

## Tourism rebounds in Asia-Pacific

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Dhaka: According to UN Tourism data, following a slow initial recovery from the pandemic, Asia and the Pacific is now rapidly regaining its tourism strength.

In 2024, destinations across the region welcomed 316 million international arrivals, representing 87pc of pre-pandemic levels—a significant jump from 66pc at the end of 2023.

South Asia led the region's rebound, achieving a 92pc recovery. Among individual destinations, the Maldives saw the strongest growth, welcoming 20pc more tourists than in 2019, followed by Japan with a 16pc increase, Fiji with 10pc, and Sri Lanka with 7pc more arrivals compared to pre-pandemic figures.

Indonesia, the host of this year's Commission, welcomed 13.9 million tourists in 2024, recovering 86pc of its 2019 numbers.

In Jakarta, Member States were brought up-to-date of the progress being made guiding the sector's development in the region.

The Report of the Secretary-General outlined progress made over the past year, most notably in the priority areas of Tourism Insights, Knowhow, Investments and Innovation, Education, and UN Tourism's support on the ground for its Members.

UN Tourism Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili said: "Our shared priorities will lay the foundations for a more resilient and sustainable tourism sector for Asia and the Pacific.

At the heart of it all, however, is innovation and youth empowerment through training and education. Asia and the Pacific is one of the most dynamic regions on Earth. It is a hub of digital transformation, new ideas and innovators. And the future looks very bright indeed."

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Between 2018 and 2024, Asia and the Pacific attracted over 640 greenfield tourism projects, worth a collective US\$66 billion, and equivalent to more than one-third of global capital expenditure in tourism-related investment.

In Jakarta, UN Tourism made clear the need to further increase investment and direct FDI towards projects with the potential to enhance sustainability and boost resilience. Within the framework of the Commission meetings, UN Tourism hosted a first Regional Conference on "Tourism Policy on Circular Economy", uniting public and private sector leaders to focus on key challenges including reducing waste, enhancing resource efficiency and rethinking supply chains across the sector.

The Secretary-General also made clear intentions to keep enhancing the work of the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in Nara, Japan, working towards strengthening this office as a hub for a wide-reaching Tourism Resilience Programme.

Hand-in-hand with boosting investments in resilient infrastructure, UN Tourism is also guiding investment in people in the region. Education and human capital development is a key priority, with Member States

updated on progress in this area.

This includes the development of a first Co-branded Master's in Tourism Management with Beijing International Studies University, with 15 full scholarships awarded annually, as well as a co-branded Master's in Digital Marketing and Analytics with the Macao University of Tourism.

In Jakarta, UN Tourism fulfilled its statutory obligations for the Organization, with elections held for key positions for the months ahead.

The Philippines and Maldives were nominated as Vice-Presidents for the upcoming 26th UN Tourism General Assembly.

The Philippines was also nominated to Chair the Commission for South Asia, with the Maldives nominated to Chair the Commission for East Asia and the Pacific. Japan and Fiji were nominated as Vice-Chairs for East Asia and the Pacific, and India and Bhutan were nominated as Vice-Chairs of South Asia.

Iran and India were nominated to represent the Asia and Pacific region on the UN Tourism Executive Council. All nominations are to be ratified by the General Assembly.

UN Tourism will return to Asia and the Pacific in September as Malaysia is the official host of World Tourism Day 2025.

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