

Forum: United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

Issue #2: Strategizing sustainable tourism to protect and strengthen local economies

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(Global Times)

Introduction

As global travel continues to expand, communities increasingly look to tourism as a driver of growth. Tourism is a major engine of growth for many countries, often described as one of the fastest-growing industries and a vital source of foreign exchange and employment. Tourism stimulates great demand for goods and services, such as accommodation, food, transportation, and entertainment, which generates income for local businesses. This ongoing increase in economic activity creates direct and indirect employment opportunities across various sectors, helping to reduce poverty and improve livelihoods. Additionally, tourism revenue often contributes to

public budgets, enabling investments in community infrastructure, which further support economic competitiveness and quality of life. According to the World Travel & Tourism Council, tourism accounts for roughly 10% of the global GDP and provides one in every ten jobs worldwide (World Travel & Tourism Council). In many developing and small countries, tourism can represent a really large share of national income, often exceeding 20% of GDP in highly dependent destinations (WTTC Economic Impact Research Report, 2024). Such dependence means that fluctuations in visitor numbers have a great impact on local livelihoods. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic caused unprecedented revenue losses, highlighting how quickly jobs and businesses can vanish in countries with limited economic diversification, where entire sectors collapse and livelihoods are swiftly disrupted.

The challenge of mismanaged tourism is further compounded by issues such as inadequate infrastructure, limited reinvestment in local communities, and uneven distribution of economic benefits. Rather than bolstering inclusive growth, in some cases, rapid tourism has led to a deepening of social disparities, strained public services, and an increase in living costs. Additionally, while cultural heritage and natural environments often serve as key tourism assets, their degradation through overcrowding or commodification can undermine the long-term economic value they represent. These factors, if left unaddressed, can undermine the very economic foundations that tourism is intended to strengthen.

In response to these challenges, sustainable tourism has emerged as a strategic policy approach aimed at balancing economic and social growth with social and environmental responsibility. From a policy perspective, sustainable tourism involves strengthening labor protections, enhancing infrastructure planning, and ensuring that regulatory frameworks equitably guide investment and service provision. Diversifying national economies and embedding tourism within broader development models can also help mitigate risks associated with sectoral overreliance. Together, these elements form the economic base that tourism seeks to reinforce. Nonetheless, sustainable tourism remains complex and, at times, a contested objective. As tourism continues to shape the economic landscape of both developed and developing nations, effective policy making will be essential to ensure that its growth translates into equitable and

enduring development.

Definition of Key Terms

Tourism sector: The cluster of industries providing goods and services demanded by visitors, including accommodation, transport, food services, entertainment, and other related activities within the tourism value chain (UN World Tourism Organization, 2019).

Sectoral Overreliance: An economic condition where a country depends heavily on one sector for a large share of income and employment (International Monetary Fund).

Economic Diversification: Reducing reliance on tourism by developing multiple economic sectors to mitigate risks from tourism fluctuations (IMF Departmental Paper, 2024).

Commodification: The process of turning cultural or natural assets into marketable commodities (Resources for the Heritage in Cultural and Social Sciences, 2014).

Sustainable Tourism: Tourism that balances economic, social, and environmental impacts to meet the needs of present and future generations (UN World Tourism Organization, 2017).

Economic Viability: The ability of tourism destinations and businesses to be financially sustainable, competitive, and capable of long-term success, while benefiting local economies (Cambridge Journal of Benefit-Cost Analysis, 2019)

Tourist Colonialism: A system where tourism perpetuates colonial-era inequalities by exploiting local cultures and lands, often benefiting external actors more than local communities (Oxford Academic, 2023).

Decolonization: The process of ending colonial control and restoring political, social, and cultural autonomy to formerly colonized peoples (Britannica, 2025).

Global South: Countries mainly in Africa, Latin America, much of Asia, and parts of Oceania characterized by developing economies and historical colonial ties (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2025).

Global North: Developed countries primarily in North America, Europe, and parts of Asia and Oceania with advanced economies and infrastructure (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2025).

Community-led Governance: A management approach in which local communities actively participate in decision-making, planning, and implementation of tourism development to ensure that tourism benefits align with their social, cultural, and economic priorities (UNWTO, 2024).

