

"High Level Meeting on Sustainable Tourism, Trade and Global Digital Assets in support of the implementation of the UNSDG's"

17 January 2017, 3:00 - 6:00 p.m., Conference Room 4
United Nations Headquarters, New York

Concept Note

Background

Economic activity in the world has been affected for a long period of slow global growth since the financial and economic crisis in 2008 that still poses a challenge to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As financing constraints continue to remain formidable even global financial markets have largely stabilized, as equity prices, the prices of primary commodities, and the currencies of emerging economies recover the losses suffered at the beginning of 2016. Nevertheless, the world economy continues to face major obstacles identified in several economic reports in 2016 suggesting that are unlikely to ease in the near term. Global economic growth prospects for 2017 remain well below pre-crisis trends, and a protracted period of slow productivity growth and feeble investment weight on the longer-term potential of the global economy.

At the same time, internal political difficulties and other country-specific domestic factors have compounded the pressures from large capital outflows and rising debt levels. As a whole, economic growth in developing countries in 2016 remained around the 3.8 per cent growth recorded in 2015.

High levels of international reserves and greater exchange-rate flexibility in several economies have so far provided a significant cushion to gradually cope with the capital flow reversal. In the near term, the scope for countercyclical monetary policy loosening in many emerging economies may remain limited. Developing countries may need to use macro-prudential regulations and, in some cases, targeted and selective capital controls to stabilize excessive capital flows and exchange-rate volatility. Fundamentally, improving growth prospects against many odds remains a key strategy for many developing countries to restore a more virtuous cycle among capital flows, investment and development.

Recent indicators for the United States of America and Europe suggest more robust labour market developments in developed economies. However, the persistently weak global economy has taken a toll on employment in many developing and transition economies, particularly those that have suffered a significant loss of commodity-related revenue. Worldwide, an estimated 27 million more are unemployed today than on the eve of the financial crisis, and this figure is expected to rise further in the coming two years.

Widespread global unemployment and job insecurity pose a significant challenge to global efforts to promote “inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all”, as envisaged in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In this context, it is important to recognize the contributions of international tourism, and particularly of the designation of an international year of sustainable tourism for development, in fostering better understanding among peoples everywhere, leading to a greater awareness of the rich heritage of various civilizations and bringing about a better appreciation of the inherent values of different cultures, thereby contributing to the strengthening of peace in the world.

In addition, it is important to acknowledge the role of sustainable tourism as a positive instrument towards the eradication of poverty, the protection of the environment, the improvement of quality of life and the economic empowerment of women and youth and its contribution to the three dimensions of sustainable development, especially in developing countries.

On the other hand, in the context of multilateral framework of the United Nations, as has been recognized in the Preamble of the Resolution adopted by the General Assembly A/Res/70/1 “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, this agenda is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. It also seeks to strengthen universal peace in larger freedom. It is recognized therefore that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development shows the scale and level of ambition of this new universal agenda. This agenda builds on the Millennium Development Goals and complete what they did not achieve. They seek to realize the human rights of

all and to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. They are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental.

In this context, the High level Meeting on Trade, Tourism and Global Digital Assets will highlight ways in which multistakeholder partnerships can support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Towards that end, this meeting will serve as facilitator rather than provide a platform for high-level discussion and policy dialogue by a range of stakeholders on the role that partnerships can play for scaling up efforts through a cross-sectoral approach.

The new Agenda explicitly recognizes the complex interlinkages among the various goals. Indeed, many of the targets cut across and support multiple SDGs which may facilitate policy integration and synergies across different sectors.

Objectives

The High level Meeting on Trade, Tourism and Global Digital Assets in support of the implementation of the UNSDG's will:

- Provide an opportunity for bringing together stakeholders (Member States, UN System, private sector, philanthropy, NGOs, Academia and others) to engage in a strategic refocussing on ways that partnerships can deliver on the 2030 Agenda utilizing an integrated approach to sustainable development, including through Trade, Tourism and Global Digital Assets.
- Identify key policy enablers that are important to accelerate cross-sectoral partnerships that address targets across multiple goals;
- Share best practices in the area of trade, the role of tourism and Global Digital Assets in support of the implementation of the UNSDG's.

Format

The High level Meeting, to be held on Tuesday, 17 January 2017, will bring together several speakers from Member States, UN System and Private Sector after the Permanent Representative of Suriname, Ambassador Henry MacDonald, in his capacity as Chair of this meeting delivered his welcoming remarks.

Outcome

A Chairman Summary will be prepared capturing the key messages from the High level Meeting and copies will be distributed among participants in a later stage.