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16th Session

Agenda item: Ensuring Equitable Access to Work and Leisure in Tourism Industries

The United Nations World Tourism Organization

Deeply concerned that despite global frameworks such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, many Member States have yet to ensure truly inclusive and sustainable tourism, as women, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons, and rural populations continue to face barriers to employment, accessibility, and leadership roles in the tourism sector,

Alarmed that although women represent over 54% of the global tourism workforce, they remain largely concentrated in low-paid, informal jobs with limited access to social protection or decision-making positions, especially in rural and underdeveloped areas,

Alarmed that over 60% of youth in sub-Saharan Africa, including Mozambique, Zambia and Senegal remain unemployed or underemployed despite tourism's untapped potential for job creation,

Acknowledging that poor infrastructure, regional inequalities, and seasonal instability continue to limit the benefits of tourism in remote, mountainous, and underdeveloped areas,

Noting that digital platforms, targeted investments, and community-based initiatives have proven effective in promoting balanced growth and inclusion, empowering marginalized populations, and enhancing resilience in local tourism sectors,

1. *Requests* willing Member States to promote accessibility for people who have disabilities and provide equal quality of tourism by:
 - a. *Establishing* criteria set by UN Tourism and the Cooperation and Social Inclusion of People with Disabilities;
 - i. Establish an Accessible Beach Award given to beaches with facilities for disabled people to be recognized on UN Tourism websites;

- ii. Strengthen the UN Tourism knowledge network to share ideas and outcomes among Member States including landlocked Member States to improve their accessibility to rivers, lakes and other water resources;
 - b. *Hosting* two types of conferences to identify current challenges and develop practical strategies for improving accessible tourism, and to help ensure that accessibility standards are applied equally across all Member States, including:
 - i. National-level meetings with collaboration of local NPOs that include people with disabilities and older persons;
 - ii. An annual international conference to promote the exchange of ideas, technologies, and best practices in accessible tourism among Member States held by Office of the United Nation High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR);
 - c. *Encouraging* the adaptability of accessibility standards in tourism and providing specific training to workers to provide services to people with disabilities;
 - d. *Promoting* the installation of accessibility facilities such as ramps and elevators in various places for better accessibility;
 - e. *Encouraging* the implementation and support of international model projects, such as the development of solar-powered eco-lodges managed by local communities, the training of rural youth in sustainable tourism practices, and the construction of universally designed tourism infrastructure that ensures accessibility;
2. *Encourages all* Member States, in collaboration with international organizations and the private sector, to implement inclusive tourism strategies that empower women by:
- a. Establishing career support mechanisms, including coaching, internships, mentoring, and leadership development pathways for women;
 - b. Conducting gender audits of tourism workplaces and offering capacity-building grants to women-led tourism enterprises, especially in rural regions;
 - c. Supporting grassroots projects such as *Collectif des Groupements de Femmes pour la Protection de la Nature (COPRONAT)*, which link employment with environmental protection;
 - d. Encouraging collaboration with the International Labour Organization and similar institutions to promote fair labor practices, implement gender-responsive policies, and monitor working conditions in rural tourism sectors;

3. *Calls for all* Member States establish career support mechanisms, including coaching, internships, mentoring, and leadership development pathways for youth;
4. *Encourages* Member States to promote marginalized communities, particularly in rural and underdeveloped areas, through the development of educational, vocational, and leadership programs aimed at increasing equitable access to tourism-related employment opportunities by:
 - a. Providing financial incentives such as scholarships, stipends, or travel support to individuals;
 - b. Engaging Member States and relevant stakeholders in the development of conservation-focused tourism education programs in ecologically sensitive and rural regions;
 - c. Expanding vocational training programs focused on tourism-related skills such as digital literacy, language proficiency, eco-tourism, guiding, hospitality, and small business development, particularly tailored to rural populations;
5. *Further encourages* Member States and stakeholders, in collaboration with international organizations and the private sector to promote infrastructure solutions such as,
 - a. Investing in rural transport, digital connectivity, and public infrastructure to improve both accessibility for tourists and mobility for local community employment opportunities;
 - b. Developing user-friendly digital platforms to showcase lesser-known destinations and connect them to broader tourism markets, thereby balancing tourist flows and supporting local economies;
6. Recommends Member States and stakeholders to address seasonal unemployment in remote, mountainous, and underdeveloped areas, through the following measures:
 - a. Promoting off-season tourism and diversification of tourism activities to support year-round employment and reduce seasonal volatility;
 - b. Supporting community-based tourism initiatives through microgrants, cooperative development, and entrepreneurship training, to empower local residents as stakeholders in tourism growth;
 - c. Creating inclusive financial tools and incentives, such as seed funding, low-interest loans, and public-private investment frameworks, to strengthen tourism startups in underserved areas;

7. Recommends Member States facilitate knowledge-sharing platforms, regional dialogues, and cross-sectoral cooperation through international conferences aimed at enhancing resilience, inclusion, and innovation in rural tourism development.