Capacity-building: The process of developing and strengthening the skills, knowledge, and resources of individuals, organizations, and communities to effectively manage and sustain tourism activities that promote economic growth, environmental protection, and social inclusion (World Bank, 2023).

General Overview

Patterns and Trends

As global tourism continues to evolve, several key patterns and trends are shaping its economic and social impact on local communities. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, international travel has shown a strong recovery, yet traveler preferences have shifted significantly. There is a growing demand for more sustainable, authentic, and experience-driven tourism, with travelers increasingly seeking eco-tourism, cultural heritage visits, and community-based experiences. This shift reflects a broader awareness of environmental and social responsibility, encouraging destinations to adapt their offerings accordingly. The global tourism industry experienced a remarkable resurgence in 2024 (Learn Tourism, 2025), with an estimated 1.4 billion international tourists traveling worldwide, marking a 99% recovery compared to 2019 and an 11% increase over 2023, adding 140 million more arrivals (UNWTO, 2025). Europe led this recovery, welcoming 747 million international arrivals in 2024, surpassing 2019 figures by

1% and 2023 levels by 5%, driven by strong intra-regional demand. The Middle East outperformed all regions with arrivals 32% above pre-pandemic levels, while Africa saw a 7% increase compared to 2019 and 12% more than in 2-23. Meanwhile, the Americas recovered 97% of pre-pandemic arrivals, and Asia-Pacific reached 87%, reflecting ongoing regional disparities in recovery (UNWTO, 2025).

Another notable trend is the rise of domestic and regional tourism, which many countries are promoting to reduce vulnerability to international market fluctuations. For example, several developing nations have launched campaigns encouraging citizens to explore their own countries, helping stabilize local economies and reduce overdependence on foreign visitors. Additionally, technological advancements continue to transform tourism, with digital platforms facilitating personalized travel experiences and expanding access to remote or lesser-known destinations.

Despite these positive developments, economic dependence on tourism remains a critical challenge, especially for small island states and developing countries where tourism accounts for a significant portion of the GDP. Such reliance exposes these economies to significant risks from external shocks, including pandemics, climate change, and geopolitical instability. Moreover, many destinations face issues of seasonality and overtourism, where peak visitor numbers strain infrastructure, inflate living costs, and degrade cultural and natural assets. In 2024, overtourism intensified in hotspots like Venice, Bali, and Barcelona, leading to environmental damage and social disruptions such as rising housing costs and overwhelmed public services (UNESCO). This imbalance not only threatens environmental sustainability but can also deepen social inequalities within host communities.

Sustainability has therefore emerged as a central priority in global tourism strategies. The rapid growth of the ecotourism market and the adoption of sustainability certification programs by governments and private sectors reflect a concerted effort to align tourism development with environmental conservation and social equity. The global ecotourism market was projected to grow from \$219.5 billion in 2023 to \$249.2 billion in 2024, with a compound annual growth rate of 13.5%, driven by rising demand for authentic travel experiences and government initiatives promoting responsible tourism.

(Allied Market Research, 2024). However, challenges persist, such as climate change impacts that jeopardize coast and natural attractions, and the commodification of culture that risks eroding local identities and community agency.

Overall, these patterns and trends highlight the urgent need for strategic policies that balance economic growth with environmental stewardship and social inclusion, ensuring that tourism remains a resilient and equitable driver of sustainable development.

Economic Viability and Local Prosperity

Understanding the evolving patterns and trends in global tourism provides important context for assessing its economic impact on local communities. While shifts toward sustainable and experience-based travel present promising opportunities, the realities of economic dependence and fluctuating visitor flows reveal complex challenges. These dynamics directly influence the ability to generate lasting prosperity for local populations. It is therefore essential to examine not only the growth potential but also the socioeconomic strains that tourism can impose to ensure that the benefits of this expanding industry are equitably shared and contribute to resilient, inclusive local economies.

