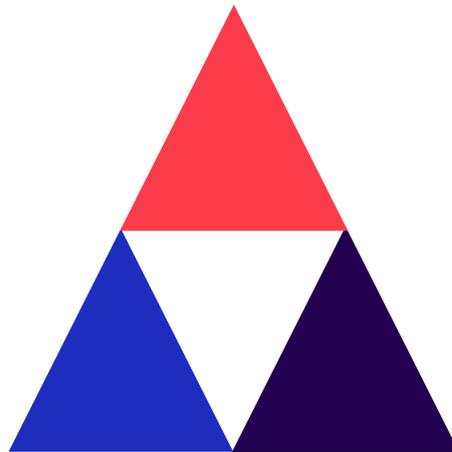




▶ **The future of work in the tourism sector: Sustainable and safe recovery and decent work in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic**

Report for the Technical Meeting on COVID-19 and Sustainable Recovery
in the Tourism Sector
(Geneva, 25–29 April 2022)



▶ Contents

	Page
Background	5
Introduction	6
The tourism sector and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic	8
The tourism sector before the COVID-19 pandemic.....	8
The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism sector.....	12
An inclusive, safe, resilient, fair and sustainable COVID-19 crisis recovery in the tourism sector	17
Tourism as an engine for job creation	17
Social protection, OSH and conditions of work	31
Social dialogue and tripartism.....	37
International labour standards and fundamental principles and rights at work.....	38
Megatrends and drivers of change: The tourism sector at a turning point.....	42
Globalization and tourism	42
Technological advances and digitalization	43
Demographics: A diverse and multigenerational workforce	46
Climate change and just transition to environmental sustainability	47

▶ Background

At its 341st Session in March 2021, ¹ the Governing Body of the International Labour Office endorsed a “Technical meeting on COVID-19 and sustainable recovery in the tourism sector”. ²

The purpose of the technical meeting is to discuss current and emerging issues in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Particular focus will be placed on policies, strategies and good practices that work towards a safe and sustainable recovery and to advance decent and sustainable work in the tourism sector.

This report has been prepared by the International Labour Office as a basis for discussions at the meeting. It highlights recent trends and developments in the tourism sector; the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the enterprises and workers of that sector; and the need for a recovery that is inclusive, safe, resilient, fair and sustainable.

¹ GB.341/POL/PV, para. 72(d).

² GB.343/POL/2(Rev.2).

▶ Introduction

1. The tourism sector is a major driver of economic growth and an engine for job creation. In recent decades, it has experienced continued expansion and diversification and has become one of the largest and fastest-growing economic sectors globally.³ Sustainable tourism can have a positive impact on the livelihoods of women and men, lift communities out of poverty, drive prosperity and generate economic and social benefits in the countries of destination. Tourism has a multiplier effect across economic sectors – such as accommodation and food services, agriculture, retail and transport – and when sustainably managed can contribute to economic diversification, enhance local culture and products, promote local enterprises and support job creation. The importance of the sector for jobs, local and national economic development, culture, products and services is reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDGs 8, 12 and 14, which include tourism-specific targets.
2. The jobs created in the tourism sector are of particular importance for women, young people and migrant workers, who make up a large share of workers in the sector. Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) represent the majority share of the industry and its workers and are key drivers of employment. Despite its important role in terms of employment generation and enterprise creation, the sector faces decent work challenges that need to be addressed in order for its potential for economic development and decent job creation to be fully realized and its productivity boosted. Rapid changes in tourism and work in the sector are also being driven by digitalization, demographic shifts, globalization and climate change.
3. For the purpose of this report, the term “tourism sector” is used synonymously with the term “hotels, catering and tourism sector”, which includes:
 - accommodation (hotels, boarding houses, motels, tourist camps, holiday centres);
 - food and entertainment (restaurants, bars, cafeterias, snack bars, pubs, nightclubs and other similar establishments; institutions that provide meals and refreshments in hospitals, factory and office canteens, schools, aircraft and ships);
 - travel management and activities (travel agencies and tourist guides, tourism information offices and conference and exhibition centres); and
 - tourist attractions (national parks, museums and their facilities).The sector includes the services provided to both travellers and residents.⁴
4. Other organizations concerned with tourism, including governments, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations, frequently use broader definitions of the tourism sector, such as “all services and products consumed by tourists, including transport”.⁵ Where tourism data is used in this report that has been aggregated with travel, it is referred to as “travel and tourism”.

³ World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTTC), *Travel & Tourism: Global Economic Impact & Trends 2020*, 2020.

⁴ ILO, *ILO Guidelines on Decent Work and Socially Responsible Tourism*, 2017, 2–3.

⁵ *Developments and Challenges in the Hospitality and Tourism Sector*, GDFHTS/2010, 2010, 1–2.

5. After years of growth and expansion in the sector, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on tourism enterprises, the livelihoods of tourism workers and the communities and countries that rely on tourism. The pandemic and the subsequent restrictions placed on travel and tourism in order to slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus have exposed the fragility of the sector and its vulnerability to shocks. Due to existing structural issues, the high levels of fragmentation in the sector and the interdependence of its businesses – as well as its large share of MSMEs – have meant that the effects of the pandemic on the tourism sector have been amplified. The sector has suffered millions of job losses and worsening of working conditions, with own-account workers, women and young people among the hardest hit and many businesses compelled to close, especially MSMEs. Despite the impact of lockdowns and travel restrictions, the sector has continued to play an important role in society during the pandemic, including in new roles, such as the use of hotels as quarantine centres. However, while continuing to service the public, the tourism sector and its workers have been exposed to new decent work and occupational safety and health (OSH) challenges.
6. This report underscores the sector's importance in terms of its global contribution to employment, the wider economic implications of the downturn in tourism throughout the pandemic and the opportunity for and necessity of facilitating a rapid, safe and inclusive recovery that builds towards a more sustainable tourism sector. It also highlights the central role of prioritizing safety and health at work, which is indispensable for a safe reopening and sustainable recovery of the sector, as well as to rebuild confidence and safely resume work. The urgent need to build back better in the sector is emphasized by the labour-intensive nature of tourism and its key role in countries that are highly dependent on tourism, including small island developing States.⁶
7. The report identifies key trends and developments in tourism, business and employment in the sector – both pre- and post-pandemic – and highlights the immense impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the sector, its enterprises and its workers. It also focuses on the need for an inclusive, safe, resilient, fair and sustainable human-centred recovery and sustainable enterprises in the sector, focusing on decent work opportunities and challenges, examining key employment and skills issues, social protection, OSH and conditions of work, and the importance of social dialogue, international labour standards and fundamental principles and rights at work. Finally, it looks at the future of work in tourism, examining the key megatrends and drivers that are impacting the sector, its enterprises and workers, including globalization, digitalization and technological advances, demographic changes and climate change.

⁶ ILO, [Resolution concerning a global call to action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient](#), International Labour Conference, 109th Session, 2021.

▶ The tourism sector and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

The tourism sector before the COVID-19 pandemic

Pre-pandemic trends in the tourism sector

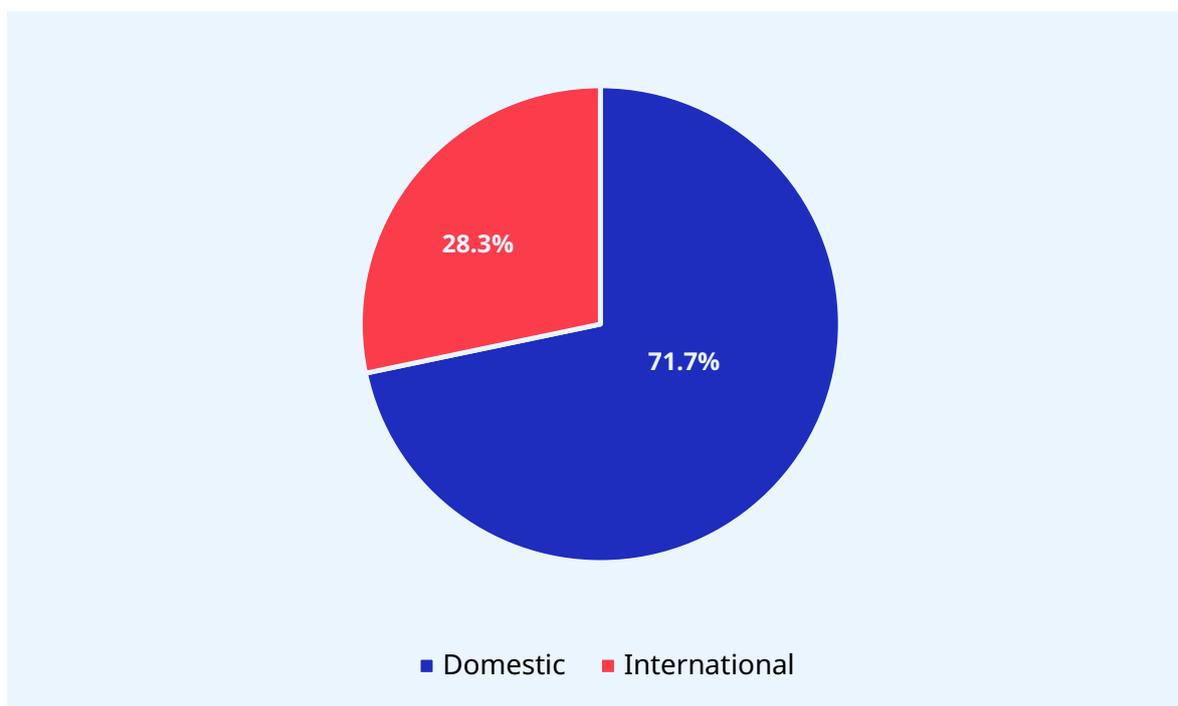
8. Tourism has long been an important driving force for socio-economic development in many countries and regions, with the potential to stimulate enterprise and job creation, including for local, coastal, rural and remote communities, and to facilitate the development of infrastructure and public services.
9. Prior to 2020, the global tourism sector had experienced six decades of almost constant growth and diversification. In 2019, the tourism sector was one of the world's fastest-growing and largest economic sectors, with travel and tourism contributing US\$8 trillion to the global economy, representing 10.4 per cent of global gross domestic product (GDP). Growth in travel and tourism continued to outpace most other economic sectors, with GDP growth of 3.5 per cent in 2019, behind only information and communication and financial services. Activity in the sector accounted for 8 per cent of total exports and 27.4 per cent of global services exports.⁷
10. International tourism continued to expand beyond long-term growth forecasts prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, with 1.5 billion international tourist arrivals in 2019.⁸ Nevertheless, domestic tourism remained the key driver of the tourism sector globally, accounting for 71.7 per cent of travel and tourism spending, with international tourism accounting for the remaining 28.3 per cent (see figure 1).⁹

⁷ WTTC, *Global Economic Impact & Trends 2020* and *Travel & Tourism: Economic Impact 2021 – Global Economic Impact & Trends 2021*, 2021.

⁸ OECD, *OECD Tourism Trends and Policies 2020*, 2020, 15.

⁹ WTTC, *Global Economic Impact & Trends 2020* and *Global Economic Impact & Trends 2021*.

▶ **Figure 1. Share of international and domestic of total tourism spending worldwide, 2019**

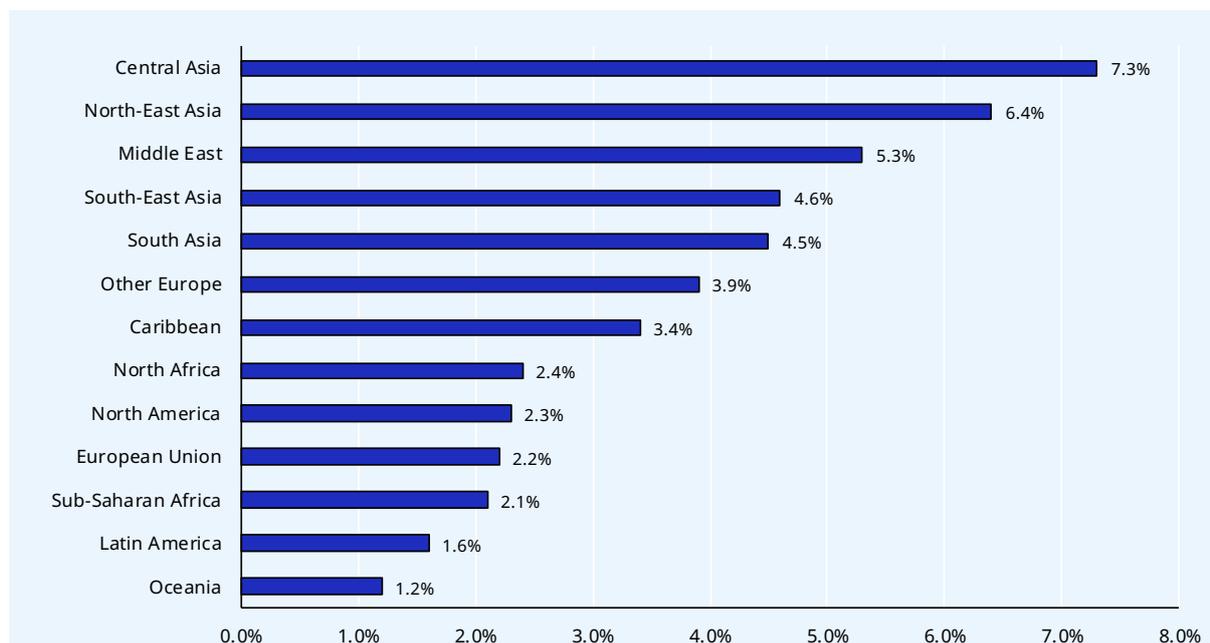


Source: WTTC, *Travel & Tourism Economic Impact 2021*, 2021.

- 11.** Much of the growth in the tourism sector in the years immediately preceding the COVID-19 pandemic was concentrated in the Asia and the Pacific region, with the fastest-growing subregions being Central Asia, North-East Asia, the Middle East, South-East Asia and South Asia, respectively (see figure 2). Meanwhile, many of the countries that are most reliant on tourism in terms of the tourism sector's share of total GDP are small island developing States, including the countries of the Caribbean. Several of the world's largest economies also depend on tourism: travel and tourism contributed 15 per cent to total GDP in Mexico, 14.1 per cent in Spain, 13.1 per cent in Italy and a significant percentage in many other countries (see table below). Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Spain, the Republic of Korea and South Africa are among the major economies that are most reliant on international tourism as a percentage of total tourism.¹⁰

¹⁰ WTTC, *Global Economic Impact & Trends 2020*.

► **Figure 2. Subregional travel and tourism GDP growth, 2019**



Source: WTTC, *Global Economic Impact & Trends 2020*.

► **Contribution of travel and tourism to GDP per capita in G20 countries, 2019**

	Country	% of GDP	Contribution to GDP (US\$ billions)
1	Mexico	15	175.6
2	Spain ¹¹	14.1	202.1
3	Italy	13.1	269.8
4	China	11.6	1 665.6
5	Turkey	11	77.6
6	Australia	10.7	149.1
7	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	10.1	305
8	Saudi Arabia	9.8	79.2
9	Germany	9.8	393.1
10	Argentina	9.4	38.9
11	United States of America	8.6	1 869.7
12	France	8.5	240.5
13	Brazil	7.7	115.7
14	Japan	7.1	373
15	South Africa	6.9	22.1

¹¹ Spain is not a G20 country but is invited as a permanent guest.

	Country	% of GDP	Contribution to GDP (US\$ billions)
16	India	6.9	191.3
17	Canada	6.4	111.6
18	Indonesia	5.9	64.7
19	Russian Federation	4.9	75.5
20	Republic of Korea	4.4	73.2

Source: WTTC, *Global Economic Impact & Trends 2021*.

