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16th Session

Agenda item: Promoting Responsible Ocean and Coastal Tourism to Safeguard Marine Ecosystems

The United Nations World Tourism Organization,

Acknowledging the importance of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development's Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14, Life Below Water, in guiding Member States to conserve and sustainably use oceans and marine resources,

Draws the attention that cruise ships produce 24% of waste in the ocean, such as water usage, runoff, and other harmful byproducts, according to the International Maritime Organization (IMO),

Underlining the danger that offshore drilling and mining has had to the environment and the dangers it presents to the local tourism industry, as recognized by the International Seabed Authority (ISA), these effects on the marine system are irreversible, according to the United Nations Scientific Advisory Board (UNSAB),

Reaffirming the value of regional cooperation under frameworks such as the Barcelona Convention and the Global Tourism Plastics Initiative (GTPI),

Emphasizing the success made by the association for Integrated Resource Management (AGIR) in implementing locally grounded practices to get real involvement of tourists and the local community,

Noting with deep concern that plastics make up over 85% of marine litter and threaten more than 800 marine species, as reported by UNEP,

Recognizing the growing pressures highlighted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) of mass tourism on coastal and marine ecosystems, including pollution, habitat degradation, and unsustainable infrastructure development,

Emphasizing the need for the expansion of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) for practical solutions that balance environmental protection with sustainable economic development in coastal communities,

Deeply concerned about the impact of climate change depleting landscapes vital to the ecosystem, and the impact of human activity on the acceleration of such depletion, especially in glacial and coastal areas to UNEP,

Alarmed that 50% of the global tourism sector is represented by global and marine tourism, which causes a negative effect on native aquatic species and ecosystems,

Noting with appreciation efforts made by countries to expand Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and promote sustainable tourism through certifications such as the Blue Flag Programme,

1. *Advises* Member States to establish policies and laws following SDG 14 to promote safe recreational oceanic activity;
2. *Requests* Member States to manage cruise ships and tourism vessels to decrease the effect of marine pollution by encouraging Member States to attend conventions to share the knowledge and techniques for the connection between sustainable infrastructure and tourism;
3. *Invites* Member States to preserve the current tourism economies by:
 - a. Advising that seasonal offshore drilling be rotated;
 - b. Diverting Infrastructure into renewable energy sources during the offseason to cut carbon and CO2 emissions, preserve coasts from the risk of oil spills, reduce pollution from routine operations, and reduce habitat destruction;
4. *Supports* all Member States to establish a systematic waste management system in high tourism areas such as:
 - a. Inland Coastal Cooperation Initiative to reduce plastic waste and promote river-based eco-tourism, including the production and establishment of clean water filters throughout waterways leading to large oceanic bodies;
 - b. Sharing techniques and experiences of sustainable infrastructure for marine ecosystems;
5. *Endorses* UN Tourism to launch a program to include locally grounded practices for marine ecosystem conservation such as:
 - a. Holding local tourism community training on data sharing for current issues and finding solutions based on data into practice, such as collaborating with fishing communities to set and manage MPA areas for overfishing issues;

- b. Creating workshops for younger generations to raise awareness that marine ecosystems are damaged by tourism activities, to have fieldwork that explores marine ecosystem environments, and to promote research on marine ecosystem based on their findings;
6. *Calls for* Member States to collaborate in building a tourism model for protecting marine life against plastic pollution by:
- a. Reducing plastic products, especially in plastic bags, by promoting a campaign to use natural products such as paper and cloth as an alternative to plastics widely;
 - b. Implementing a deposit-return system to encourage recycling;
 - c. Promoting the use of existing research solutions for building materials in coastal towns, such as recycled and biodegradable rubber, plastic, and compacted sea and waste materials when building resorts, housing, hotels, piers, and bridges that will not harm the environment in production, use, and repair;
 - d. Adding an agenda topic to the UN Tourism summit that promotes hands-on tourism initiatives to prevent the spread of plastic trash and establish new policies to continue to limit littered plastics;
7. *Emphasizes* that Member States coordinate regional Coastal Conservation Funds through Non-government Organizations (NGOs), supporting marine biodiversity research, beach restoration, and sustainable infrastructure development by:
- a. Utilizing the existing funding from the Green Climate Fund under the UN Tourism to expand knowledge of native species and external predatory species of marine environments, and to coordinate experts from private companies in marine biodiversity to work under this initiative;
 - b. Encouraging Member States to set caps on attendance at beaches for the preservation and restoration of native species, specifically in areas where endangered species are dangerously decreasing;
8. *Proposes* UN Tourism and UNEP collaboration to create a Blue Tourism Certification Scheme to certify tourism operators and facilities that meet sustainability criteria such as waste management, anchoring controls, and community benefit, which:
- a. Encourages the use of Integrated Ocean and Tourism Accounts as a tool for measuring the ecological and economic impact of coastal tourism and informing;
 - b. Establishes legal frameworks that define eligibility, monitoring, and renewal procedures for certified operators and facilities;