Tourism remains a powerful engine for economic growth, supporting over 370 million jobs worldwide in 2025 (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2025). The sector stimulates demand across accommodation, food services, transportation, and entertainment, generating income that benefits local businesses and governments alike. The influx of revenue enables investments in infrastructure and public services, which in turn enhance economic competitiveness and quality of life for residents. Small businesses and entrepreneurs often experience and create employment opportunities in diverse sectors.

However, the economic benefits of tourism are not always evenly distributed, and rapid growth can exacerbate socioeconomic strains within host communities. Many destinations face challenges such as rising living costs, traffic congestion, overcrowding, and environmental degradation, which can disproportionately affect lower-income residents and strain public services. While most travelers recognize tourism's positive

economic impact, concerns about these social pressures are growing.

Moreover, excessive dependence on tourism revenue can leave local economies vulnerable to external shocks, as seen during the COVID-19 pandemic, when many tourism-dependent countries suffered severe economic disruption. This highlights the need for economic diversification alongside tourism development to build resilience. Sustainable tourism strategies emphasize equitable reinvestment of tourism revenue into local communities, strengthening labor protections, supporting community-led initiatives, and preserving cultural and natural assets (World Economic Forum, n.d.). Empowering local populations to participate meaningfully in tourism planning and benefit-sharing is critical to ensuring that tourism planning and benefit-sharing is critical to ensuring that tourism fosters inclusive and enduring prosperity rather than deepening social disparities.

In summary, while tourism offers substantial economic opportunities for local prosperity, it also presents socioeconomic strains that require careful management. Balancing growth with equitable benefit distribution, infrastructure development, and environmental stewardship is essential to maintain tourism's role as a sustainable driver of local economic viability.

Root Causes, Structural Inequalities, and Historical Legacy

The economic strains and disparities highlighted in tourism-dependent economies cannot be fully understood without examining their historical and structural foundations. Colonialism, extractive economic models, and systemic inequalities have shaped modern tourism systems, perpetuating cycles of dependency and marginalization that persist despite formal decolonization.

Before colonialism, many indigenous and local communities practiced sustainable resource management and communal land stewardship, integrating cultural and ecological preservation. For example, pre-colonial societies in Africa, Asia, and the Americas often relied on circular economies that prioritized reciprocity and intergenerational equity. Colonialism dismantled these systems, replacing them with extractive frameworks that prioritized resource exploitation for imperial profit.

Indigenous knowledge and governance structures were suppressed, eroding traditional sustainability practices that could have informed modern tourism models (Debt Justice, Woolfenden T., 2023).

Colonial powers established infrastructure and labor systems that prioritized export-oriented economies, creating dependencies that persist today. Tourist destinations in formerly colonized nations often rely on foreign-owned resorts, airlines, and tour operations, with up to 80% of tourism revenue “leaking” out of local economies to multinational corporations (Warsaw Forum of Economic Sociology, Kędziolek, W., n.d.). This “tourist colonialism” mirrors historical extraction, where Global South nations remain peripheral suppliers of labor and natural attractions to wealthier countries (Warsaw Forum of Economic Sociology, Kędziolek, W., n.d.; Debt Justice, Woolfenden T. 2023). For instance, Caribbean nations, where tourism accounts for over 30% of GDP, still grapple with land ownership concentrated in foreign hands and wages 40% lower than in the Global North tourism sectors (Debt Justice, Woolfenden T., 2023).

Furthermore, postcolonial governance often perpetuated centralized economic models, exacerbating regional inequalities.

In conclusion, addressing tourism's root causes requires dismantling colonial legacies and centering Indigenous and local agency. Strategies include land repatriation, community-led tourism governance, and equitable revenue-sharing models. Policies must also rectify historical injustices by investing in education, infrastructure, and climate resilience for marginalized communities. By confronting structural inequalities and honoring pre-colonial sustainability wisdom, tourism can transition from a vehicle of extraction to one of equitable regeneration, ensuring economic benefits are rooted in justice rather than exploitation.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

France

France remains the world's most visited country, attracting over 100 million international tourists in 2024, with tourism contributing about 8% of its GDP (Atout France, 2023; France Diplomatie, 2025). Initiatives like sustainable housing, gastronomic routes

featuring local producers, and eco-friendly transport contribute to creating quality jobs in small communities (France Diplomatie, 2025). The government's €1.9 billion "Destination France" plan (2021-2030) aims to transform tourism by investing in sustainable infrastructure, digital innovation, and workforce development to make France the world's leading sustainable tourist destination by 2030. France emphasizes diversification to avoid overdependence on mass tourism and promotes inclusive growth, benefiting local populations.