Pre-pandemic employment in the tourism sector

12. In 2019, travel and tourism accounted for 334 million jobs worldwide, directly or indirectly, accounting for 10.6 per cent of total global employment. Some 1 in 10 jobs worldwide and 1 in 4 of all newly created jobs were in the rapidly growing tourism sector.¹² For every 1 newly created job, nearly 1.5 additional jobs were created through the indirect or induced effect on tourism-related economic activity. Of these jobs, the accommodation and food services subsectors alone provided employment for 144 million workers worldwide (4.6 per cent of total global employment), approximately 44 million of which were own-account workers.¹³ However, the sector is characterized by a high incidence of informality due in part to its seasonality, combined with weak regulation, enforcement and labour organization.
13. Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, the tourism sector comprised more than 7 million employers, the majority of which were MSMEs of less than 50 employees. Approximately 30 per cent of the total tourism sector workforce were employed in microenterprises with 2 to 9 employees.¹⁴
14. The tourism sector is a key driver of job creation for women, young people and migrant workers. As of 2019, women accounted for 54 per cent of all workers in the tourism sector, compared to 39 per cent of workers in the wider economy.¹⁵ The sector is also an important employer and entry point into the labour market for young people, although many workers later leave the sector, often in pursuit of better working conditions. Globally, the majority of workers in tourism are under 35 years of age, half of whom are 25 or under.¹⁶ Typically, the sector employs a higher share of young people than the overall economy. For instance,

¹² WTTC, *Global Economic Impact and Trends 2021*. The WTTC establishes data estimates and forecasts for “travel and tourism”. According to the WTTC, travel and tourism “relates to the activity of travellers on trips outside their usual environment with a duration of less than one year”; total contribution to GDP refers to “GDP generated directly by the Travel & Tourism sector plus its indirect and induced impacts”; and direct contribution to GDP refers to “GDP generated by industries that deal directly with tourists, including hotels, travel agents, airlines and other passenger transport services, as well as the activities of restaurant and leisure industries that deal directly with tourists” (see WTTC, *Global Economic Impact and Trends 2021*, 24). The sum of direct, indirect and induced impacts equals the total economic impact of a sector. According to the WTTC, the total employment impact of travel and tourism includes direct, indirect and induced jobs.

¹³ ILO, *ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the World of Work. Second Edition*, 2020, and *ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the World of Work. Third Edition*, 2020.

¹⁴ ILO, *ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the World of Work. Third Edition*, 6.

¹⁵ World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), *Global Report on Women in Tourism: Second Edition – Key Findings*, 2019.

¹⁶ ILO, *ILO Guidelines on Decent Work and Socially Responsible Tourism*, 10.

young people made up about 30 per cent of the workforce in tourism in Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom before the crisis, more than double their share of the workforce in the wider economy.¹⁷ While it is difficult to precisely measure the number of employed migrants in the sector, it is estimated that in Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) member countries, foreign-born workers account for 25 per cent of total employment in the hospitality subsector.¹⁸

- 15.** Despite being a crucial driver of job creation, the tourism sector faces decent work deficits – such as excessively long working hours, low wages, a high turnover rate, a lack of social protection and gender-based discrimination – that are most pronounced in the informal economy. Informality is common across countries and regions. For instance, 61.4 per cent of restaurant workers and 25.1 per cent of hotel workers work informally in Latin America and the Caribbean and more than three in four workers in the tourism sector work informally in Asia and the Pacific.¹⁹ Shift and night work, seasonality, temporary or part-time employment and increasing outsourcing and subcontracting rates are common in tourism. There is a pressing need for these issues to be addressed in order to maximize the potential of the sector to contribute to economic development and decent work and to improve its sustainability.²⁰

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism sector

- 16.** The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on all areas of life, highlighting the interdependence of global health, employment and other socio-economic issues. In addition to the tragic loss of life and the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on health and communities, the crisis has decimated the world of work and put millions of jobs at risk. There has been increased unemployment and underemployment, loss of incomes, business closures and bankruptcies, supply chain disruption, rising informality and insecurity of work, and new and exacerbated OSH challenges. Women, young workers and migrants working in tourism have suffered disproportionately from the crisis.²¹
- 17.** Tourism has been among the hardest hit of all the economic sectors affected by the pandemic. To control the spread of the COVID-19 virus, almost all countries imposed containment measures that had a knock-on effect on tourism, including travel restrictions, border closures, prohibition of public events, total or partial quarantines, confinement and physical distancing. Travel restrictions led to a global collapse in international tourism arrivals, which fell 74 per cent worldwide from 1.5 billion in 2019 to 381 million in 2020. This effect was even more severe in Asia and the Pacific, where several countries implemented strict border closures and arrivals fell by as much as 84 per cent. Elsewhere, arrivals fell 70 per cent in Africa, 69 per cent in the Americas, 71 per cent in Europe and 76 per cent in

¹⁷ WTTC, *Global Economic Impact & Trends 2021*, 5.

¹⁸ OECD, *International Migration Outlook 2021*, 2021.

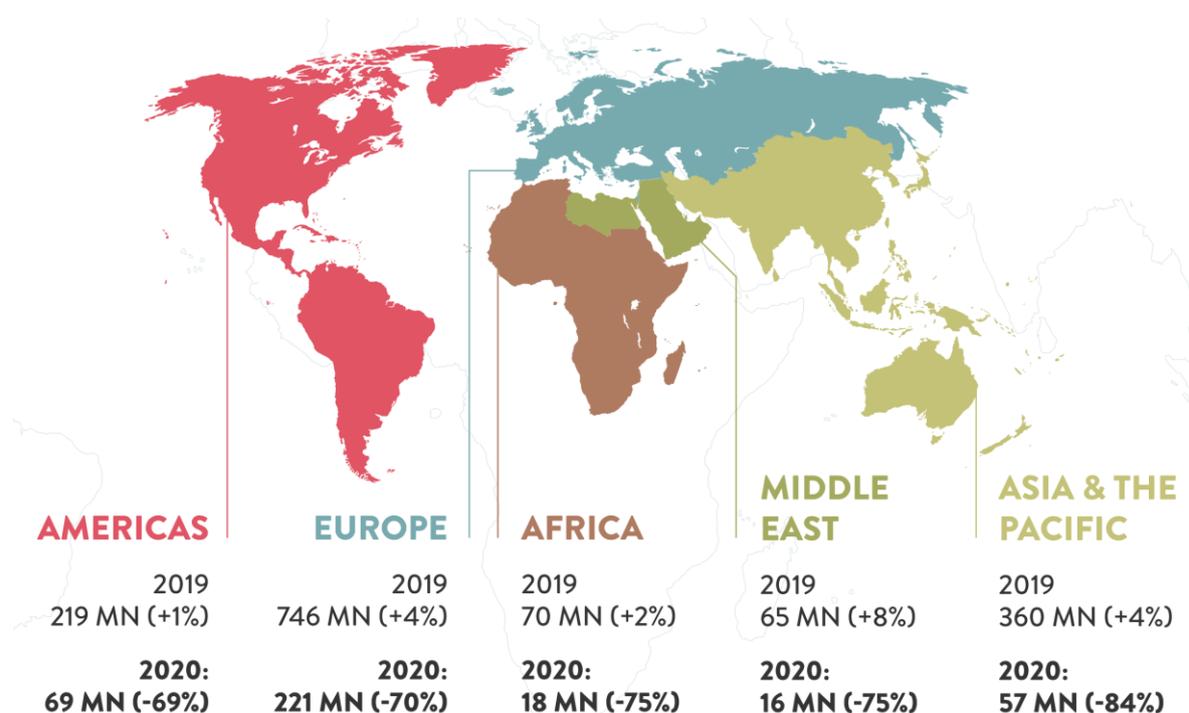
¹⁹ ILO, *Towards a Sustainable Recovery of Employment in the Tourism Sector in Latin America and the Caribbean*, 2021, and *COVID-19 and Employment in the Tourism Sector: Impact and Response in Asia and the Pacific*, Thematic Brief, 2020.

²⁰ ILO, *ILO Guidelines on Decent Work and Socially Responsible Tourism*.

²¹ ILO, Resolution concerning a global call to action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient; and *Protecting Migrant Workers during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Recommendations for Policy-makers and Constituents*, Policy Brief, 2020.

the Middle East (see figure 3).²² In general, domestic travel fared better, although it still declined by an estimated 45 per cent on average in 2020.²³

► **Figure 3. International tourist arrivals, 2020**



Source UNWTO, "2020: A Year in Review".

18. The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent interventions brought the tourism industry to a standstill. Throughout 2021, this remained the case in many countries and areas, while others attempted to facilitate the process of recovery in the sector and welcome the return of tourists amid a great number of uncertainties. Hotels and restaurants, as well as many satellite industries, suffered both partial and total closures, often for prolonged periods throughout both 2020 and 2021. Even in countries with less stringent measures in place, economic activity was affected due to factors such as physical distancing and global spillover effects, including international barriers to tourism and migration.²⁴ Many of the trends identified above, such as the high fragmentation and interdependence of the tourism sector and its large share of MSMEs (80 per cent of tourism enterprises employ fewer than 50 people), have compounded the impacts of the pandemic on the sector.²⁵
19. As a result of the pandemic, the tourism sector's contribution to the global economy collapsed. Worldwide, the travel and tourism industry suffered a loss of almost US\$4.5 trillion in 2020, while its share of global GDP declined to 5.5 per cent from 10.4 per cent in 2019.²⁶ Tourism's intersectoral linkages have also caused a substantial knock-on

²² UNWTO, "2020: A Year in Review".

²³ WTTC, "Global Economic Impact from COVID-19", PowerPoint presentation, November 2020.

²⁴ ILO, *ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the World of Work. Seventh Edition*, 2021, 4.

²⁵ United Nations, *Policy Brief: COVID-19 and Transforming Tourism*, 2020, 11.

²⁶ WTTC, *Global Economic Impact & Trends 2021*.

- effect on the GDP of other industries, such as construction, civil aviation, handicrafts, agriculture, and food and beverages.²⁷
20. The disruption to economic activity in the tourism sector has had a massive impact on the livelihoods of its workers, millions of whom lost their jobs and incomes. Employment supported directly or indirectly by the sector fell 18.5 per cent to 272 million, a loss of almost 62 million jobs.²⁸ Accommodation and food services suffered major job losses, with more than 20 per cent of jobs and 33 per cent of working hours lost in the second quarter of 2020 compared to the same period in 2019.²⁹ Reflecting the substantial effects of lockdown measures on the sector, global employment in accommodation and food services suffered the largest decline of all sectors (-9.4 per cent) in 2020.³⁰ MSMEs in the sector were particularly hard hit, with millions of enterprises going bankrupt and millions of workers losing their jobs as a result.³¹ As with the wider economy, women, young people and migrant workers, as well as workers with disabilities and indigenous persons, many of whom work informally, suffered the greatest exposure to job losses and business closures. For example, the number of migrant workers employed in the hospitality subsector in the European Union dropped by nearly 15 per cent between 2019 and 2020, compared with 12.5 per cent for native-born workers.³² Meanwhile, many indigenous cooperatives and enterprises producing goods directly or indirectly related to tourism, including community-based tourism, food and handicrafts, lost their markets.³³
 21. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism sector has varied according to the levels of reliance on tourism in different countries and regions. Regions in which tourism – in particular international tourism – represents a large share of the overall economy (both GDP and employment), such as the Caribbean, have been particularly negatively impacted by the pandemic. While in 2020 North America and Latin America performed better than most other subregions, with their sectors shrinking by 42.2 per cent and 41.1 per cent, respectively, the Caribbean region suffered the worst of any region, contracting by 58 per cent. In Asia and the Pacific, where many countries' economies – including those of Cambodia, Thailand and Viet Nam in South-East Asia and Nepal and Sri Lanka in South Asia – depend on tourism and many people work informally, workers have been particularly vulnerable to the crisis.³⁴ In 2020, the ILO estimated that the jobs and livelihoods of at least 15.3 million workers were threatened in the region.³⁵
 22. Globally, governments have deployed substantial resources to protect jobs and boost their economies throughout the crisis. Government interventions such as employment retention schemes have mitigated the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and safeguarded many jobs

²⁷ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), *COVID-19 and Tourism: Assessing the Economic Consequences*, 2020, 14.

²⁸ WTTC, *Global Economic Impact & Trends 2021*.

²⁹ See ILO, *ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the World of Work. Seventh Edition*, 14.

³⁰ ILO, *ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the World of Work. Eighth Edition*, 2021.

³¹ WTTC, "WTTC Research Reveals Global Travel & Tourism Sector Suffered a Loss of almost US\$4.5 Trillion in 2020 due to the Impact of COVID-19", 25 March 2021.

³² OECD, *International Migration Outlook 2021*.

³³ ILO, *COVID-19 and the World of Work: A Focus on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples*, Policy Brief, 2020, 3.

³⁴ WTTC, *Global Economic Impact & Trends 2021*.

³⁵ Across 14 countries with available data: Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Fiji, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam. See: ILO, *COVID-19 and Employment in the Tourism Sector*.

in the tourism sector, particularly in developed countries. Many governments have also provided financial support specific to the sector; for example, the Government of Colombia provided a credit line specific to the tourism and aviation sectors, while special compensation was given to seasonal businesses in the tourism sector in Greece during the summer of 2020.³⁶ Social partners have played a key role in mitigating the effects of the crisis on the sector through bipartite and tripartite social dialogue. For instance, the European Federation of Trade Unions in the Food, Agriculture and Tourism sectors (EFFAT) – a regional organization within the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF) – issued a call for the support and protection of the industry's workers.³⁷ In Spain, social partners developed packages of economic measures to protect businesses and workers and set up dedicated COVID-19 crisis guidance and tools,³⁸ while in many countries social dialogue was used to find solutions at the local, regional and national levels, leading to comprehensive policies supporting the sector.³⁹

- 23.** Despite these interventions, many of the tourism sector's businesses and workers – in particular those working in the informal economy and international migrant workers – have fallen through the cracks of government schemes. Many developing countries have not had access to the resources to effectively implement employment retention schemes. While governmental support measures – and in some countries continued domestic tourism – have helped to mitigate the impact on jobs and enterprises, a full recovery will take time and major investment, with traveller and business confidence expected to rebound only slowly over several years.⁴⁰ Moreover, without the full recovery of the tourism industry the millions of tourism jobs that are still supported by government retention schemes and reduced hours will remain at risk.⁴¹ The number of MSMEs is also expected to continue to decline as the sector experiences widespread business failures.⁴²
- 24.** The pathway to a post-pandemic recovery in tourism presents governments, employers and workers with a complex challenge, as well as an opportunity to rethink the future of a sector that has suffered from considerable decent work deficits and come under scrutiny in terms of its environmental and social sustainability. New opportunities have arisen, such as the prospect of expanding domestic tourism in the face of declining international tourism or harnessing the potential of digitalization in the sector. Ensuring a transition to a sustainable tourism sector will also require policies that support enterprises – especially MSMEs – in improving their resilience and sustainability to withstand future economic shocks and crises, training the industry's workforce and enabling the transition of workers and economic units from the formal to the informal economy in line with the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204).

³⁶ ILO, *Addendum to the 2020 General Survey: Promoting Employment and Decent Work in a Changing Landscape*, 2021, 21–22.

³⁷ EFFAT, Letter dated 30 April 2020 from the EFFAT General Secretary addressed to heads and members of selected EU institutions, entitled "Recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic – time to prepare for a more sustainable and socially responsible tourism".

³⁸ See for example Spain, Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism, "Plan de impulso del sector turístico: Hacia un turismo seguro y sostenible", 2020.

³⁹ ILO, *The Impact of COVID-19 on the Tourism Sector*, ILO Sectoral Brief, 2020, 6.

⁴⁰ UNWTO, *World Tourism Barometer* 18, Issue 7 (2020): 1–24.

⁴¹ WTTC, "WTTC Research Reveals Global Travel & Tourism Sector Suffered a Loss of almost US\$4.5 Trillion in 2020 due to the Impact of COVID-19".

⁴² ILO, *ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the World of Work. Third Edition*, 6.

