourist protests or movements among over-touristed cities in 2019. In countries like Spain, Croatia, and Italy, locals have recently expressed their frustration at the consequences of excessive tourism on the environment, living conditions, and historical sites of cities. In cities like Dubrovnik, the rise of anti-tourist locals led to new restrictions on travel. In 2019, city officials decided to limit the number of cruises allowed to be on the city's port in association with the Cruise Line International Association (Street).

**Resolution Focus:**

Throughout the conference and in the resolution writing process, we would like to see debate centered around multiple topics, including:

- The impacts of excessive tourism on different parts of the world
- Regulations to ensure the protection and prevent further damage to cultural or historical landmarks
- Tourism's significant role in climate change and strategies to mitigate its negative impacts
- How COVID-19 has and will continue to affect tourism, and possible solutions to manage an unsustainable 'tourism boom' after the pandemic
- Increasing living standards of locals through different tourism policies

### Questions to Consider:

1. The local economy of many cities depends on a large influx of tourists every year. Without the revenue produced by tourism, the economies of these cities would collapse. How can the UNWTO advocate for sustainable tourism without hindering economic growth? In what ways can the detrimental effects of tourism be limited without restricting the flow of tourists to a certain capacity?
2. The threat of climate change grows increasingly more concerning as the world approaches what has been called as the ‘point of no return’, or when carbon emissions are so high the effects of climate change become irreversible. The tourism industry contributes significantly to this environmental issue through greenhouse gas emissions and pollution. What possible actions could the UNWTO take or advocate for in order to transform the tourism sector into a more sustainable one?
3. One of the main viable solutions considered around the world is distributing the tourist flow around several destinations, not just the most popular ones. How can your country employ this strategy, if it has not already? Consider social media, partnerships with tourism companies, and marketing campaigns for different attractions.
4. What is the future of the tourism sector? What can the UNWTO specifically do to ensure that this future aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals? Get creative!

### Key Players:

- **European Union:** The European Union is home to some of the most visited cities in the entire world. Of the 105 destinations classified as suffering from over-tourism, 70 were from Europe. The main objectives of the EU are: distributing the visitors in time and space, targeting inappropriate behavior from tourists, and increasing the capacity of infrastructure, accommodation and facilities. These measures were found to be effective and are being implemented by local governments around the continent. In the study *Overtourism: impact and possible policy responses*, it was determined that there was a lack of systematic data or monitoring on over-tourism. Therefore, the key recommendations for the EU are currently to monitor tourist and host activity in order to better plan or predict cases of over-tourism, implement specific and customised measures

or tools depending on the country or city, and create a cross-EU ‘Task force on overtourism’ (Peeters).

- **South and Southeast Asia:** The sandy white beaches of Southeast Asia attract millions of tourists every year, mainly from China. The fragile ecosystems of the region, such as coral reefs, are damaged due to the increasing plastic pollution on its beaches. Not only that, but many of the cultural sites and temples of Southeast Asia have been damaged too from littering. This region, especially Thailand, faces the difficult task of growing its economy and lifting travel restrictions while still preventing the negative consequences of over-tourism (Regan). Another issue that South Asia is dealing with as a result of over-tourism is Mount Everest, in recent years there has been a rise in deaths at this tourist attraction as more inexperienced climbers decide to climb this mountain. The excessive amount of tourists and the short window of time in which the summit can be reached has caused gridlock at the top of the world's tallest mountain.
- **North America:** North America is one of the most visited regions in the world, this is due to the great variety of tourist attractions it contains. In 2019, 79.3 million people visited the USA alone, and millions more visited the rest of the region. North America is greatly affected by the issue of overtourism, as seen by the adverse effects this has had on the delicate ecosystems of southern Alaska, Cancun, Cabo San Lucas, Big Major Cay Island and Hawaii, where people are largely dependent on tourism. Even though over-tourism greatly affects ecosystems, another problem caused by the increase in visitors is safety, areas that have this problem and have even seen some deaths include; Yellowstone, Maho Beach, Niagara Falls and The Grand Canyon.

### **Key Terms:**

- **Overtourism:** Defined by the World Trade Organization as “the impact of tourism on a destination, or parts thereof, that excessively influences perceived quality of life of citizens and/or quality of visitor experiences in a negative way”.
- **Sustainable development of tourism:** The growth of tourism as an industry while limiting its environmental and social negative impacts as well as harm to host communities.

## **Participating countries**

- The Commonwealth of Australia
- Federative Republic of Brazil
- Dominion of Canada
- People's Republic of China
- Republic of Colombia
- Republic of Cuba
- Arab Republic of Egypt
- French Republic
- Republic of India
- Republic of Indonesia
- Islamic Republic of Iran
- Israel
- Italian Republic
- Japan
- United Mexican States
- Kingdom of Morocco
- Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal
- The Kingdom of the Netherlands
- Federal Republic of Nigeria
- Republic of Peru
- Russian Federation
- Kingdom of Spain
- Kingdom of Thailand
- The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
- The United States of America



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