Philippines

Tourism accounts for approximately 8.6% of the Philippines' GDP and supports over 5 million jobs, making it a vital sector for economic growth and poverty reduction (World Bank, 2023). The government emphasized community-based and nature-focused tourism to ensure local populations benefit directly, especially in rural and island areas vulnerable to environmental risks (UNWTO, 2024). However, infrastructure limitations and exposure to natural disasters remain challenges for sustainable growth. The Philippines promotes resilience-building and inclusive policies to protect ecosystems and empower indigenous communities, aiming to balance tourism expansion with social equity and environmental conservation. The pressure to sustain economic growth through tourism can undermine genuine environmental conservation and social equity, risking the very resources and communities tourism depends on (Environmental Watch Philippinesm 2024)

Turkey

Tourism in Turkey supports over 4 million jobs and represents roughly 12% of Turkey's GDP (WWTC, 2024). The country encourages diversification beyond traditional coastal resorts, investing in infrastructure and heritage protection to sustain long-term growth (UNWTO, 2023). However, geopolitical instability and uneven benefit distribution complicate sustainability efforts. Turkey's strategy reflects a tension between rapid tourism expansion for economic gains and the need to address social and environmental impacts.

Spain

Spain's tourism sector accounts for about 14% of GDP and provides around 2.8 million

jobs (WTTC, 2024). The country faces over-tourism and environmental degradation in hotspots like Barcelona and the Balearic Islands. Spain's sustainable tourism policies focus on dispersing visitors across regions and seasons, investing in green infrastructure, and supporting local businesses to ensure wider economic benefits (UNWTO, 2023). Despite these efforts, social tensions and rising living costs linked to tourism persist, illustrating the challenges of balancing economic dependence with sustainability.

China

China's tourism sector contributes about 11% of GDP and employs over 28 million people (World Bank, 2024). The government promotes eco-tourism, heritage conservation, and green infrastructure aligned with national goals on carbon neutrality and rural revitalization. China's large domestic tourism market and growing outbound travel drive innovation in sustainable practices to reduce environmental impacts and enhance local economic benefits. The state-led approach integrates tourism within broader economic diversification and environmental policies, reflecting China's scale and rapid development. Despite government efforts, incidents of tourist exploitation have damaged China's reputation. Additionally, China's tourism generates a significant environmental footprint, which raises questions about the true sustainability of rapid tourism growth (McKinsey, 2023). Critics argue that while tourism contributes to economic growth, it also exacerbates income inequality and environmental degradation, suggesting that current policies may prioritize expansion over equitable and ecological sustainability (Teng, 2021)

Brazil

Brazil's tourism sector contributes approximately 3.5% to the country's GDP and supports over 2 million jobs, making it an important economic driver, particularly in ecologically sensitive regions like the Amazon (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2024). While the government promotes sustainable tourism initiatives aimed at preserving the rainforest and empowering Indigenous communities, critics argue that these efforts often fall short in practice. Infrastructure development and tourism expansion sometimes proceed without adequate environmental safeguards, exacerbating deforestation and threatening fragile ecosystems. Additionally, there are concerns that tourism revenues disproportionately benefit large corporations and urban centers rather than local or

Indigenous populations, perpetuating economic inequalities. The tension between economic growth ambitions and genuine sustainability remains a contentious issue.

Timeline of Events, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties, and Events

Date	Description of Event
1960s	Early recognition of tourism's negative impacts on local environments and cultures prompts initial calls for more sustainable approaches.
1987	The Brundtland Report defines sustainable development, laying the groundwork for sustainable tourism as part of broader development goals.
1995	The World Trade Organization (WTO) creates the World Committee on Tourism Ethics, emphasizing responsible tourism and community benefits.
2015	The United Nations adopts the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), both relevant to sustainable tourism.
2017	The UN General Assembly declares 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development.
2020	The COVID-19 pandemic caused global tourism to collapse, highlighting vulnerabilities of over-reliance on tourism and the need for sustainable, resilient models.
2024	UNWTO reports global tourism nearly back to pre-pandemic levels, with renewed focus on sustainability, local empowerment, and climate resilience.