25. While not exclusive to the tourism sector, the severe impact of the pandemic on equality and women, in particular women belonging to vulnerable groups, is a matter of concern. This effect, heightened by the increased burden of care work, which is disproportionately performed by women, threatens to undo global gains in gender equality. ILO research also suggests that fewer women who have left the job market will re-enter it during the pandemic.⁴³ As a major employer of women, the tourism sector can play a key role in addressing these issues throughout the recovery process.
26. While post-pandemic recovery in the tourism sector is expected to be slow, it is notable that it previously demonstrated its resilience in bouncing back from economic slowdowns, such as in areas affected by the 2003 severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) epidemic and the 2008–09 global financial crisis.⁴⁴ As one of the largest and fastest-growing sectors prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism has the potential to play a key role in the global post-pandemic recovery. This process can provide the opportunity for a human-centred recovery, as well as a rethinking of the sector in response to the pressing needs of the climate crisis, technological advances, globalization and demographics, in order to ensure a just transition to a greener, more inclusive and more resilient future of work in tourism.

⁴³ ILO, *Building Forward Fairer: Women's Rights to Work and at Work at the Core of the COVID-19 Recovery*, Policy Brief, 2021.

⁴⁴ Nisachol Mekharat and Nouhoum Traore, "How the Tourism Sector in Emerging Markets is Recovering from COVID-19", *EM Compass*, Note 95 (2020): 1–8.

► An inclusive, safe, resilient, fair and sustainable COVID-19 crisis recovery in the tourism sector

27. The global call to action adopted by the International Labour Conference in June 2021 calls for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient. It acknowledges tourism as one of the hardest-hit sectors and calls for urgent and coordinated action to “facilitate a speedy recovery towards a sustainable travel and tourism sector, bearing in mind its labour-intensive nature and its key role in countries highly dependent on tourism, including Small Island Developing States”.⁴⁵
28. Despite the tourism industry’s significant contribution to employment and economic growth, it continues to face decent work challenges that need to be addressed in order for the sector to contribute to an inclusive, safe, resilient, fair and sustainable and human-centred COVID-19 crisis recovery. As the sector has strived to continue to offer important services to customers, tourism workers have encountered new and exacerbated decent work challenges and OSH risks. The crisis has also magnified the deficits in social protection that workers already faced – largely due to the prevalence of informal work in the sector, including in terms of income security and access to health protection – and has exacerbated inequalities for women, young people and workers in vulnerable situations.
29. This section of the report focuses on the opportunities and challenges for decent and sustainable work in the tourism industry in the context of the COVID-19 crisis. These opportunities and challenges are divided into four main subsections covering the Decent Work Agenda:
- Tourism as an engine for job creation
 - Social protection, OSH and conditions of work
 - Social dialogue and tripartism
 - International labour standards and fundamental principles and rights at work.

Tourism as an engine for job creation

Women, young people and workers in vulnerable situations

30. The crisis has exacerbated global inequalities in the labour market in the tourism sector, disproportionately affecting women, young people, migrants and workers in the informal economy, who are often among the most vulnerable groups of workers. This presents a serious challenge to an inclusive, sustainable and resilient future of work, as many tourism workers are at risk of suffering long-term consequences throughout their working lives, including in terms of labour market participation and career development. However, the rebuilding process also provides an opportunity to build a fairer and more sustainable future of work for all workers in the sector.
31. In the tourism sector, MSMEs play a major role as job providers for young people, women and migrant workers. However, relative to larger enterprises, MSMEs – in particular those

⁴⁵ ILO, Resolution concerning a global call to action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient, para. 11(A)(b).

that operate in the informal economy – often lack access to credit, have fewer assets and are less likely to benefit from the economic stimulus packages implemented by governments in response to the COVID-19 crisis without targeted support.⁴⁶

Women and gender equality

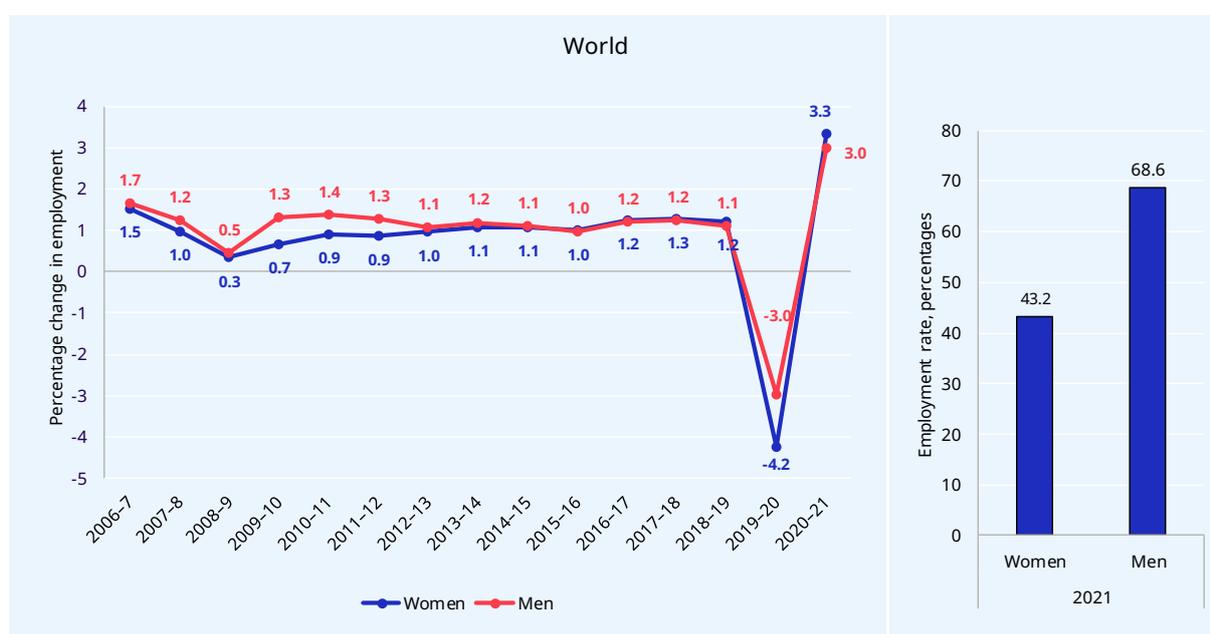
32. Tourism is an important employer of women worldwide, with a high representation of women throughout the sector and a majority representation of women in subsectors such as accommodation and food. While the COVID-19 crisis has affected workers throughout the industry, women's employment has fallen more than that of men, while in the wider economy women have experienced greater employment losses, in part due to their high representation in the worst-affected sectors such as tourism (see figure 4). While tourism-specific data are unavailable, global data is indicative of the scale of the challenge in the industry. In 2021, there were still 13 million fewer women in employment compared to 2019 worldwide, while men's employment was projected to recover to 2019 levels. Meanwhile, only 43.2 per cent of the world's working-age women were employed compared to 68.6 per cent of working-age men (figure 4).⁴⁷
33. Gender equality in the tourism sector has deteriorated, with women across the world suffering disproportionate income losses and being burdened with the majority of the responsibility for unpaid care work. Subsequently, women in tourism have been pushed into inactivity by the care work crisis. There is a risk that the COVID-19 pandemic could reverse hard-won gains on gender equality and women's rights across the tourism sector and the wider economy, with negative implications for economic growth, productivity and sustainability. Potential issues for the sector include stagnation in the progress of reducing gender pay and employment gaps in many places and an increase of gender-based violence and harassment.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ ILO, *ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the World of Work. Seventh Edition*.

⁴⁷ ILO, *Building Forward Fairer*, 2.

⁴⁸ ILO, *Inequalities and the World of Work*, ILC.109/IV(Rev.), 2021, 5.

► **Figure 4. Percentage change in employment by sex, 2006–2021 and employment rate, 2021**



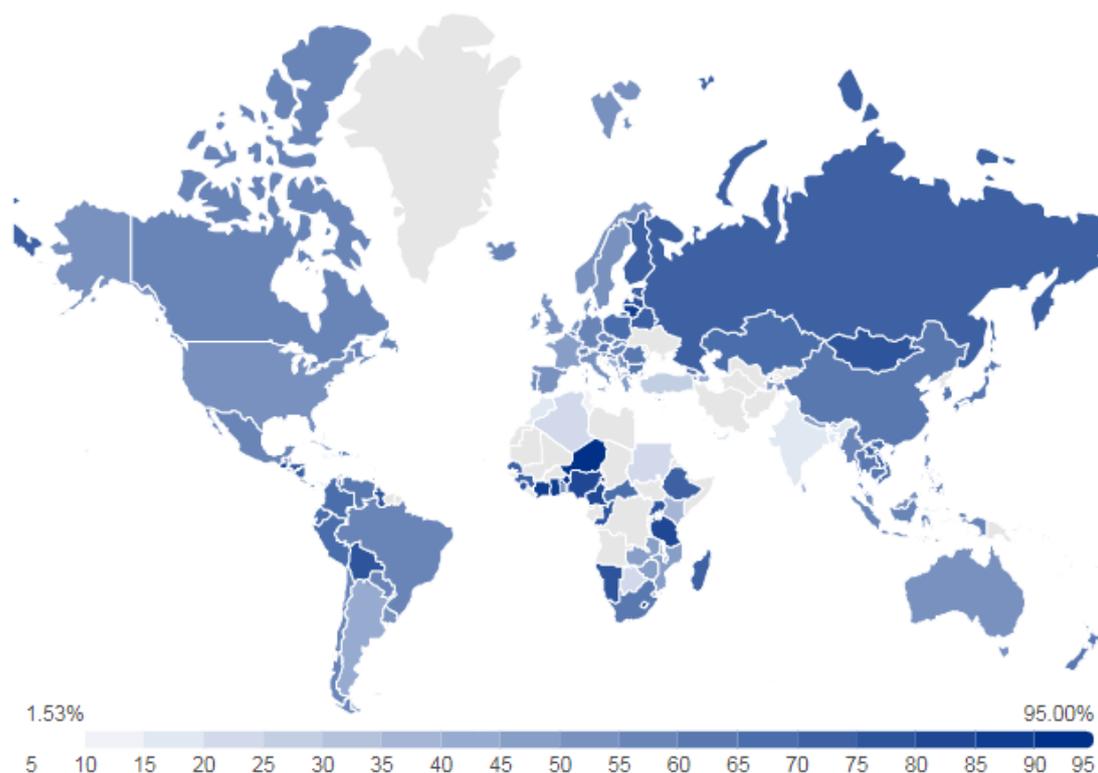
Source: ILO, *Building Forward Fairer*.

34. The effects on women in the tourism sector have been compounded by the large percentage of women working informally. At the onset of the crisis, 42 per cent of women compared to 32 per cent of men were working in the informal economy in sectors identified as at high risk of disruption, including tourism (alongside manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade, and real estate and business activities).⁴⁹ The percentages of women employed in tourism are high globally (see figure 5) and women account for the majority share of employment in the accommodation and food sector in Central, Eastern and Western Africa, Central and South America, and Eastern Europe.⁵⁰ When women entrepreneurs in tourism work in informal enterprises or as informal own-account workers, they are faced with the low rates of savings and investment and negligible capital accumulation that are often associated with this type of work, making them more vulnerable to economic shocks and crises.⁵¹

⁴⁹ ILO, *ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the World of Work. Third edition*, 7.

⁵⁰ ILO, *A Gender-responsive Employment Recovery: Building Back Fairer*, Policy Brief, 2020, 3.

⁵¹ ILO, *COVID-19 Crisis and the Informal Economy: Immediate Responses and Policy Challenges*, ILO Brief, 2020.

▶ **Figure 5 Percentage of women employed in the tourism sector worldwide, 2018**

Source: UNWTO, *Global Report on Women in Tourism: Second Edition*, 2019; ILOSTAT, 2018 data.

- 35.** Across the tourism sector, women who have remained in employment during the crisis have been forced to juggle paid work and additional care work, with care obligations often forcing them to cut down on paid working hours or to extend total working hours to unsustainable levels, having already carried out three times as much unpaid care work as men prior to the pandemic.⁵² In a Europe wide-survey, 10.6 per cent of female respondents aged 35 to 49 reported that family responsibilities prevented them from devoting the required time to their jobs all or most of the time, compared with 6.7 per cent of male respondents.⁵³ In Argentina, an online survey showed that almost 60 per cent of women who continued paid work, either in their workplace or from home, felt overwhelmed by their workload, compared to approximately 40 per cent of men.⁵⁴
- 36.** Women who work in tourism in unskilled or semi-skilled jobs in the informal economy are more likely to be subject to poor working conditions and inequality of opportunity and treatment, including in the form of gender pay gaps and violence and harassment at

⁵² ILO, *Addendum to the 2020 General Survey*, 115.

⁵³ ILO, *A Gender-responsive Employment Recovery*, 7. Figures based on respondents from the EU-27. See Eurofound, "Living, Working and COVID-19", e-survey launched on 9 April 2020.

⁵⁴ Observatorio de Géneros y Políticas Públicas, "Puertas adentro: Organización laboral y distribución de tareas de cuidado durante el Aislamiento Social Preventivo y Obligatorio en el Área Metropolitana de Buenos Aires, 2020.

work.⁵⁵ According to a 2019 study of 18 countries,⁵⁶ women were paid 14.7 per cent less on average than men in the tourism sector, compared to 16.8 per cent less in the wider economy in these countries. A slightly narrower gender wage gap in the tourism sector than in the wider economy reflects a sector that is typically low paid for both men and women, in which women often represented a large share or majority of the workforce. However, women are also under-represented in senior management positions and earn less for equivalent work.⁵⁷ The Violence and Harassment Convention (No. 190) and Recommendation (No. 206), 2019, provide a framework for governments, employers and workers in the tourism sector to tackle violence and harassment in the world of work, ranging from prevention to protection, enforcement and remedies, training and awareness-raising.

- 37.** Building back better from the COVID-19 crisis in tourism requires placing gender equality at the core of the recovery effort and putting in place inclusive, gender-responsive strategies that promote equal opportunities for decent work for women and men. In this regard, the global call to action provides guidance for the tourism sector. It states that a transformative agenda for gender equality should include ensuring equal pay for work of equal value, supported by pay transparency; sharing of work and family responsibilities; closing gender skill gaps through employment creation and lifelong learning; investing in education, health care, social work, the care economy and other sectors, addressing understaffing and improving working conditions; removing legal and other barriers to entry to and advancement in education, training, employment and careers; and preventing and protecting against gender-based violence and harassment.⁵⁸

Youth employment

- 38.** Of all age groups, the COVID-19 pandemic has had the greatest impact on young workers and this is reflected in the tourism sector, where more young people work on average than in the wider economy. In 2020, youth employment fell by 8.7 per cent globally compared with 3.7 per cent for adults. Across all economic sectors, the decline in employment among young people, especially among young women, was far greater than among older age groups in the majority of countries. Furthermore, employment losses have often translated into increased inactivity rather than unemployment. The share of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET rate) has risen and not yet returned to pre-crisis levels in most cases and the rise in inactivity has not been offset by a return to education.⁵⁹
- 39.** Given the over-representation of young workers in tourism and the scale of its impact on the sector, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a particularly significant effect on its young workers. Not only have millions of young workers lost their jobs but the tourism sector – which accounted for one quarter of all new jobs annually before the pandemic – has not been providing a point of entry into the labour market for young people to the same extent, making it harder for them to find their first jobs.

⁵⁵ Thomas Baum, *International Perspectives on Women and Work in Hotels, Catering and Tourism*, Gender Working Paper 1/2013, Sector Working Paper No. 289, (ILO, 2013).

⁵⁶ Case studies were drawn from Albania, Bolivia, Cabo Verde, Costa Rica, Ghana, India, Japan, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, the Republic of Korea, Spain, Uganda, the United Kingdom and the United States.

⁵⁷ UNWTO, *Global Report on Women in Tourism: Second Edition*.

⁵⁸ ILO, Resolution concerning a global call to action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient.

⁵⁹ ILO, *An Update on the Youth Labour Market Impact of the COVID-19 Crisis*, Statistical Brief, 2021, 1–2.

