

UNWTO, ICAO partner for aviation, tourism recovery, transformation

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Madrid : UNWTO and the International Civil Aviation Organisation have agreed to strengthen their partnership with the aim of supporting the safe restart of travel and tourism and accelerating the two sectors' shift towards greater resilience and sustainability.

Confirmed a week ahead of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26), the new agreement underscores UNWTO's call for enhanced collaboration in order to realise tourism's potential to lead recovery and drive sustainable and inclusive growth. In the immediate term, UNWTO and ICAO will work to support aviation and tourism bounce back from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Coordination at every level

At the same time, the agreement illustrates a shared commitment to enhancing coordination at every level, from policy research and management areas, to border management and facilitation of safe and seamless travel, one of UNWTO's long-standing priorities. The Memorandum of Understanding also recognises the importance of securing relevant finance mechanisms to accelerate the shift towards greener travel and tourism, with a commitment to joint advocacy and fundraising efforts.

UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili said, "Tourism and air travel are

essential pillars of growth and opportunity, most notably for developing countries and communities. As air travel resumes and tourism restarts, both sectors must collaborate to support the livelihoods of today and to build a more resilient and sustainable future. The partnership between UNWTO and ICAO will allow exactly this."

ICAO Council President Salvatore Sciacchitano added, "This agreement is an important step to help our organizations address joint data and research initiatives, the modernisation and financing of aviation infrastructure, and the alleviation of economic regulatory constraints to enhance air connectivity and seamless travel."

Building on past partnerships

ICAO has been part of UNWTO's Global Tourism Crisis Committee, established at the start of the current crisis to unite the diverse tourism sector behind a common response and recovery plan. At the same time, UNWTO has also contributed to ICAO's Covid-19 Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART), working to identify and recommend strategic priorities and policies for countries and aviation industry operators. Moreover, ICAO has been part of the UNWTO's Committee for the development of an International Code for the Protection of Tourists as an observer, actively contributing to the drafting of the Code together with 98 Member States, five non-UNWTO Members and several observers from a diverse range of international organisations and private stakeholders.