United Nations Involvement

The United Nations has long recognized the vital role that tourism can play in fostering economic development, particularly in local communities. Over the past several decades, the UN has steadily increased its engagement with sustainable tourism as a means to support inclusive growth, protect the environment, and reduce poverty. The UN's involvement is reflected in a series of high-level summits, international years, and

policy frameworks, all aimed at integrating sustainable tourism into broader development strategies.

World Summit on Sustainable Development, 2002

Held from 26 August to 4 September 2002, the Summit focused on sustainable development ten years after the first Earth Summit in Rio. It called for the promotion of ecotourism and sustainable tourism as tools for poverty alleviation. One key outcome was the launch of the Sustainable Tourism – Eliminating Poverty (ST-EP) initiative in partnership with UNCTAD (UN Trade and Development), aimed at leveraging tourism for poverty reduction. The Summit also produced the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, emphasizing partnerships and practical actions to achieve sustainable development goals, including those related to tourism (UN, 2002).

Rio+20 Conference and “The Future We Want”, 2012

Ten years later, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) reaffirmed the importance of sustainable tourism, well-managed and designed, as a significant contributor to sustainable development. The outcome document “The Future We Want” encouraged investments in sustainable tourism, including ecotourism and cultural tourism, as well as small business creation and access to finance for local communities, the poor, and Indigenous Peoples. The document stressed the need to build capacity for environmental awareness and understanding of tourism’s impacts on biodiversity, local communities, and cultural diversity, aiming to promote positive, holistic outcomes for tourism activities (UN, 2012)

Resolution A/RES/69/233, 2015

Adopted by consensus and sponsored by 107 Member States, this resolution recognizes the vital contribution of sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, to poverty eradication, community development, and biodiversity protection. It builds on earlier UN resolutions and a report by the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), emphasizing the importance of policies, guidelines, and regulations to promote sustainable tourism. The resolution calls on UNWTO and other UN agencies to develop recommendations to further promote sustainable tourism, which were to be submitted to the 71st UN General Assembly in 2016. It highlights sustainable tourism as a tool to

achieve global development goals by fostering economic growth while protecting the environment and supporting local communities (UNGA, 2015).

Resolution A/RES/77/178, 2022

This resolution reaffirms the role of sustainable and resilient tourism, including ecotourism, as a critical driver for poverty eradication and environmental protection. It emphasizes the need to optimize economic, social, cultural, and environmental benefits from sustainable tourism across all countries, especially vulnerable groups such as women, youth, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples, and older persons. The resolution encourages investment in tourism infrastructure, diversification, and public-private partnerships to foster job creation and preserve cultural heritage. It also stresses the importance of digital transformation, education, and capacity-building to enhance competitiveness and resilience in the tourism sector. The resolution calls for coordinated international and regional frameworks to assist countries in promoting sustainable tourism and urges inclusive recovery plans post-COVID-19 that support micro-, small, and medium-sized enterprises dependent on tourism (UNGA, 2022).

One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme

Facilitated by UN Tourism, this initiative aims to accelerate sustainable consumption and production in tourism policies and practices, supporting SDG 12 and related climate and ecosystem goals (UNWTO, n.d).

Agenda 21 and Local Agenda 21

These frameworks recognized the importance of sustainable tourism for local development, urging governments to develop strategies that maximize tourism's potential for local employment and the use of local products and skills (UN, 1992).

Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism (MST), 2024

In 2024, all 193 UN Member States adopted the Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism (MST), establishing a globally agreed-upon methodology to assess the economic, social, and environmental impacts of tourism and marking a significant step toward responsible and sustainable tourism management (UN, 2024). The adoption of the MST enables governments and tourism sectors to systematically

collect and analyze data on tourism's economic, social, and environmental impacts. This standardized approach helps policymakers design targeted strategies, monitor progress, and make informed decisions to promote sustainable tourism development that benefits local communities while minimizing negative effects.