40. For young workers in the tourism sector who are now inactive, unemployed or underemployed, the crisis threatens to have long-term consequences. Young people entering or looking to enter the tourism sector now face greater challenges in starting their careers. Empirical evidence shows that starting a career during a recession can affect an individual's labour market outcomes for a decade or more. To minimize the impact on young people, policy interventions in the tourism sector should be immediate and substantial and should include dimensions that are targeted to reach young people, in particular those who are often in vulnerable situations, including young women.⁶⁰
41. Tackling youth employment issues in the tourism sector requires both general and targeted labour market interventions. The tourism sector typically offers employment opportunities for young people and thus has the capacity to contribute to lowering global youth unemployment. Wider employment policies for young workers that can be applied to the tourism sector include promoting demand for young workers in tourism, with a focus on reconstructive policies (from income support to stimulating new employment and entrepreneurship) and policies to support young tourism workers who have withdrawn from the labour market. These include employment services and career guidance to ease their transition to work; skill development, in particular digital literacy training to increase their capacity to use digital tools and online resources; employment and labour market programmes and entrepreneurship schemes that address the specific situations of young people entering the world of work; extending social protection coverage, including unemployment benefits, to more young people; and programmes to safeguard young workers' rights in the tourism sector, including by encouraging the participation of young people in social dialogue. Given the role of the tourism sector in youth employment, policy interventions that target the tourism sector may be crucial to the overall recovery process and improving future employment outcomes for young people.⁶¹ Gender-responsive strategies that promote opportunities for decent work for young women in the tourism sector are also of key importance.

Migrant workers

42. Migrant workers are in high demand in the tourism sector in many countries and regions and they allow for employers to fill important skills shortages through labour and skills mobility.⁶² Foreign citizens, for instance, account for 16 per cent of the 13 million people that work in the tourism sector in the EU.⁶³ Meanwhile, 19.5 per cent of workers in the tourism sector in the United States are foreign-born⁶⁴ and it is one of the largest users of temporary work visas in Australia.⁶⁵
43. Migrant workers in the tourism sector may provide skills profiles that are unavailable in the local labour market. However, there are cases of skills mismatches: some migrants are significantly overqualified for the working roles that they play and yet are

⁶⁰ ILO, *An Update on the Youth Labour Market Impact of the COVID-19 Crisis*.

⁶¹ ILO, *A Policy Framework for Tackling the Economic and Social Impact of the COVID-19 Crisis*, Policy Brief, 2020, and *An Update on the Youth Labour Market Impact of the COVID-19 Crisis*.

⁶² ILO, *Developments and Challenges in the Hospitality and Tourism Sector*; and Helen Dempster and Cassandra Zimmer, "Migrant Workers in the Tourism Industry: How Has COVID-19 Affected Them and What Does the Future Hold?", *COMPAS Blogs* (blog), 24 June 2020.

⁶³ Eurostat, "Over 13 million people employed in tourism in EU", March 2019.

⁶⁴ New American Economy, "Hospitality & Tourism".

⁶⁵ Australia, *Reviewing the Skilled Migration and 400 Series Visa Programme: Tourism & Hospitality Industry Response*, 2014, 9.

disproportionately likely to remain in lower-paid positions. The demand for migrant labour can further lead to a “brain drain” effect of skilled tourism workers from developing countries. For instance, a 2021 ILO report examined the outward migration of tourist workers from Sri Lanka abroad and the intersection with domestic labour shortages in the sector.⁶⁶ However, migrant workers also have the opportunity to acquire skills through training and work experience abroad, which they can use upon returning to their home countries and thereby contribute to increased growth and productivity.

44. The tourism sector indeed relies on a global workforce and offers jobs to migrant workers at all skill levels. Not all migrant workers in the tourism sector are in vulnerable positions; however, they are more likely to find themselves in vulnerable situations. Many migrant workers in the tourism sector are particularly likely to work in the informal economy; often work in less safe environments and less favourable working conditions than other workers; and may be subject to abusive and fraudulent practices in recruitment processes.⁶⁷
45. The COVID-19 crisis has exposed and exacerbated these vulnerabilities. Many migrant workers have been neither able to work due to workplace closures nor to return home due to border closures. Furthermore, many migrant workers work in the informal economy and are excluded from wage subsidies, unemployment benefits and other social security benefits put in place as a national response to the COVID-19 pandemic.⁶⁸
46. The crisis provides a chance to reconsider and improve policies for migrant labour in the sector. With many returned migrant workers in the tourism sector intending to remigrate, there is an opportunity to build back better and implement policies to ensure that labour migration governance systems are safer, fairer and more sustainable in the future and that policies also recognize the reintegration of returning migrants, in line with the ILO’s *General principles and operational guidelines for fair recruitment and Definition of recruitment fees and related costs*⁶⁹ and the ILO Guidelines on decent work and socially responsible tourism.⁷⁰

Transition from the informal to the formal economy

47. About 2 billion people – more than 60 per cent of the world’s workers – work informally. The majority of these workers live in emerging and developing countries. The informal economy contributes significantly to jobs, incomes and livelihoods and in many countries it plays a major economic role but is often characterized by poor working conditions. As is the case in the tourism sector, informal workers tend to work in economic sectors in which workers carry a higher risk of COVID-19 infection and where business activity has been particularly affected by containment measures.⁷¹
48. The tourism sector is characterized by high informality, in part due to the seasonality and temporality of work in the sector, combined with weak regulation, enforcement and organization of labour. In many countries, work in the sector crosses the fluid boundaries between the formal and informal economies. Migrant workers, women and young people

⁶⁶ ILO, *Workforce and Migration Patterns of Sri Lanka’s Tourism Industry: Implications for the Growth of the Sector*, 2021.

⁶⁷ ILO, *ILO Guidelines on Decent Work and Socially Responsible Tourism*, 22 and 34.

⁶⁸ Dempster and Zimmer, “Migrant Workers in the Tourism Industry”.

⁶⁹ ILO, *General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment and Definition of Recruitment Fees and Related Costs*, 2019.

⁷⁰ ILO, *Locked Down and in Limbo: The Global Impact of COVID-19 on Migrant Worker Rights and Recruitment*, 2021; and *Protecting Migrant Workers during the COVID-19 Pandemic*.

⁷¹ ILO, *ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the World of Work. Second Edition*.

in the sector are particularly vulnerable to informal or casual employment and therefore often work in less safe working environments or with worse working conditions than others. Decent work deficits are most pronounced for tourism workers in the informal economy and informality in the tourism sector may be linked to sexual abuse of women and children.⁷²

49. While specific data on the impact on informal workers in the tourism sector is scarce, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on informal workers in the wider economy has been particularly severe and signals a need for policies that specifically target informal workers in the sector.⁷³ For instance, in the immediate aftermath of the crisis informal wage workers were three times as likely to lose their jobs as formal workers and 1.6 times as likely as the self-employed.⁷⁴ Large regional variations in informality have contributed to the global inequalities caused by the highly uneven impact of the COVID-19 pandemic across countries.
50. Informal workers in the tourism sector are already in disadvantaged situations and the disruption to their working lives caused by the crisis could jeopardize their work opportunities and career trajectories in the future. Tourism workers working in the informal economy lack social protection associated with formal jobs, as well as basic social protection in terms of access to essential health care and basic income security, including in cases of maternity, sickness or unemployment.⁷⁵ Because of their status, the sector's informal workers are likely to benefit only marginally from COVID-19 crisis-related social protection measures and other financial assistance programmes.⁷⁶ These workers are therefore at a greater risk of falling into poverty, with a lack of social protection and typically lower saving rates.⁷⁷
51. Consequently, the formalization of work in the sector needs to be prioritized as part of the recovery process. Wider economic policies that target informal workers will have a positive impact on working conditions in the tourism sector. In some instances, fiscal, financial and technical support have been extended to informal businesses and workers and such assistance will remain crucial to supporting the tourism industry throughout the recovery process. Efforts that have been made to provide income support to informal workers (for example, cash and in-kind transfers to informal workers) and mitigate the decline in economic activity for informal businesses (for example, loans, grants and debt restructuring for informal enterprises) may have a positive impact on the livelihood of the sector's workers and the sustainability of its businesses. In the longer term, investments are needed to strengthen health and social protection systems for all, along with comprehensive measures to formalize work in the tourism sector and facilitate the transition to, and create more tourism jobs in, the formal economy.⁷⁸ Many such measures are financed from tax revenues or other state revenues, demonstrating the significance of non-contributory provision to ensure at least basic levels of protection for all.

⁷² ILO, *ILO Guidelines on Decent Work and Socially Responsible Tourism*, 23.

⁷³ ILO, *Addendum 2020 to the General Survey*, 65–80.

⁷⁴ ILO, *World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2021*, 2021, 14.

⁷⁵ ILO, *ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the World of Work. Second Edition*.

⁷⁶ ILO, *COVID-19 Crisis and the Informal Economy*.

⁷⁷ ILO, *World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2021*, 14.

⁷⁸ ILO, *National Employment Policies for an Inclusive, Job-rich Recovery from the COVID-19 Crisis*, Policy Brief, 2020.

- 52.** To build back better in the tourism sector, there is a need to seize the opportunity to develop and implement comprehensive, innovative and integrated approaches to curb the spread of informality and accelerate the transition to the formal economy, particularly for the creation, preservation and formalization of enterprises and decent jobs.⁷⁹ Recommendation No. 204 provides relevant guidance for the tourism sector and crisis recovery on facilitating the transition to the formal economy, promoting the creation of jobs in the formal economy and protecting formal jobs from informalization, while respecting workers' fundamental rights and ensuring opportunities for income security, livelihoods and entrepreneurship.

Green jobs

- 53.** The rebuilding process in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic provides the opportunity to rethink the future of the tourism sector and introduce greener, more sustainable models of tourism and generate green jobs within the sector. International tourism has increased by 250 per cent since 2000 and while this has provided opportunities for growth, it has also raised issues about the social and environmental sustainability of travel and tourism.⁸⁰ The temporary reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution during the pandemic – to which a drastic reduction in travel and tourism contributed – raised further questions about the sustainability of the tourism sector in the context of securing a just transition to a greener and more sustainable future.⁸¹
- 54.** Green jobs go hand in hand with a green recovery that provides both more and better jobs and helps build towards healthier and more resilient societies. Green jobs in tourism could emerge from efforts to green the sector as a whole, including the greening of its enterprises, workplace practices and the labour market, as well as from circular economies in tourism that promote reusing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling materials and products.⁸²
- 55.** The potential for green jobs in tourism has yet to be fully realized. To date, most of the jobs created have been through changing existing occupations through the addition of new knowledge and skills – such as in the area of ecotourism – in medium-skill-level occupations. For some countries and rural communities, the greening of tourism and ecotourism have great potential. Globally, protected areas received roughly 8 billion nature-based tourism visits annually before the pandemic, generating about US\$600 billion per year in direct in-country expenditure.⁸³ Costa Rica has in recent years used sustainable tourism to help promote its conservation efforts and ecotourism could play an important role in the country's COVID-19 crisis recovery strategy.⁸⁴ In Montenegro, it was estimated that more than 16,000 new jobs would be created between 2012 and 2020 in the tourism sector through efforts to green the sector. In the Philippines, the Government's National Ecotourism Strategy and Action Plan 2013–2022 estimated the potential for between

⁷⁹ ILO, Resolution concerning a global call to action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient.

⁸⁰ OECD, "Managing Tourism Development for Sustainable and Inclusive Recovery", *OECD Tourism Papers 2021/01*, 2021.

⁸¹ ILO, *COVID-19 and the World of Work: Jump-starting a Green Recovery with More and Better Jobs, Healthy and Resilient Societies*, Policy Brief, 2020.

⁸² ILO, "Green Jobs".

⁸³ Andrew Balmford et al., "Walk on the Wild Side: Estimating the Global Magnitude of Visits to Protected Areas", *PLoS Biol* 13, No. 2 (2015): 1–6.

⁸⁴ Jude Webber, "Costa Rica's Eco-tourism Experiment Offers a Path to Recovery", *Financial Times*, 12 November 2020.

1.5 million and 14.2 million eco-tourists.⁸⁵ A gender-responsive toolkit on ecotourism planning and management was developed by the Philippine Commission on Women, in partnership with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, including training sessions on ecotourism planning and resources monitoring for ecotourism.⁸⁶ Sustainable tourism could play a key role in providing decent work opportunities for indigenous and tribal peoples, while indigenous and tribal peoples could also play an important role in promoting sustainable tourism. In Canada, the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada, in partnership with the Government, facilitated the COVID-19 Development Stimulus Grant, which has provided 678 indigenous tourism businesses, mostly MSMEs, with non-repayable grants since the outset of the pandemic, implementing projects (for example to promote domestic tourism) that help to drive local employment and upskill workers.⁸⁷

- 56.** The ILO guidelines on decent work and socially responsible tourism provide sector-specific guidance with a view to implementing interventions to promote decent work, greening the industry, enhancing its sustainability and contributing to the achievement of the SDGs.⁸⁸

Skills and lifelong learning

- 57.** Skills development and lifelong learning play a major role in the immediate and long-term responses to the COVID-19 crisis in the tourism sector. They could play a key role in getting people back to work in the sector, helping its workers to find new jobs, developing the necessary skills for the digitalization of the sector and building resilience into long-term recovery strategies.⁸⁹ Promoting the acquisition of skills, competencies and qualifications for tourism workers throughout their working lives is at the heart of a human-centred approach to crisis recovery and the future of work, as well as to ensuring fair, inclusive and secure work, full, productive and freely chosen employment for all, productivity improvement and sustainable development.⁹⁰ Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and skills development that specifically respond to the tourism sector's requirements are key to creating and securing decent jobs, improving employability, productivity and social inclusion, and maximizing the opportunities and well-being of employers and workers.⁹¹ With the tourism sector facing major skills gaps, TVET and skills development could have an important impact on boosting productivity and profitability, including by harnessing the strong productivity and growth potential of digital technologies.⁹²

- 58.** The tourism sector requires a range of skills for occupations in order to respond to new and emerging trends such as the advance of digitalization. The COVID-19 pandemic has prompted an acceleration of digitalization in the tourism industry, ranging from contactless services at hotels and restaurants and registration processes for checking the testing

⁸⁵ ILO, *Skills for a Greener Future: A Global View*, 2019, 103.

⁸⁶ Philippines, Philippine Commission on Women and Department of Environment and Natural Resources, *Gender-Responsive Toolkit on Ecotourism Planning and Management*, 2013; and ILO, *World Employment and Social Outlook 2018: Greening with Jobs*, 2018.

⁸⁷ UNWTO, *Recommendations for the Transition to a Green Travel and Tourism Economy*, 2020, 26.

⁸⁸ ILO, *ILO Guidelines on Decent Work and Socially Responsible Tourism*.

⁸⁹ ILO, *Skills Development in the Time of COVID-19: Taking Stock of the Initial Responses in Technical and Vocational Education and Training*, 2021, 46.

⁹⁰ ILO, *ILO Centenary declaration for the future of work*, International Labour Conference, 108th Session, 2019.

⁹¹ ILO, *ILO Guidelines on Decent Work and Socially Responsible Tourism*, 27.

⁹² OECD, *OECD Tourism Trends and Policies 2020*, 43–44.

and/or vaccination status of guests to virtual tourism that eschews the need for physical travel. As is common with fast-growing sectors, the demand for skills in the tourism sector often outstrips the supply of the labour market. Hoteliers, restaurants and tour operators often struggle to find the necessary skills at all levels, from entry level to management. This can have a negative impact on productivity and the service provided and therefore on business reputation, profitability and future investments. A lack of the necessary skills will place constraints on the tourism sector's recovery from the crisis.⁹³ Insufficient skills are among the most common constraints faced by MSMEs in the tourism sector, with many entrepreneurs lacking the necessary competencies and often facing insufficient incentives or an inadequate enabling environment for acquiring these competences and boosting productivity.