- c. Suggests making use of structured Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) progress mandatory for all new coastal tourism developments, including cumulative impact analysis to evaluate and mitigate potential marine habitat harm;
 - d. Supports capacity-building programs for local governments and local tourism businesses to transition toward community-based, aquatic, and oceanic-positive tourism practices;
 - e. Facilitates financial access to eco-certification and green infrastructure support;
9. *Suggests* Member States to promote policies for sustainable tourism and the eco-marine system by:
- a. Supporting developing Member States such as Small Island Developing States (SIDS) by sharing technology and experiences at an annual meeting;
 - b. Cooperating with UNEP and UN Tourism to promote sustainable ocean activities;
 - c. Joining “The Global Fund for Coral Reefs” to support coastal Member States’ tourism and fishing practices, which are relied upon to maintain the economy;
10. *Requests* the launch of a shared Clean Coasts Campaign, involving local authorities, schools, NGOs, and tourism stakeholders to raise awareness on marine litter and promote responsible tourist behavior by:
- a. Proposing a collaboration between UN Tourism and private funds such as the Sustainable Tourism Impact Fund and the Tourism Development Fund to promote initiatives in towns and cities through advertisements for the general public on environmentally damaging items, materials, and practices, such as:
 - i. Single-use plastics (like straws, bags, and bottles);
 - ii. Littering;
 - iii. Certain household cleaners containing harmful chemicals;
 - iv. Products with excessive packaging;
 - v. Batteries, aerosol spray cans, and products containing palm oil;
 - b. Employing members of tourist agencies to teach tourists as part of their expeditions about the dangers of certain practices that are commonly used in non-coastal areas, which might be damaging to local wildlife;

- c. Inviting experts on coastal ecosystems to inform tourist agencies, stakeholders, and hotel agencies on more sustainable business models and practices that would be beneficial to the environment, rather than more corporate business models that are harder to maintain in coastal environments;
- 11. *Recommends* all Member States to provide protected areas to limit the use of resources, maintain the local ecosystem, promote biodiversity, and continue to maintain local economies by:
 - a. Collaborating with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO's) Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (World Heritage Convention 1972) to establish protected lands to:
 - i. Create an environment for protected endangered species;
 - ii. Promote local biodiversity in animal and plant life;
 - b. Encouraging each Member State's National Trust to promote the protection of native species in both plants and animals by eliminating the threat of invasive species by:
 - i. Researching the species that are limiting the biodiversity and prosperity of native flora and fauna;
 - ii. Informing tourists and locals about the invasive species to promote the elimination and removal of such species;
- 12. *Encourages* Member States to adopt or expand MPAs, with zoning systems that allow for low-impact tourism while:
 - a. Conserving sensitive marine habitats that are affected by tourist eco destruction, dealing with economic losses due to tourism, have experienced relocation due to natural disaster, and conserving economic opportunities;
 - b. Protecting the economic and cultural significance of fishing to promote the preservation of traditional practices;
 - c. Introducing the model proposed by the United Nations Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and Laws of the Seas 2007 (UNICPOLOS), with the levels defined as:
 - i. Level 1 Biogeographic Region;
 - ii. Level 2 Including Environment Types, Estuarine and, Marine;

- iii. Level 3 Including Depths, classified by Intertidal, and, Subtidal;
 - iv. Level 4 Including atmospheric exposure from low, medium, and, high;
 - v. Level 5 Including Habitat Type, Mud Flat, Sand Beach, Boulder Beach, Rocky reef etc;
- d. Proposing that this action be completed under a strict time frame for voluntary countries, with three time frames as published by the MPAs classification, protection standard, and implementation guidelines under the UNICPOLOS, including:
- i. A preparatory time frame;
 - ii. The appointment of a chair and members;
 - iii. The planning of consultations with community;
 - iv. A review of information;
 - v. A report to relevant government officials.