First World Conference on Tourism for Development, 2016

Held in Beijing, this conference produced the Beijing Declaration, reaffirming the role of sustainable tourism in development, peace, and the protection of human rights (UNWTO, 2016)

High-Level Thematic Debate on Sustainable and Resilient Tourism, 2022

Convened by the President of the UN General Assembly, this debate focused on placing sustainable and resilient tourism at the heart of an inclusive recovery, with discussions on financing, digitalization, and best practices (UNGA, 2022)

International Year of Sustainable and Resilient Tourism, 2027

The UN General Assembly declared 2027 the International Year of Sustainable and Resilient Tourism, urging governments and stakeholders to implement comprehensive measures with a focus on poverty eradication, gender equality, and environmental protection (UNGA, 2023)

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

Previous attempts to promote sustainable tourism and strengthen local economies have yielded mixed results, highlighting both progress and persistent challenges. Initiatives such as the Sustainable Tourism – Eliminating Poverty (ST-EP) program and the designation of International Years of Sustainable Tourism have successfully raised global awareness and encouraged policy frameworks that integrate economic, social, and environmental goals (UNCTAD, 2018). Many countries have adopted eco-tourism models and certification schemes that have improved conservation efforts and created jobs in rural and indigenous communities. However, these successes are often unevenly distributed, with benefits frequently concentrated among larger businesses and foreign investors rather than local populations. Additionally, the heavy reliance of

some economies on tourism revenue has exposed them to vulnerabilities from external shocks. Moreover, issues like overtourism, cultural commodification, and environmental degradation continue to undermine the long-term sustainability of tourism in many destinations. These challenges underscore the need for more inclusive governance, equitable benefit-sharing mechanisms, and stronger integration of tourism within broader development and resilience strategies to ensure that sustainable tourism truly supports local economic empowerment and environmental stewardship.

Resolution A/RES/69/233, 2015

This landmark resolution recognized sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, as a powerful tool for poverty eradication, community development, and environmental protection. It urged the UN system and Member States to adopt policies and regulations promoting sustainable tourism and encouraged financial support for small and medium enterprises, cooperatives, and inclusive microcredit initiatives. The resolution garnered broad support, reflecting growing global awareness of tourism's developmental potential. However, implementation has been mixed: while some countries have strengthened regulatory frameworks and developed community-based tourism, many developing regions still face gaps in capacity, funding, and equitable benefit-sharing. The resolution's emphasis on policy guidance and financial inclusion remains relevant but requires stronger follow-through to overcome structural barriers.

Resolution A/RES/77/178, 2022

Building on earlier efforts, this resolution highlighted the importance of resilient tourism capable of withstanding shocks such as pandemics and climate change. It called for inclusive growth by empowering women, youth, persons with disabilities, and older persons, and stressed the integration of sustainable consumption and production patterns in tourism. The resolution reflects a comprehensive and forward-looking approach, the persistent inequalities in the tourism workforce and uneven recovery from COVID-19 demonstrate that translating these goals into practice remains challenging. Greater investment in capacity-building, infrastructure, and community participation is needed to realize the resolution's ambitions fully.

Possible Solutions

Empowering Communities Through Sustainable Tourism Policy

To address the challenges of sustainable tourism, delegates should prioritize community-led governance models that empower local populations in decision-making and revenue-sharing. This includes establishing legal frameworks for land rights, mandating tourism businesses to hire local staff, and supporting traditional and cultural activities. Promoting rural and cultural tourism can attract environmentally conscious travelers while preserving local heritage and natural landscapes. Initiatives that improve infrastructure in rural or underserved areas, such as eco-friendly accommodations and nature-based experiences, could be proposed, not only minimizing environmental harm but also creating jobs and generating income for residents. When drafting resolutions, collaboration between countries should be emphasized to share best practices and develop common standards for sustainable tourism based on each country's needs. Encouraging investment in training and capacity-building for local entrepreneurs and workers will help build resilient tourism sectors. Resolutions could also promote responsible traveler behavior, such as supporting local businesses and respecting cultural norms, to maximize positive impacts. Additionally, establishing monitoring frameworks to track tourism's social, economic, and environmental impacts ensures transparency and accountability. Overall, the focus should be on practical, inclusive policies that balance economic growth with environmental protection and social equity, creating long-term benefits for both visitors and host communities.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