- 59.** Along with the impact of the crisis on labour markets, the pandemic has also disrupted education and training at all levels, including through the complete closures of training institutions. Many countries have struggled to make the transition to distance training and many people have lacked the resources to connect online, particularly in the world's poorest countries. The unprecedented job losses in tourism have exacerbated pre-existing challenges, including skills mismatches and a lack of access to skills development opportunities, with millions of women and men forced to look for alternative occupations. Because of their focus on work-based learning and the acquisition of practical skills, TVET programmes are particularly important to the tourism sector; however, due to the nature of such training, these institutions have been particularly hard hit. Losses in revenues and business closures have caused cuts in the offer of apprenticeship placements in enterprises. The declining quality of training and delays in assessment and certification have disincentivized both learners and teachers, increasing the risk of students and trainees dropping out of programmes and adding to the challenges facing the tourism sector in finding workers with the right skill sets.⁹⁴
- 60.** A 2020 ILO study on tourism identified a number of reasons why poor skills persist across the sector.⁹⁵ In particular:
- public training institutions either cannot keep up with sector growth or do not exist in the first place and governments prioritize investment in infrastructure rather than the supply of skills;
 - training curricula are outdated and often focus on theoretical skills rather than practical ones;
 - the positions available are not attractive enough (for example in terms of wages, career progression and benefits) for trainees to start a career in tourism; and
 - staff turnover is high and enterprises struggle to replenish staff, particularly the most qualified workers.⁹⁶

There is also a risk that some of these causes have been further exacerbated by the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the provision of education and training.

⁹³ WTTC, *Global Talent Trends and Issues for the Travel & Tourism Sector*, 2015.

⁹⁴ ILO, *Skills Development in the Time of COVID-19*, 46.

⁹⁵ In Bolivia, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Mozambique, Myanmar, United Republic of Tanzania and Viet Nam.

⁹⁶ ILO, "Accelerating Tourism's Impact on Jobs: Lessons from Market System Analysis in Seven Countries", 2020.

- 61.** There is furthermore a gender divide in skills and in education and training in the tourism sector. Women are often over-represented in lower-skilled and lower-paid areas, notably housekeeping and customer contact areas. Skilled jobs in which women are under-represented and to which they have less access than men include skilled kitchen work, engineering and security, and senior technical and managerial roles. This is related to and stems from gender segregation in education and training, which has implications for the gender wage gap. Targeted skills policies are needed to address the skills divide in the tourism sector in order to make education and training more accessible and appealing to women workers, help boost the productivity of the sector and generate fair, inclusive and sustainable work in tourism.⁹⁷
- 62.** As governments and social partners respond to the COVID-19 crisis and recovery from its impacts and as enterprises and workers adapt to the challenges of the future of work and digitalization, there is an opportunity to make skills training more accessible to a larger number of workers in the tourism sector. Future skills programmes that target workers in the tourism sector could harness the potential of new education technologies, turn workplaces into learning locations and upscale skills development interventions. To better address the needs of enterprises and improve employment outcomes, learning systems could integrate work-based learning – including for core and digital skills – that is implemented through social dialogue. Considering the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on young people, women and migrant workers, priority attention should be given to their training and education. Inclusive training programmes that are flexible and learner-centred, with a strong emphasis on gender equality, are needed to address the inequalities caused by the crisis. There is also a need to bridge the digital divide by providing improved access to equipment, the internet and other low-tech solutions. The growth of online, non-formal and informal learning pathways, which was accelerated by the crisis, requires a more robust recognition of prior learning systems and the continuous recognition of skills through micro-credentials.⁹⁸
- 63.** A strategic approach to skills development is essential to create an attractive, productive and sustainable tourism sector. Effective training and career development strategies, as well as worker satisfaction and retention, may positively impact the sector's productivity. Career development policies should be part of strategies in tourism and should specifically target underutilized stocks of skills, such as women, young people and migrant workers. In addition to occupation-specific technical skills, a focus on multiskilling and core skills – including soft skills, information and communication technologies, customer interaction, workplace organization and management – is of key importance to the sector. Stronger links between skills development and lifelong learning systems and the private sector can help to promote decent work and improve productivity, employability and social inclusion.⁹⁹ For the development of TVET programmes, the ILO guidelines on decent work and socially responsible tourism provide guidance in terms of the production of training modules, establishing and strengthening institutional and technical capacity, skills matching, needs assessments, and skills anticipation and upgrading.

⁹⁷ ILO, *ILO Guidelines on Decent Work and Socially Responsible Tourism*, 12.

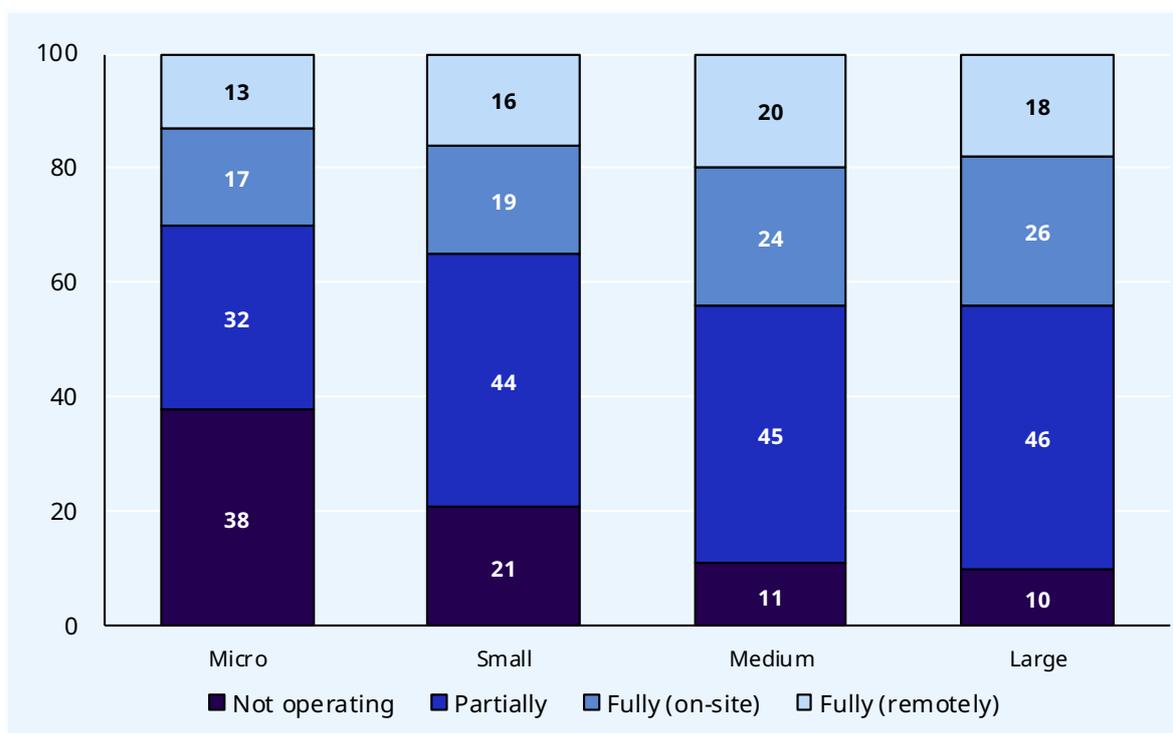
⁹⁸ ILO, *Programme and Budget for the Biennium 2022–23*, para. 151.

⁹⁹ ILO, *Reports of the General Discussion Working Party on Skills and Lifelong Learning: Proposed Resolution and Conclusions Submitted to the Conference for Adoption*, ILC.109/Record No. 10A, 2021, 3–4.

Sustainable enterprises and responsible business conduct

64. The COVID-19 pandemic had unprecedented impacts on all sizes and types of tourism enterprises that led to widespread business and supply chain disruptions, including disproportionate impacts on MSMEs. While industry-specific data are scarce, MSMEs are generally more than 50 per cent more likely than larger firms to have been strongly affected by the crisis, with almost three quarters of them reporting severe financial difficulties (see figure 6).¹⁰⁰

► **Figure 6. Operational status of enterprises during the COVID-19 crisis, by size, 2020 (percentages)**



Source: ILO, *World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2021*; adapted from data in ILO, *A Global Survey of Enterprises: Managing the Business Disruptions of COVID-19 – Second Quarter 2020 Situational Analysis*, 2020.

65. Due to the high concentration of MSMEs in tourism, the fragmentation of the sector and the manner in which containment measures have curbed tourist activity, the crisis has had a particularly severe impact on the sector’s enterprises. Enterprise investments have been diverted to personal protective equipment (PPE) and other precautionary measures necessary for public-facing work, to the detriment of other investments and with possible negative implications for future productivity. Informal enterprises in the tourism sector are less likely to be eligible for government support schemes and are further at risk, with one quarter of informal firms surveyed by the International Trade Centre (ITC) stating that the crisis was driving them out of business. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a more pronounced effect on women-led firms, which have a larger share of the tourism sector than the wider economy.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ ILO, *World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2021*.

¹⁰¹ ITC, *SME Competitiveness Outlook 2020: COVID-19 – The Great Lockdown and its Impact on Small Business*, 2020.

- 66.** In 2020, the ILO conducted a global survey of enterprises in order to spotlight the overall impact of the crisis on enterprise outcomes. Of the economic sectors analysed, the tourism sector had the largest share of businesses that reported a high level of financial impact (88 per cent), followed by retail or sales (59 per cent). It also reported the largest share of enterprises that did not have access to funding to support for business recovery (47 per cent). The impact on enterprises in the sector had a demonstrable effect on workers and work hours, with the largest share of enterprises in any sector (64 per cent) undertaking a substantial workforce reduction of more than 40 per cent.¹⁰²
- 67.** An inclusive, resilient, safe, fair and sustainable recovery for the sector should support business continuity and foster an enabling environment for innovation, productivity growth and sustainable enterprises, including MSMEs. Promoting sustainable enterprises and responsible business conduct in the tourism sector could have important positive impacts on its sustainability. Stronger linkages between tourism infrastructure, policy and regulatory environments and providing the necessary skills base to foster innovation in the sector could help increase productivity and profitability. Policies that specifically target innovation in tourism businesses, particularly among MSMEs, could be key to increasing productivity and creating employment opportunities.¹⁰³ Social dialogue should play a central role in the development of government policies, helping to ensure targeted and long-lasting support for enterprises that takes into account decent work and the rights and needs of workers.
- 68.** As the recovery from the pandemic continues, a number of policies will help facilitate the process. Policy support may include easing access to credit and other financial services; establishing policies that stimulate demand for tourism-related services or boost employment; and adopting measures to make the business environment more agile and responsive (for example by waiving registration fees, fast-tracking and simplifying public procurement procedures or adopting procedures to simplify restructuring and shutdowns). Financial measures such as tax exemptions and subsidies could incentivize the green transition among enterprises. For example, in Bogotá ecotourism firms certified by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development receive a 20-year income tax exemption.¹⁰⁴ Longer-term policies will need to target economic growth and rethink the ways in which firms do business, including by upgrading infrastructure – which can improve their access to supplies and markets – and providing business services to support MSMEs (for instance, investment in skills and training or incentives to improve sustainability and invest in digital transformation).¹⁰⁵
- 69.** The ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy reflects good practices for all enterprises, including in the tourism sector, and it could help guide tripartite dialogues and policies directed towards the sector, particularly in countries that seek to engage multinational enterprises in the recovery process.¹⁰⁶ The United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights are key to providing guidance to enterprises on social policy and inclusive, responsible and sustainable

¹⁰² ILO, *A Global Survey of Enterprises: Managing the Business Disruptions of COVID-19 – Second Quarter 2020 Situational Analysis*, 2020, 3 and 35–39.

¹⁰³ Yoo Ri Kim, Andrew Lockwood and Allan M. Williams, *The UK Tourism Productivity Gap: Challenges and Potential for Tourism Productivity* (VisitBritain and the University of Surrey, 2019).

¹⁰⁴ Colombia, “Legal and tax incentives”, *Invest in Colombia*.

¹⁰⁵ ILO, *Interventions to Support Enterprises during the COVID-19 Pandemic and Recovery*, ILO Enterprises Brief, 2020.

¹⁰⁶ See ILO, *Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy*, 2017.

workplace practices.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, the conclusions concerning small and medium-sized enterprises and decent and productive employment creation, adopted by the International Labour Conference in 2015, help address the particular constraints faced by MSMEs and their workers and provide guidance on effective SME policies to create productive employment and decent work that are particularly relevant in relation to the COVID-19 crisis.¹⁰⁸

Social protection, OSH and conditions of work

70. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed and exacerbated social and economic inequalities globally, with the crisis impacting workers in low-income countries disproportionately owing to a lack of adequate social protection. Many workers in the tourism sector have limited or no social protection, often related to their informal working status, and have faced challenges regarding their safety and health at work throughout the pandemic.
71. The recovery from the crisis is a pivotal moment to harness the response to build a new generation of rights-based social protection systems and safe and healthy workplaces. This includes expanding sustainable social protection schemes and scaling up OSH systems. Progress in ensuring adequate and effective protection at work for all is essential to put the world back on the path set by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially in relation to SDG 8 on promoting decent work and economic growth and SDG 10 on reducing inequalities.
72. The Working Conditions (Hotels and Restaurants) Convention (No. 172) and Recommendation (No. 179), 1991, provide guidance on working conditions in relation to issues such as hours of work and rest and remuneration for workers.

Social protection (social security)

73. The COVID-19 crisis prompted an unprecedented expansion of social protection programmes across the world. In April 2021, the ILO documented more than 1,600 newly introduced measures of social protection covering hundreds of millions of workers, including actions to extend or adjust existing programmes, as well as entirely new measures, including direct cash transfers and emergency relief. The scale of government action to extend social protection to those in need at a time of crisis has been remarkable. In the case of the tourism sector, the need for such extraordinary measures is evidence of the decent work deficits in the sector prior to the pandemic.¹⁰⁹ Considerable progress was made in extending social protection in the years preceding the COVID-19 crisis in many countries, which strived to provide access to health care and at least basic income security, particularly in relation to old age, unemployment, sickness, disability, work injury, maternity or loss of a main income earner, as well as for families with children. However, many countries still face challenges in guaranteeing the human right to social security for large segments of their populations. The ILO estimates that more than 4 billion people around the world still remain entirely unprotected.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ United Nations, *Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights*, 2011.

¹⁰⁸ See ILO, *Resolution and conclusions concerning small and medium-sized enterprises and decent and productive employment creation*, International Labour Conference, 104th Session, 2015.

¹⁰⁹ ILO, *Work in the time of COVID: Report of the Director-General*, ILC.109/Report I(B), 2021.

¹¹⁰ ILO, *World Social Protection Report 2020–22: Social Protection at the Crossroads – in Pursuit of a Better Future*, 2021, 19.

- 74.** Deficits in social protection are particularly pronounced in the tourism sector, in which due to short tenures, short contribution periods or low earnings, workers' social security coverage and entitlements are often limited – as is frequently the case for temporary, part-time and self-employed workers – or are non-existent in the case of those operating under informal work arrangements. This is especially true for women, who represent an important part of the sector's workforce but are more likely to work on a temporary or part-time basis, earn comparatively less and often have inadequate social protection coverage. This in turn results in such workers' limited access to health care and inadequate levels of social security benefits, including when they reach old age, requiring their pensions to be complemented by or provided by tax-financed social assistance measures. As a result of typically low wages, informal workers' benefit levels and savings may also be low. The COVID-19 crisis has also demonstrated the importance of extending the scope of social protection systems to adequately cover workers in all types of employment, including part-time, temporary and self-employment, while at the same time implementing policies aimed at formalizing workers in the sector. It has also highlighted the importance of establishing national social protection floors and providing basic social security guarantees for all persons throughout their life cycle in order to ensure that every human is able to enjoy a life in health and dignity.¹¹¹
- 75.** The pandemic has exposed deep-seated inequalities and gaps in the coverage, comprehensiveness, sustainability and adequacy of social protection across all countries. Throughout the pandemic, job losses have fallen disproportionately in the tourism sector. Workers in the sector who are not protected by social security, including informal workers, have been particularly hard hit, with the temporary emergency social protection measures taken during the pandemic only marginally providing them with basic income security and access to essential medical care. Small island developing States and developing countries whose economies depend on tourism, in particular their workers, have been severely affected by the crisis, exacerbating the existing social inequalities between countries.¹¹²
- 76.** The tourism sector should pursue policies to ensure that all workers enjoy decent working conditions, with adequate and comprehensive social protection. The pandemic has provided an opportunity to recognize the importance of building universal and rights-based social protection systems that guaranteeing workers in the tourism sector with access to comprehensive, adequate and sustainable protection over their life cycles, in line with ILO standards.¹¹³ As a core element of comprehensive formalization strategies, social protection will help cushion workers in the tourism sector from future crises and give enterprises and workers the security to ensure a just transition to an inclusive, resilient and sustainable future of work in the sector.
- 77.** The ILO guidelines on decent work and socially responsible tourism provide guidance on strengthening social protection for workers in the tourism sector. They note that social security policies should be gender-sensitive; address both formal and informal economies; link with policies to promote economic activity and formal employment; and seek to ensure social protection coverage for all workers in tourism. Social security benefits and conditions that meet international social security standards, in particular the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102), and the Social Protection Floors Recommendation,

¹¹¹ ILO, [Resolution and conclusions of the recurrent discussion on social protection \(social security\)](#), International Labour Conference, 109th Session, 2021.

