

Be messengers of hope": Pope Francis

A Monitor Report

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Sorrento : His Holiness Pope Francis sent an historic message of support to UNWTO's first Global Youth Tourism Summit.

As the Summit gets underway in Sorrento, Italy, His Holiness called on young participants to make the most of the unique opportunity to develop the knowledge and the skills they will need to build a better future for tourism and for their home communities.

"The experiences that you will make [in Sorrento] will be enshrined in your memories," Pope Francis said. "This is how you will grow and will be prepared to assume more important roles. I wish that you will be messengers of hope and of rebirth for the future. I send you my blessings and my greetings."

His Holiness also welcomed the young participants' commitment to peace and solidarity.

For the Summit, a landmark first for the sector and for UNWTO as it prioritises youth empowerment and education and training, around 130 students from 60 countries, will take part in a series of workshops, debates and discussions.

Participants are aged between 12 and 18 and include a delegation from Ukraine. The Global Youth Tourism Summit celebrates and promotes the role that young people will play in shaping our sector in the years to come

UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili added, "The Global Youth Tourism Summit celebrates and promotes the role that young people will play in shaping our

sector in the years to come. By giving them the knowledge and the tools they need to lead the sector forwards, participants can act on Pope Francis's welcome words and become ambassadors of tourism for peace and solidarity."

UNWTO has enjoyed a long and productive relationship with the Holy See, which has held observer status to the Organisation since 1975. In 2019, Secretary-General Pololikashvili enjoyed an official visit to the Vatican to meet Pope Francis, using the occasion to highlight tourism's essential role in eradicating poverty and promoting peace.

The first Global Youth Tourism Summit will also feature the support and participation of a number of UNWTO Ambassadors as well as leading figures from across the sector, including Ministers from every global region. The week-long event will also feature a mock UNWTO General Assembly to allow the youngsters to debate the theme of tourism and discuss the innovative proposals for the future of the sector within the global framework of the UN 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).