SDG 12 calls for sustainable consumption and production patterns, which are vital for the tourism sector's long-term viability. Tourism's environmental footprint—through resource use, waste generation, and emissions—can be significant, especially in fragile ecosystems. Strategizing sustainable tourism means adopting practices that minimize negative impacts, and several sub-targets of SDG 12 are directly relevant:

Target 12.1: Implement the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable

Consumption and Production (10YPPF), with tourism contributing through initiatives like the One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme, which promotes sustainable policies and practices across the tourism value chain.

Target 12.3: Halve per capita global food waste at retail and consumer levels, a critical goal given tourism's substantial food consumption. Sustainable food management strategies in tourism can reduce waste, lessen environmental impacts, and support local food systems.

Target 12.5: Substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling, and reuse, which tourism stakeholders can address via improved waste infrastructure and education.

Target 12.6: Encourage companies to adopt sustainable practices and sustainability reporting, fostering transparency and accountability in tourism businesses.

Target 12.8: Promote universal understanding of sustainable lifestyles, where tourism serves as a platform to educate travelers and communities about environmental stewardship.

Target 12.b: Develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable tourism impacts, such as the Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) and System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA), enabling data-driven decision-making and policy development (Tourism4SDGs, 2023).

Moreover, sustainable tourism also intersects with other SDGs, reinforcing its multidimensional impact:

SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth: Tourism is a major source of employment, especially for youth and women, contributing to inclusive economic growth.

SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities: Sustainable tourism plays a crucial role in advancing SDG 11, which aims to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe,

resilient, and sustainable

SDG 13 Climate Action: Sustainable tourism strategies include reducing carbon emissions through energy efficiency and promoting climate resilience in vulnerable destinations.

SDG 15 Life on Land: Responsible tourism supports biodiversity conservation and the protection of natural habitats that attract visitors.

In summary, these SDGs are deeply interconnected with what sustainable tourism hopes to achieve. The integration of these goals into tourism policies and projects ensures that tourism contributes positively to economic, social, and environmental sustainability, benefiting both local communities and visitors alike.

Appendix

This section of the issue bulletin is dedicated to providing delegates with valuable sources to utilize during their research.

<https://wttc.org/research/economic-impact>

Source A: UN General Assembly A/RES/77/178 resolution outlines how sustainable tourism supports poverty eradication, employment, and ecosystem protection. Emphasizes economic, social, and environmental benefits, especially for vulnerable communities and local economies.

<https://www.weforum.org/stories/2023/10/this-is-how-to-leverage-community-led-sustainable-tourism-for-people-and-biodiversity/>

Source B: Explores how sustainable tourism, when rooted in community leadership and benefit-sharing, can promote economic resilience and biodiversity protection. Useful for linking tourism strategies to inclusive local development

<https://wttc.org/research/economic-impact>

Source C: Offers reliable, up-to-date statistics on the contribution of tourism to global and national GDP, employment, and investment. Helps delegates understand how tourism fits into economic models and labor markets in both developed and

developing countries.

<https://www.unwto.org/statistical-framework-for-measuring-sustainability-of-tourism>

Source D: Introduces the UN's Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism, adopted by all Member States in 2024. Supports policy design by providing methods to assess tourism economic, environmental, and social dimensions.

<https://www.elibrary.imf.org/view/journals/087/2024/006/article-A001-en.xml>

Source E: Discusses how countries can reduce overdependence on sectors like tourism by developing broader economic strategies. Important for understanding risks tied to tourism-dominant models and the need for diversification.

<https://tourism4sdgs.org/>

Source F: This UN-supported platform links tourism policies and practices to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Delegates can explore how tourism supports SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), and more, with an emphasis on inclusive economic progress.

<https://www.unwto.org/sustainable-development/one-planet>

Source G: A UN initiative promoting sustainable consumption and production across the tourism value chain. Offers insight into economic practices that minimize waste, optimize resources, and supports local supply networks.

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