¹¹² ILO, *World Social Protection Report 2020–22*.

¹¹³ ILO, [Conclusions concerning the second recurrent discussion on social protection \(social security\)](#), para. 13(d).

2012 (No. 202), can help ensure that all workers in the tourism sector have access to social security guarantees and benefits that guarantee them a life in dignity.

Occupational Safety and Health

- 78.** Occupational risks and hazards have serious negative effects on tourism workers, their families and societies at large and negatively impact productivity and competitiveness in the sector. Risks and hazards in the tourism industry include fatigue and injuries stemming from physically demanding work; work-related accidents and injuries; psychological risks; and chemical and biological risks.¹¹⁴ OSH management systems at all workplaces are essential for the protection of workers, the continual improvement of the working environment and the adoption of preventive measures against risks and hazards.
- 79.** The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on OSH at work, exposing workers to the risk of infection at work. Indoor workplaces, in which workers spend time in close proximity to one another and/or the general public, are particularly hazardous.¹¹⁵ The pandemic has underscored the centrality of OSH for the tourism sector, not only for workers but also to give tourists the confidence to travel and ensure a full and sustainable recovery for the sector. Given the labour-intensive and often public-facing nature of work in the tourism industry, new OSH measures have been necessary to protect both workers and the public from the risk of infection. Regardless of whether they have returned to the workplace or have worked from home, workers have been confronted with new OSH risks and hazards, in addition to those already faced by workers in the sector.
- 80.** It is important that employers and workers and their representatives undertake regular risk assessments in each workplace to identify the hazards posed by the presence or potential presence of SARS-COV-2 in the environment and to monitor the effectiveness of measures taken to minimize the risk of exposure to the COVID-19 virus. Good ventilation, mask-wearing, physical distancing, hand hygiene, regular cleaning and vaccination programmes are key to ensuring worker and guest safety. In addition, regular testing, contact-tracing and income protection for those workers who are sick or required to isolate are all essential OSH measures.¹¹⁶
- 81.** For all workers, the OSH threat of the COVID-19 pandemic has extended beyond the risk of catching the virus itself. Mitigation measures to stop the spread of the virus, including working from home, administrative and engineering controls and, where available, increased use of PPE, can protect workers from the risk of infection. However, in many cases these measures have created new OSH risks, including chemical, ergonomic and psychosocial hazards. Increased stress has affected many workers' mental health and well-being and has in some cases meant delays in treatment for other serious health conditions. Teleworking has been used in a limited number of cases, although the tourism sector is typically less amenable to telework. Where it has been used, including for instance in managerial roles, telework has been important in protecting workers from the virus, but for those that have stayed home it has blurred the lines between work and private life. This has caused many workers additional stress, increasing the burden of family responsibilities and causing issues for employers in sustaining worker morale (with 65 per cent of enterprises

¹¹⁴ ILO, *ILO Guidelines on Decent Work and Socially Responsible Tourism*.

¹¹⁵ ILO, *Anticipate, Prepare and Respond to Crises: Invest now in Resilient Occupational Safety and Health Systems*, 2021.

¹¹⁶ IUF, *Guide to COVID-19 Safety in Hotels*, forthcoming.

surveyed by the ILO and the G20 OSH Network reporting difficulties in this regard).¹¹⁷ Progress in vaccination has emerged as a critical factor for labour market recovery, which could help protect tourism workers' safety and health as they return to work and reduce workplace closures and restrictions, but such progress is currently uneven globally, in particular with respect to vaccine distribution, which has often resulted in slow progress in low- and middle-income countries.¹¹⁸

- 82.** Implementing and communicating appropriate OSH protocols is particularly important for the tourism industry as it is key to rebuilding confidence in the industry and safeguarding the safety and health of workers, tourists and host communities. The IUF, a global federation of trade unions with members in a variety of industries, including tourism, has called for the protection of hotel workers in the fight to contain the spread of the COVID-19 virus. These requests include providing workers with a full range of informational and preventive tools, adapting shifts, breaks and work organization plans in order to minimize risks and respecting workers' rights to refuse to work under unsafe conditions.¹¹⁹ The IUF has also called on governments and employers to reinforce OSH measures for tourism workers, with workers' organizations involved in policy development and implementation related to health and safety measures, as well as income security measures, including measures on health care and sick leave.¹²⁰
- 83.** The tourism industry has responded by adopting new health and safety measures in the workplace to protect workers, ranging from the provision of PPE, including gloves and masks, to the use of contactless forms of service in order to maintain social distancing. Industry organizations have published new work and research on OSH in the sector, such as the World Travel and Tourism Council's safety protocols for the tourism sector, as well as guides on returning to the workplace and working from home in the tourism sector that were prepared in partnership with the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health.¹²¹ Private compliance initiatives have been launched by various industry stakeholders in order to promote safety and health in the tourism sector. Such efforts, while they cannot replace the effectiveness of public governance systems, can support and/or supplement them. For instance, certification labels have been launched, such as the "Clean and safe" label in Switzerland, which informs customers that tourism providers have taken adequate steps to comply with necessary safety regulations.¹²² Meanwhile, MSMEs, particularly those operating informally in the sector, have often found it hard to meet official OSH requirements because many lacked the resources to adapt to the threats posed by the pandemic. Many workers lacked sufficient OSH protection during the COVID-19 pandemic, including insufficient access to PPE, hygiene stations and other infection reduction strategies.¹²³ Implementing OSH measures at the level of MSMEs remains an important challenge.
- 84.** The ILO's prevention and control checklist for the COVID-19 pandemic and related accommodation and food service activities provides a practical and participatory tool to

¹¹⁷ ILO, *Anticipate, Prepare and Respond to Crises*.

¹¹⁸ ILO, *ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the World of Work. Eighth Edition*.

¹¹⁹ IUF, "IUF COVID-19 Demands: Hotels", 2020.

¹²⁰ See IUF, draft item 3, "Proposals and discussion of demands for governments and employers", Extraordinary HRCT Trade Group Board Meeting on COVID-19, 14 May 2020.

¹²¹ See WTTC, "Safe Travels: Global Protocols & Stamp for the New Normal".

¹²² See Switzerland, Switzerland Tourism, "New Clean and Safe Label".

¹²³ ILO, *Anticipate, Prepare and Respond to Crises*.

help implement and continuously improve practical action to prevent and mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 virus in accommodation and food service activities. It provides guidance on implementing general measures for protecting all workers and customers (such as sanitation measures; provision of PPE, including gloves and masks; physical distancing; and contact-tracing); planning resources, communication and management systems to prevent and reduce the risk of exposure to the COVID-19 virus (including for consultation, risk assessment, communication and training); and additional measures aimed at protecting workers in selected occupations and tasks (such as reception and concierge staff, restaurants, dining rooms and bar staff, and cleaning and housekeeping staff). Prevention and control measures are essential for the protection of workers and the reopening and continued operation of the tourism industry.¹²⁴

- 85.** As the crisis continues and the industry strives for a recovery with full and productive employment, coordinated responses from the health and labour sectors are crucial to creating enabling environments in which workers and people can work and feel safe. These policies and measures are essential for the reopening of economies and tourism destinations and ensuring a path to sustainable and resilient growth and recovery in the tourism sector.¹²⁵ Investing in and putting into place sound and resilient OSH systems, in consultation with social partners, will not only help protect workers now and support a faster recovery from the current crisis, while avoiding contagion, but will also help minimize the risks to workers in the event of future crises. With trends such as climate change increasing, along with the risk of further global health emergencies, resilient OSH systems could improve the sustainability of the tourism sector and protect businesses and workers in the future. Vaccination could also be a critical factor for the recovery of labour markets, protecting the safety and health of tourism workers and facilitating less stringent workplace restrictions. Measures to address global inequality in access to vaccinations could bring rapid and substantial benefits to the global labour market, helping to build a fairer and more inclusive recovery and helping work in the tourism sector and tourism activity to recover.¹²⁶
- 86.** International labour standards offer specific guidance on how to respond to these challenges and seize the opportunities for more resilient OSH systems. The Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), the Occupational Health Services Convention, 1985 (No. 161), the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187) and their corresponding Recommendations are among the ILO instruments that can be adapted to situations related to the COVID-19 pandemic and the response thereto of the tourism sector.¹²⁷ The ILO guidelines on decent work and socially responsible tourism provide guidance to effectively address OSH challenges and prioritizes actions to be implemented by tourism employers in collaboration with workers and their representatives, in accordance with Convention No. 155, with respect to developing workplace OSH policies and management systems; conducting workplace risk assessments on a regular basis to identify potential hazards and define the necessary risk management practices; and implementing an integrated approach to OSH in order to reduce the incidence of injuries, illnesses, fatalities, accidents and calamities.

¹²⁴ ILO, *COVID-19 & Accommodation and Food Service Activities: Prevention and Control Checklist*, 2020.

¹²⁵ ILO, *A 10-step Tool for a Safe and Healthy Return to Work in Times of COVID-19*, 2021.

¹²⁶ ILO, *ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the World of Work. Eighth Edition*.

¹²⁷ See also ILO, *COVID-19 & Accommodation and Food Service Activities*.

Conditions of work and work organization

- 87.** Certain forms of work, such as shift and night work, seasonality and temporary or part-time employment, including an increasing rate of outsourcing and subcontracting, are frequent in tourism. These forms of work, if well-designed and regulated, can offer a stepping stone to employment, especially for workers who face higher barriers on the labour market, such as young, low-skilled and migrant workers, and can provide workers with options for improving their work–life balance and addressing issues such as childcare and domestic care crises.¹²⁸ These types of work, however, may give rise to decent work deficits when, among other reasons, they are not regulated well, are not used for the specific legal purpose they are intended for but to circumvent the employer’s legal and contractual obligations, or do not afford adequate labour and social protection. This can contribute to undercutting fair competition and deepening inequalities in the labour market.¹²⁹ The regulation of hours of work for all workers, including the establishment of a maximum working day and week, regardless of the type of employment relationship, is essential for tourism workers’ health, workplace safety, work–life balance and sustainable enterprise productivity.¹³⁰ The post-crisis recovery offers an opportunity to address legislative and implementation gaps in order to protect workers and promote decent jobs in the tourism industry.
- 88.** Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, many workers have had to deal with new working arrangements due to workplace closures, such as teleworking and other forms of remote-work. Those who have been unable to work remotely – most of the workers in the tourism sector – have typically felt the effects of the crisis even more acutely.¹³¹ The closures of tourism businesses meant that millions of the sector’s workers were left unemployed and many more were underemployed, particularly those occupying lower-paying jobs and working in the informal economy. In high-income countries, some tourism workers were eligible for furlough and job retention schemes, although these created their own challenges for the sectors’ businesses and workers.
- 89.** With schools and childcare centres disrupted, the burden of domestic and caregiving responsibilities has increased and caused many women to exit the workforce entirely.¹³² The dual crises of job loss and caregiving responsibilities combine to jeopardize women’s financial security, including in retirement, exacerbating the risk of the feminization of poverty in old age.¹³³ The Employment Relationship Recommendation, 2006 (No. 198), calls on Members to “take special account in national policy to address the gender dimension in that women workers predominate in certain occupations and sectors where there is a high proportion of disguised employment relationships, or where there is a lack of clarity of an employment relationship” (Paragraph 6(a)).

¹²⁸ ILO, *ILO Guidelines on Decent Work and Socially Responsible Tourism*.

¹²⁹ ILO, *Reports of the General Discussion Working Party: Inequalities and the World of Work – Proposed Resolution and Conclusions submitted to the Conference for Adoption*, ILC.109/Record No. 9A(Rev.1), 2021, 5.

¹³⁰ ILO, *ILO Guidelines on Decent Work and Socially Responsible Tourism*.

¹³¹ ILO, *World Social Protection Report 2020–22*, 67.

¹³² ILO, Resolution concerning a global call to action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient.

¹³³ See ILO, *Women in Non-standard Employment*, Inwork Issue Brief No. 9, 2017.

Social dialogue and tripartism

90. Social dialogue, based on respect for freedom of association and the effective recognition of trade unions and the right to collective bargaining, has a crucial role to play in designing policies to promote social justice and support government measures to protect jobs, incomes and enterprises in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In times of crisis, as in times of prosperity, social dialogue can contribute to creating a convergence among governments, employers and workers and building trust in and ownership of new policies.
91. Recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic calls for social dialogue in a number of key areas and allows for dynamic responses to the ever-changing demands of the crisis. Issues that actors and institutions of social dialogue in the tourism sector may place high on their agenda in the recovery include employment-protection measures supporting business, with an emphasis on public investment in key sectors and digitization of the economy; OSH, skills, teleworking and other forms of remote-work policies; social protection measures; and the greening of the sector.¹³⁴
92. Because of the nature of the tourism sector as an interface between service providers and customers, establishing good workplace management-labour relations is of critical importance and can positively impact service quality and the retention of staff as the sector recovers from the pandemic. Social dialogue has a key role to play in the response to and recovery from the crisis. For instance, in 2021 social partners in the European Union issued a call for the establishment of a hospitality task force across EU institutions in order to discuss the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on business and jobs and deliver a road map for the recovery of the hospitality sector and its value chain.¹³⁵ Social dialogue can also seek ways of increasing productivity in tourism enterprises while ensuring that sector workers benefit from adequate working conditions as the sector recovers.
93. Nevertheless, the tourism sector remains a sector with low union density due to, inter alia, the prevalence of MSMEs, the young workforce and high staff turnover. A large percentage of its workers also work in the informal economy, the vast majority of whom remain without a collective and representative voice.¹³⁶
94. The ILO's 2021 global call to action underscores the role of social dialogue, in particular the importance of building on the role that social dialogue has played in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes promoting social dialogue to support delivery of the outcomes set out in the global call to action and strengthening the capacity of public administrations and of employers' and workers' organizations to participate in such dialogue.¹³⁷ The ILO guidelines on decent work and socially responsible tourism provide additional sector specific guidance to constituents in promoting effective social dialogue in the tourism sector.

¹³⁴ ILO, *Social Dialogue One Year after the Outbreak of COVID-19 Pandemic: Spotlight on Outcomes*, Research Brief, 2021.

¹³⁵ EFFAT et al., "Working Together for a Quick, Safe & Sustainable Recovery of Europe's Hospitality Sector", 2021.

¹³⁶ ILO, *ILO Guidelines on Decent Work and Socially Responsible Tourism*, 33.

¹³⁷ ILO, Resolution concerning a global call to action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient.

International labour standards and fundamental principles and rights at work

95. Throughout the tourism sector's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond, international labour standards will provide a tried and tested normative foundation to guide Member States in building back better. The ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work reaffirms that the setting, promotion, ratification and supervision of international labour standards is of fundamental importance to the ILO and requires the Organization to have and promote a clear, robust, up-to-date body of international labour standards and to further enhance transparency.
96. Governments have the duty to adopt, implement and effectively enforce national laws and regulations to ensure that fundamental principles and rights at work and ratified ILO Conventions apply to all workers in the tourism sector, taking into account their obligations under other international labour standards. Fundamental principles and rights at work should be guaranteed to all workers regardless of their employment relationship, including workers in insecure forms of work in the formal and informal economy.
97. In accordance with the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up (1998), all ILO Member States have an obligation to respect, promote and realize the fundamental principles and rights at work concerning child labour and forced labour, freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining and non-discrimination.

Promoting equality and non-discrimination

98. Hard-won gains in equality and non-discrimination achieved before the COVID-19 pandemic are under threat. The crisis has exposed and exacerbated persistent and pervasive gender inequalities in the tourism sector and the wider world of work, as well as discrimination against and marginalization of groups of workers who are often in vulnerable situations, including young workers, migrant workers, indigenous and tribal peoples, workers with disabilities and those living with HIV/AIDS. The crisis has had severe impacts on persons in vulnerable situations for several reasons, including that they are more likely to be concentrated in poorly remunerated jobs in the economic sectors that are most affected by the pandemic, such as the tourism sector. They are also more likely to be in informal work arrangements and are therefore extremely vulnerable to economic shocks. Where individuals belong to more than one disadvantaged group, multiple and intersectional forms of discrimination compound and exacerbate existing inequalities.¹³⁸
99. Despite the general acceptance of the principles of equality, non-discrimination and equal remuneration for women and men for work of equal value and the high rates of ratification of the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111) and the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), tourism workers, particularly groups vulnerable to discrimination, including migrant workers, are not always effectively protected under the relevant national legislation. Creating and promoting employment opportunities for these groups of workers are key to ensuring social inclusion. As previously stated, Convention No. 190 and Recommendation No. 206 provide guidance to seize the opportunity for a recovery built on equality and non-discrimination. The Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169) promotes the recognition and protection of

¹³⁸ ILO, *Addendum 2020 to the General Survey*, 111.

indigenous and tribal peoples' integrity, cultures and identities. Governments should ensure that the rights and cultures of indigenous peoples are safeguarded in the development and recovery of the tourism sector.¹³⁹ In addition, as previously stated, Convention No. 190 and Recommendation No. 206 provide guidance on measures to be taken to eliminate violence and harassment at work.

- 100.** According to the ILO guidelines on decent work and socially responsible tourism, policies to promote equality and non-discrimination in the tourism sector should aim at eliminating violence and harassment at work; ensuring equality of opportunity and treatment of workers; the establishment and proper functioning of childcare and family services and facilities; awareness-raising of the benefits of a diverse and inclusive workforce for business adaptability, growth and sustainability; and addressing barriers to groups that are vulnerable to discrimination, including by providing equal access to education and training programmes, employment recruitment processes and financial assistance.

Eliminating forced and child labour

- 101.** Workers in the tourism sector who have been left without incomes or savings because of the pandemic may be at increased risk of being drawn into forced labour. At the same time, the rise in socio-economic vulnerabilities and the increasing opportunity costs of education for many of the world's poorest people has fuelled concerns that families will turn to child labour in order to make ends meet.¹⁴⁰
- 102.** Although it is widely recognized that tourism is not the cause of human rights violations, parallel activities that are unduly associated with tourism can aggravate the problem when parts of the tourism infrastructure, such as transport networks and accommodation facilities, are exploited for criminal purposes. It has been estimated that 2 million children in the world are victims of commercial sexual exploitation, much of which is linked with parallel activities that are unduly associated with tourism.¹⁴¹ There is a risk that poverty associated with the crisis could exacerbate these issues.
- 103.** The COVID-19 pandemic threatens to reverse a generation of progress achieved against child labour and forced labour. The ILO fundamental principles and rights at work on the abolition of child labour and the elimination of forced or compulsory labour are therefore more important to the tourism sector than ever. These rights constitute the foundation for building back better and striving for a more just world of work in the aftermath of the pandemic. Despite the grave challenges faced by the groups of workers that are most vulnerable to the crisis, the rebuilding process provides Member States with a unique opportunity to eliminate the worst forms of labour exploitation, including those that may be linked to activities that are parallel to tourism, and to build a fairer, more equitable and more sustainable future for all.¹⁴²
- 104.** The Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and the universally ratified Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), require immediate action against the worst forms of child labour, including slavery and drug trafficking. Where not ratified, Member States should consider the possibility of ratifying Convention No. 138, the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) and its Protocol of 2014, and the Abolition of Forced Labour

¹³⁹ ILO, *ILO Guidelines on Decent Work and Socially Responsible Tourism*, 32.

¹⁴⁰ ILO, *Issue Paper on COVID-19 and Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work*, 2020.

¹⁴¹ ILO, *ILO Guidelines on Decent Work and Socially Responsible Tourism*, 33.

¹⁴² ILO, *Issue Paper on COVID-19 and Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work*.

Convention, 1957 (No. 105).¹⁴³ The ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work and SDG target 8.7 give expression to the universal commitment to eradicate forced labour and child labour and to end modern slavery and human trafficking.

- 105.** It is important to enact national laws and regulations to protect persons, in particular migrant workers, from abusive and fraudulent practices during recruitment processes, in keeping with international labour standards and the ILO principles and operational guidelines for fair recruitment. International labour standards on migration, including the Migration for Employment Convention (Revised) (No. 97) and Recommendation (No. 86), 1949, as well as the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention (No. 143) and Recommendation (No. 151), 1975, provide guidance in this respect.

Ensuring freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining

- 106.** Throughout the pandemic, the exercise of the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining, in accordance with the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), have proved vital to building effective, consensus-based responses to the crisis. These responses include measures implemented in the tourism sector in order to protect workers in the workplace at the outset of the crisis and to facilitate the recovery process.¹⁴⁴ Workplace cooperation and other forms of social dialogue have also played an important role in addressing some of the challenges faced by the sector. The pandemic has reinvigorated social dialogue, including collective bargaining, as employers and workers have come together to find collective solution to these challenges.
- 107.** However, in certain respects the COVID-19 crisis has added to the challenge of ensuring the recognition of the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining. In some contexts, labour rights, including the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining, have come under pressure as part of broader government responses to the crisis.¹⁴⁵ In some cases, the COVID-19 crisis may have been used to suppress trade union rights, including by failing to ensure the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining. The implementation of collective bargaining systems and measures to ensure equal pay for work of equal value and pay transparency, among other measures, including in supply chains, are key for the fair distribution of economic progress in the tourism sector and help to establish a virtuous relationship between wage and productivity growth.¹⁴⁶
- 108.** Freedom of association and collective bargaining are indispensable and necessary pathways towards an inclusive, safe, resilient, fair, sustainable and human-centred recovery in the tourism sector. Collective bargaining can play an important role in enhancing tourism enterprises' performance, managing change and building industrial relations. However, the tourism sector is characterized by diversity and fragmentation, informality and complex

¹⁴³ ILO, *Giving Globalization a Human Face: General Survey on the Fundamental Conventions concerning Rights at Work in Light of the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, 2008*, Report of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, ILC.101/III/1B, 2012, para. 253.

¹⁴⁴ See for example ILO, *The Impact of COVID-19 on the Tourism Sector*, ILO Sectoral Brief.

¹⁴⁵ ILO, *Issue Paper on COVID-19 and Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work*.

¹⁴⁶ ILC.109/Record No. 9A(Rev.1), 7; and ILO, *ILO Guidelines on Decent Work and Socially Responsible Tourism*, 47.

employment relationships, including a high level of subcontracting and outsourcing. While these may be important for the functioning of the sector, they may have implications for workers' freedom of association and right to bargain collectively. According to the ILO guidelines on decent work and socially responsible tourism, particular attention needs to be paid to developing or adapting national policies and legislation in order to ensure freedom of association and the right to bargain collectively without discrimination; establishing adequate machinery for the implementation of such policies and legislation, including by establishing responsible authorities and labour inspectors; protecting tourism workers against dismissal in retaliation for activities in workers' organizations; and establishing social dialogue structures at the national and workplaces level for effective collective bargaining and worker consultation.

▶ Megatrends and drivers of change: The tourism sector at a turning point

Globalization and tourism

- 109.** Globalization and the falling cost of travel have contributed to an increase in the global mobility of people, allowing a growing number of the world's population to travel both domestically and internationally. Many countries, regions and communities have benefited as the recipients of tourism in recent decades, providing economic stimulus and driving the creation of new jobs and enterprises across the tourism value chain. In the face of globalization, tourist destinations have sought to develop and protect their cultural assets in order to create local distinctiveness and competitive advantage.¹⁴⁷ Nevertheless, increased globalization and tourism has also had negative effects on tourist destinations, including the uniformization of tourism products and culture erosion in destinations that adapt to foreign traditions; the impact of tourism on local infrastructure; and the environmental effects of increased travel.¹⁴⁸
- 110.** Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, experts predicted that continued globalization would drive strong growth in the tourism sector, including significant growth in international tourism.¹⁴⁹ In 2011, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) forecast that annual international tourism arrivals would reach 1.4 billion by 2020 and 1.8 billion by 2030, with the strongest growth in arrivals expected in the Asia and the Pacific region¹⁵⁰ and most of the growth in outbound travellers in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and the Middle East (figure 7).¹⁵¹ By 2019, international arrivals had already surpassed those expectations, reaching almost 1.46 billion. However, during the pandemic the number of arrivals collapsed to pre-1990 levels of just 381 million – a far worse decline than the temporary declines following the 2003 SARS epidemic or the 2008–09 global financial crisis. It is expected to take between 2.5 and 4 years for international tourism to return to pre-2019 levels. However, following the rebound in economic activity, the sector is expected to revert to the trajectory of pre-pandemic forecasts.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁷ OECD, *The Impact of Culture on Tourism*, 2009.

¹⁴⁸ ILO, *Developments and Challenges in the Hospitality and Tourism Sector*; and Lena Linetti, "The Effect of Globalization on the Tourism Industry", 2019.

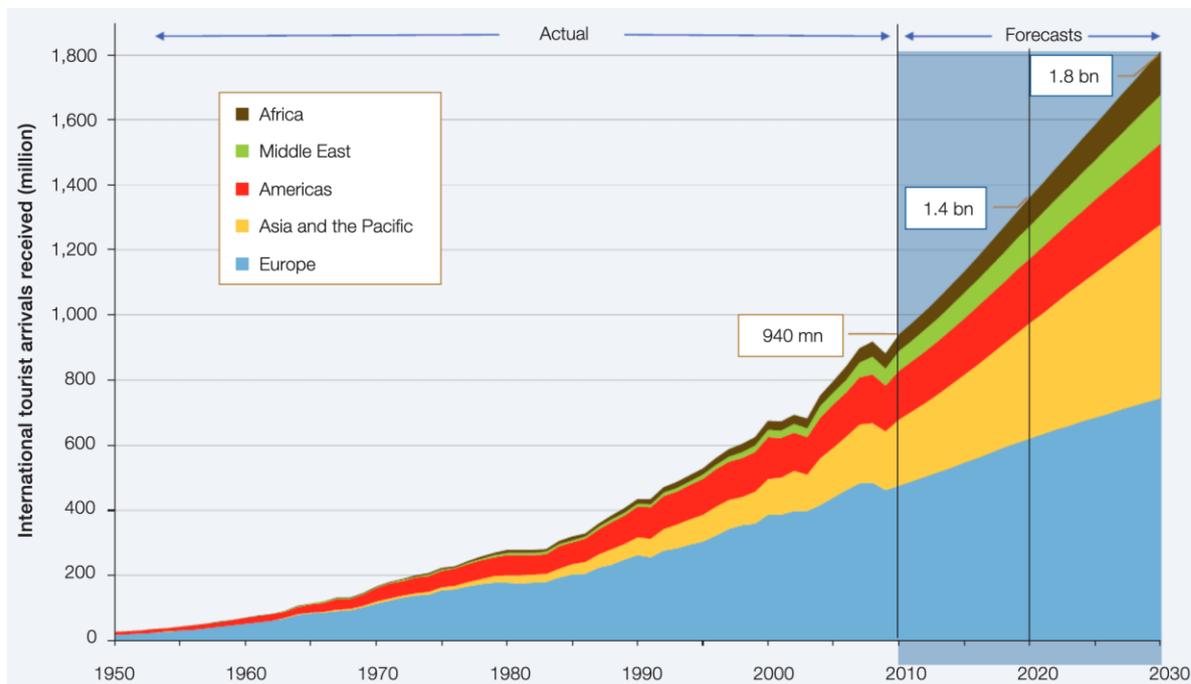
¹⁴⁹ OECD, *OECD Tourism Trends and Policies 2020*.

¹⁵⁰ UNWTO, *Tourism Highlights: 2017 Edition*, 2017, 14.

¹⁵¹ World Economic Forum, "The New Travel Boom: Why Your Next Holiday Won't Be Where You Expect", 2017.

¹⁵² UNWTO, "Impact Assessment of the COVID-19 Outbreak on International Tourism", December 2020.

► **Figure 7. International tourist arrivals, actual and forecast, 1950–2030**



Source: UNWTO, *Tourism Highlights: 2017 Edition*, 2017.

111. Globalization is also having an impact on labour migration among tourism workers, enabling employers to fill important skills shortages through skills mobility and creating an important source of work for domestic and international migrants seeking employment opportunities away from their home communities, both temporary and permanent. There is typically a divide in the employment opportunities available to migrants, with those from poorer countries typically working in lower-skilled, low-paid positions and those from developed countries more likely to be employed in higher-skilled, managerial and technical positions. Consequently, the experience of migrant workers varies greatly across the industry.¹⁵³ Nevertheless, migrant workers are among the groups of workers in the industry most likely to find themselves vulnerable to informal employment and in less safe and less favourable working environments than other workers. As the industry recovers from the COVID-19 crisis and workers again seek to migrate or remigrate to work in the tourism industry, policies are needed to ensure that labour migration governance systems are safer, fairer and more sustainable and ensure decent working conditions for the industry’s workers.

Technological advances and digitalization

112. The tourism sector has been at the forefront of the digital revolution. Tourism was an early adopter of new technologies and platforms, with hotels, travel and tourism services among the first to embrace online booking and the sharing economy at a global scale. The use of digitalization, including artificial intelligence (AI), augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR), blockchain technology, the internet of things and location-based services, are continuing to revolutionize the industry. Digitalization provides the potential to offer

¹⁵³ Tom Baum, *Migrant Workers in the International Hotel Industry*, International Migration Paper No. 112 (ILO, 2012), v.

products and services that are more diverse, efficient and environmentally and socially sustainable (see box below).¹⁵⁴ Digitalization has prompted a shift in the industry, from a sector that is traditionally hospitality focused to one that provides highly personalized services, often through increasingly high-tech digital platforms and embedded systems and tools.¹⁵⁵ Nevertheless, the majority of tourism businesses have not yet been able to capture the strong productivity and growth potential of digital technologies.¹⁵⁶

► Established and emerging digital technologies most likely to impact jobs and skills in the tourism industry

- **Digital platforms:** Online travel agencies (OTAs) and platforms allow consumers and businesses to connect and interact with each other, with ICT, big data and AI combining in real time to provide enhanced services. The success of Airbnb throughout the late 2000s and 2010s heralded the rise of the sharing economy model, which is forecast to expand more in tourism than in any other sector. It is estimated that US\$100 billion of produced value in tourism will be transferred from traditional enterprises to OTAs and sharing platforms.
- **AI and big data:** AI and big data are playing a key role in personalizing the experience of tourism, providing opportunities to customize the choice of destinations, hotels, restaurants, facilities and other services. Recommender systems in mobile devices can offer tourists recommendations relevant to their current position and previous choices.
- **Service robots:** Service robots and passenger assistance robots can help reduce costs and provide additional customer service, potentially reducing waiting times. In some countries, such as Japan, service robots have demonstrated increased potential, for example in hotel room service and automatic restaurants. However, in many countries there remains a strong preference for face-to-face hospitality and a resistance to service robots from both consumers and producers.
- **Virtual reality:** VR and AR have the potential to change and enhance the way consumers experience tourism. For instance, VR has the potential to be applied to the booking stage to help consumers experience tourist destinations in advance of their travels; to be used to enhance the way tour guides inform their customers; or to be added to hotel rooms to provide new experiences to guests. In some instances it may replace the in-person travel experience, allowing people to virtually experience tourist attractions without physically being present.

Source: OECD, "Preparing the Tourism Workforce for the Digital Future", 2021.

113. The COVID-19 crisis has accelerated the rate of technological advancement, digital transformation and automation in the tourism sector. Digital tools have been used to help safely resume service during the pandemic. Quick response codes and online ordering have been used to help maintain physical distancing and provide for contactless service at bars and restaurants, while other customer-facing businesses have also moved to contactless payment methods. New digital registration processes have been established to comply with government vaccination and testing regulations. Despite the importance placed on the personal nature of customer care in the tourism industry, it is expected that many digital and online service measures will endure past the pandemic. While most of the changes to service in the sector rely on established technologies, there has been growing interest in the application of new and emerging technologies, such as virtual tourism that relies on VR

¹⁵⁴ UNWTO, "Digital Transformation".

¹⁵⁵ OECD, "Preparing the Tourism Workforce for the Digital Future", *OECD Tourism Papers No. 2021/02*, 2021, 11–12.

¹⁵⁶ OECD, *OECD Tourism Trends and Policies 2020*.

and AR devices.¹⁵⁷ Technology will be crucial to the recovery of the sector, with the potential to promote increased productivity and profitability. AI and big data can help manage flows of tourism and monitor and protect communities and resources as they recover and grow sustainably. The recovery of tourism enterprises and destinations will be shaped by their ability to capture the potential of technology to help them respond to tastes and trends with more flexibility; create highly personalized experiences; use digital platforms to extend their reach to customers; and implement health protocols as they continue to evolve. There is an opportunity to include a special focus on technology in recovery packages, particularly in terms of advancing the digitalization of MSMEs. For instance, programmes in the Netherlands and Portugal have been launched to provide funding to promote innovation among start-ups, including in the tourism sector.¹⁵⁸

- 114.** While the digitalization of tourism can increase productivity and efficiency and improve the provision of services, it is changing the way that work, workplaces and businesses are organized and creating new opportunities and challenges in terms of jobs and skills. This causes gaps in the supply of and demand for skills, particularly where there is a need for low- and medium-skilled jobs to combine digital skills and other complementary skills with existing skill sets. At the same time, the use of information and communications technology and digital skills increasingly requires highly skilled workers who are able to operate these systems, while a number of new jobs and occupations are emerging.¹⁵⁹ The requirement for social distancing has increased the demand for automated processes and web-based tools and the potential for automation and robotization of jobs also exists in the industry. Research conducted by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) assessed the impact of both the COVID-19 pandemic and automation on the tourism industry, finding that most jobs in tourism are highly affected by the pandemic, while many tasks within these jobs have the potential for automation and that the pandemic is likely to accelerate this process. Nevertheless, research shows that much of the automation of tasks will result in job transformation, requiring new skills rather than job losses, and that new jobs will be created by the digitalization of the industry.¹⁶⁰
- 115.** As jobs and occupations are shaped by digitalization, addressing the gaps in the supply and demand of digital skills is of key importance. A focus on skills and lifelong learning for workers is essential to ensuring a human-centred future of work and an inclusive, resilient and sustainable COVID-19 crisis recovery. Skills shortages and skills gaps are likely to create frictions in the labour market for workers and to put pressure on enterprises that lack the skilled workers necessary for a digital transformation. Addressing the skill gap requires a holistic and comprehensive approach, involving workers, employers and governments. Skills shortages affect tourism companies of all sizes, in particular MSMEs, who may struggle to attract skilled workers or train workers to ensure the necessary skills mix for the future of the sector. This effect is particularly pronounced considering the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the business and profitability of MSMEs in the sector. In addition to skills development and training in digital and complementary skills in the sector, policies that specifically target MSMEs are required to ensure that all firms are able to achieve the benefits of digitalization and to help promote decent jobs, productivity improvement and sustainable development in tourism.

¹⁵⁷ OECD, "Preparing the Tourism Workforce for the Digital Future".

¹⁵⁸ United Nations, *Policy Brief: COVID-19 and Transforming Tourism*.

¹⁵⁹ OECD, "Preparing the Tourism Workforce for the Digital Future".

¹⁶⁰ CEDEFOP, "Skills Developments and Trends in the Tourism Sector".

Demographics: A diverse and multigenerational workforce

- 116.** Global demographic trends – including growing populations, increased life expectancy, ageing populations and urbanization – present new opportunities and challenges for the tourism sector and its workers. As the composition of the population changes, the needs and demands of travellers will evolve, as will the structure and dynamics of the sector’s workforce.
- 117.** According to the United Nations, the world’s population is expected to increase by 2 billion in the next 30 years, reaching 9.7 billion by 2050 and 11 billion by the end of the twenty-first century. More than half of the world’s population growth by 2050 will take place in Africa, the fastest-growing region. Further demographic challenges will be created by lower fertility rates, ageing populations and increased life expectancy, though a demographic dividend will be created in certain countries and regions with younger populations, most notably in Africa.¹⁶¹ In terms of outgoing travellers, this will prompt growth in tourism in all regions, with Africa, Asia and the Pacific and the Middle East leading the way. The strongest growth by region in terms of tourist arrivals is expected to occur in Asia and the Pacific, which is expected to increase by 331 million overall to reach 535 million by 2030 (an increase of almost 5 per cent annually from 2019 levels).¹⁶² Meanwhile, the number of travellers over the age of 60 is forecast to reach 1.7 billion by 2040, an increase of 89 per cent compared to 2015.¹⁶³
- 118.** The continued growth in the number of tourists worldwide will mean new demands for the sector and put additional stress on infrastructure, both for existing and emerging destinations. Ageing populations will drive further demand for the increased accessibility of sites and services, both in terms of physical access and the provision of information.¹⁶⁴ Accessible tourism is already being mainstreamed into tourism interventions in many countries, for example in Belgium, France, Germany, Hungary, Luxembourg, the Republic of Korea, Turkey and the United Kingdom.¹⁶⁵
- 119.** In addition to the need to accommodate ageing populations, emerging generations will become increasingly important in terms of overall tourism spending through 2040. Younger generations bring with them different expectations and demands for the tourism sector. For instance, Millennials make more trips than other generations but also take shorter trips on average and favour “authentic” experiences that veer off the beaten track of traditional tourism. Meanwhile, consumers in emerging economies are becoming increasingly important as the middle classes grow and different cultures place different demands on tourism. Millennials in China, for example, place greater importance on travel than the worldwide average in their age group.¹⁶⁶
- 120.** Consumers are increasingly interested in sustainability, products and services that respect local cultures and protect the environment and biodiversity, creating a demand for a whole range of ecotourism-related services. They are increasingly used to having on-demand access to a range of digital services. The development of domestic, non-traditional and

¹⁶¹ United Nations, “Global Issues: Population”.

¹⁶² UNWTO, *Tourism towards 2030: Global Overview*, 2010, 18.

¹⁶³ OECD, *OECD Tourism Trends and Policies 2020*, 42.

¹⁶⁴ OECD, *OECD Tourism Trends and Policies 2018*, 2018.

¹⁶⁵ OECD, *OECD Tourism Trends and Policies 2020*, 42.

¹⁶⁶ OECD, *OECD Tourism Trends and Policies 2018*, 64–70.

small-scale tourism and ecotourism – as opposed to large-scale, mainstream tourism – is on the rise to meet the demands of emerging groups of consumers. The COVID-19 pandemic has also changed visitor's expectations and travel habits both in the short and long terms. Safety and health concerns relating to travel are more important to travellers¹⁶⁷ and the increasing demand for private travel away from crowds (including private rentals) is expected to continue.¹⁶⁸ A recent World Economic Forum report shows that in the light of the pandemic, health and safety considerations have become a more significant factor than price in determining where consumers choose to stay, which heavily influences the type of destinations they are willing to travel to.¹⁶⁹

- 121.** Emerging demographic trends will have important implications for the workforce of the tourism sector. While tourism typically attracts young workers, demographic changes point towards a future workforce that is increasingly multigenerational and diverse and inclusive of increasing numbers of older workers and persons with disabilities.¹⁷⁰ Ageing workforces, as well as the continually evolving demands of the sector, require an increased focus on lifelong learning and present additional challenges and opportunities for the upskilling and reskilling workers. As the demand for accessible tourism grows, employing and training workers with disabilities can help in the process of designing services in a more inclusive and accessible way. There is also an opportunity to make work in the tourism sector inclusive, sustainable and resilient, with a focus on gender equality and the rights of groups of workers who are more frequently vulnerable to poor working conditions, low pay, discrimination, violence and harassment.

Climate change and just transition to environmental sustainability

- 122.** Sustainable tourism can help to ensure that natural resources are not overexploited in tourist destinations and provide for continued long-term economic activities in local and neighbouring communities. However, without policies and regulation to ensure the sustainability of the sector, tourism can generate increased waste, lead to the overuse of resources and cause environmental degradation and/or social disruption in local communities. Providing for the long-term sustainability of the tourism sector, as an integral part of COVID-19 crisis recovery strategies and beyond, can help lay the foundations to foster a transition to a green economy, drive the creation of green jobs and help address the challenges of climate change.
- 123.** Despite temporary drops in CO₂ emissions in 2020, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has not slowed the advance of climate change.¹⁷¹ This has highlighted the magnitude of the challenge ahead for the world and the tourism sector. With travel and tourism coming to almost a complete standstill in 2020, greenhouse gas emissions fell by an estimated 7 per cent, equal to the annual level of reduction in emissions required to meet the goals set by

¹⁶⁷ World Economic Forum, "COVID-19 Could Change Travel – But Not in the Way You Think", September 2020.

¹⁶⁸ See for instance Hannah Sampson and Natalie B. Compton, "11 Ways the Pandemic will Change Travel", *The Washington Post*, 15 June 2020.

¹⁶⁹ World Economic Forum, "COVID-19 Could Change Travel – But Not in the Way You Think".

¹⁷⁰ See United Nations, *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, A/RES/61/106 (2007), which recognizes "that disability is an evolving concept and that disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others".

¹⁷¹ World Meteorological Organization, *United in Science 2021*, 2021.

the Paris Agreement.¹⁷² The primary contributors of the tourism sector to climate change are transport-related emissions from tourism. In 2016, these accounted for 5 per cent of all man-made CO₂ emissions, while by 2030 the share is expected to increase to 5.3 per cent – representing a 25 per cent increase in CO₂ emissions for the sector.¹⁷³

- 124.** In addition to the impact of the sector on greenhouse gas emissions and climate change, a key concern is the conservation of biodiversity. The conservation of ecosystems, protected areas and species is often dependent on the revenue that tourism provides. While a reduction of tourism during the COVID-19 pandemic has in some instances reduced pressures on the environment, it has resulted in losses of these revenues. There is a need to sustainably support conservation efforts through tourism and to invest in sustainable solutions for tourism that mitigate the impacts of tourism on the environment through, for example, better management of natural resources and promotion of use of sustainable materials.¹⁷⁴
- 125.** As the tourism sector targets a full recovery from the COVID-19 crisis, there is an opportunity to build back better, making the sector inclusive, sustainable and resilient. In order to mitigate against the impacts of climate change, the UNWTO highlights a need to strengthen the measurement and transparency of CO₂ emissions in tourism, decarbonize tourism operations and engage the tourism sector in carbon removal.¹⁷⁵ Sustainable tourism policies focus on the current and future economic, social and environmental impacts of the sector, addressing the impact on tourists, the industry, the environment and local communities. To help promote a more sustainable tourism sector, the OECD has highlighted the need to mainstream policies with a clear sustainability and SDG focus; adopt integrated approaches that focus on the impacts on the industry, communities and its workers; and develop sustainable business models, such as eco-responsible practices for tourism-related transport, accommodation, food and attractions.¹⁷⁶ When promoting sustainable tourism and ecotourism, complementary policies, such as local capacity development and platforms for social dialogue, are essential to ensure that tourism does not result in adverse social impacts on local communities.¹⁷⁷
- 126.** Environmental and climate change, biodiversity loss and the management of waste and chemicals bring opportunities and challenges for ensuring full and productive employment and decent work in the tourism sector, as well as the goals of poverty eradication and the elimination of discrimination and inequalities. Greener, more sustainable models of tourism, such as ecotourism, can help make the sector fairer and more inclusive for its workers and promote the creation of green jobs. Sustainable tourism and ecotourism can help to protect and promote the livelihoods of indigenous and tribal peoples, many of whose traditional livelihoods have come under pressure due to a number of factors, including loss of land, the impacts of conflict and climate change. Tourism and innovation in the green economy are among the new activities that indigenous people engage in; however, their contributions are often not visible since they work primarily in the informal

¹⁷² UNWTO, “Transforming Tourism for Climate Action”; and Pierre Friedlingstein et al., “Global Carbon Budget 2020”, *Earth Syst. Sci. Data* 12, No. 4 (2020): 3269–3340.

¹⁷³ UNWTO and International Transport Forum (ITF), *Transport-related CO₂ Emissions of the Tourism Sector – Modelling Results*, 2019.

¹⁷⁴ UNWTO, *Recommendations for the Transition to a Green Travel and Tourism Economy*, 2021, 10–11.

¹⁷⁵ UNWTO, *Recommendations for the Transition to a Green Travel and Tourism Economy*.

¹⁷⁶ OECD, “Managing Tourism Development for Sustainable and Inclusive Recovery”, 7–8 and 31–32.

¹⁷⁷ ILO, *Jobs in a Net-Zero Emissions Future in Latin America and the Caribbean*, 2020.

economy. Sustainable tourism can both benefit from the contributions and knowledge of indigenous people and provide them with decent work opportunities, while being a catalyst for socio-economic development in poorer areas.¹⁷⁸ Convention No. 169 provides guidance in that regard, including on the consultation and participation of the indigenous peoples concerned.

- 127.** The COVID-19 pandemic has made it evident that a healthy life and workplaces, productive economies and decent work depend on a healthy environment. This is particularly true of the tourism industry, as a sector which both directly impacts and is impacted by the socio-economic and environmental aspects of sustainability and climate change.¹⁷⁹ Climate change will create new OSH concerns for the sector, including for tourism workers who work outdoors, and workers in Southern Asia and Western Africa are among the worst-affected. Environmental hazards that may affect workers safety and health include air pollution; heat risks and heat stress; rising sea levels; desertification and the loss of productive land; extreme weather events; and vector-borne/zoonotic diseases (which may result in future global health emergencies).¹⁸⁰ Targeted policies are needed in the tourism sector to avoid and mitigate against the negative health and safety effects and reduced work capacity associated with climate change.¹⁸¹
- 128.** The rebuilding process following the COVID-19 crisis provides opportunities for developing and implementing integrated policies to address environmental challenges and foster a transition to a green economy in order to promote the creation of more and productive jobs as an integral part of recovery strategies. The ILO *Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all*¹⁸² can facilitate transformative change in all economic sectors through integrated policies based on social dialogue.

¹⁷⁸ ILO, *Decent Work for Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in the Rural Economy: Decent Work in the Rural Economy – Policy Guidance Notes*, 2019, 3–4.

¹⁷⁹ OECD, “Managing Tourism Development for Sustainable and Inclusive Recovery”, 7.

¹⁸⁰ ILO, *Working on a Warmer Planet: The Impact of Heat Stress on Labour Productivity and Decent Work*, 2019.

¹⁸¹ ILO, *Safety and Health at the Heart of the Future of Work: Building on 100 Years of Experience*, 2019, 43–45.

¹⁸² ILO, *Guidelines for a Just Transition towards Environmentally Sustainable Economies and Societies for All*, 2015.