



Technical meeting on COVID-19 and sustainable recovery in the tourism sector

Geneva, 25–29 April 2022

► Conclusions

The technical meeting on COVID-19 and sustainable recovery in the tourism sector, Having met in Geneva from 25 to 29 April 2022, Adopts the following conclusions:

Challenges to and opportunities for a sustainable recovery and decent work

1. The tourism sector is a major driver of economic growth, enterprise development and job creation, particularly for women, youth, migrant workers and local communities. In recent decades, it has experienced continued expansion and diversification to become one of the largest and fastest-growing economic sectors globally. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism accounted, directly and indirectly, for one in ten jobs worldwide and 10.4 per cent of global GDP. Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) represent the majority share of the industry and its workers.
2. Over the past decade, the sector has been in transition, largely driven by new and emerging technologies such as meta-search engines and online booking platforms, demographic shifts towards a diverse and multigenerational workforce, globalization and climate change.
3. Globally, although differences between regions exist, the sector continues to face decent work deficits, such as the prevalence of informality, variable and long working hours, low wages, limited access to social protection, gender-based discrimination, poor occupational safety and health (OSH) practices and weak regulation, enforcement and organization of labour. In some cases the sector is also affected by the lack of an enabling environment for sustainable enterprise development, insufficient and inadequately skilled workforce and productivity challenges.
4. Increasingly, tourism has many forms of work, such as seasonal and part-time work, fixed-term contracts, working through private employment agencies, outsourcing and subcontracting, that can offer a stepping stone to employment, especially for workers

who face higher barriers on the labour market such as young, low-skilled and migrant workers. These types of work may give rise to decent work deficits when, among other reasons, they are not well regulated, are not used for the specific legal purpose they are intended for but to circumvent the employer's legal and contractual obligations, or do not afford adequate labour and social protection.

5. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on the tourism industry. The sector is among the hardest hit and the pandemic has destroyed tourism enterprises, particularly MSMEs, and livelihoods, with serious impacts on communities and countries that rely on the sector. Disruptions generated by the pandemic have led to unemployment, underemployment, business closure and bankruptcy. It has exposed workers to serious OSH risks and created additional decent work deficits.
6. The pandemic was felt strongest in informal segments of the tourism sector where decent work deficits are most pronounced. Women, young people, indigenous and tribal peoples, migrant workers and local communities frequently engaged in informal or casual employment were disproportionately affected. Inequalities in the sector have increased and hard-fought gains made towards gender equality and women's rights in recent years have reversed in some cases.
7. The lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic offer a truly unique opportunity to upgrade and transform the tourism sector and to build forward better towards an inclusive, sustainable and resilient future of work.

A human-centred, inclusive, sustainable and resilient recovery and a just transition to a sustainable future of work in tourism

8. Tourism, as one of the largest, most dynamic, and in many countries, resilient sectors of the global economy, is known for its ability to overcome crises and downturns. The tourism sector can play a major role in the global recovery, provided that an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises is established and jobs created are decent and leverage opportunities for social and economic progress.
9. Ensuring equal opportunities and treatment between women and men is critical to a sustainable and human-centred future of the sector. This includes respecting the principle of equal remuneration for work of equal value, and promoting a world of work that is free from violence and harassment.
10. There is a need to develop and implement comprehensive, innovative and integrated approaches to curb the spread of informality and accelerate the transition to the formal economy. Efforts should aim at facilitating this transition while respecting all workers' rights, including fundamental rights and ensuring sustainability of enterprises and decent work.
11. Occupational safety and health and a preventive OSH culture are particularly key in the tourism sector. National programmes on OSH should contribute to the protection of workers by eliminating or minimizing work-related hazards and risks taking into account relevant international labour standards and in accordance with national laws and practices, including gender-sensitive OSH practices. They should be supported by, and aligned with, other complementary national programmes and plans, including on health systems.
12. Targeted policies based on social dialogue are needed to support technical and vocational education and training (TVET) systems, skills development, and lifelong learning systems that enhance productivity, facilitate job creation and retention, promote innovation and entrepreneurship, attract new workers, foster inclusion, career development, and respond to the tourism sector labour market requirements, at all

levels, addressing skills shortages and mismatches, and gender-based occupational segregation. Promoting the acquisition of skills, competencies and qualifications for tourism workers throughout their working lives is at the heart of a human-centred approach to crisis recovery and the future of work.

13. A policy environment and measures have to be put in place that provide for job-rich recovery with decent work opportunities for all, and for an inclusive, sustainable and resilient recovery for the sector to support business creation and continuity, and foster an enabling environment for innovation, productivity growth and a fair distribution of its gains as well as for sustainable enterprises, particularly for MSMEs.
14. Sustainable tourism, such as eco-tourism, that promotes the preservation of the social and natural environment and preserves tourism assets, including cultural heritage, ecosystem and natural resources while avoiding the over-exploitation of natural resources, and the creation of decent and green jobs will be key to the sector's long-term social and economic sustainability.
15. Social dialogue, based on the respect of freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, has a central role in designing and implementing effective policies and building the trust needed for an inclusive, sustainable and resilient recovery in the tourism sector and in promoting social justice.

Recommendations for future action by the International Labour Organization and its Members

16. Governments have the duty to adopt, implement and effectively enforce national laws and regulations and to ensure that fundamental principles and rights at work and ratified international labour Conventions protect and are applied to all workers in the tourism sector, regardless of their employment relationship, and to workers in the informal economy, taking into account their obligations under other international labour standards and their national circumstances. Governments should strengthen labour administration and labour inspection systems in order to ensure full compliance with laws and regulations and access to appropriate and effective remedy and complaints mechanisms.
17. Governments, in cooperation with employers' and workers' organizations, should:
 - (a) engage in effective social dialogue, towards a human-centred, inclusive, sustainable and resilient recovery of the tourism sector and a just transition to a more inclusive, sustainable and resilient future of work in tourism;
 - (b) engage in the effective implementation of the *ILO Guidelines on decent work and socially responsible tourism*;
 - (c) put in place a policy environment and measures for a sustainable recovery that promotes decent jobs and sustainable enterprises, fosters a just transition towards formality and ensures adequate protection for all workers; and enhances the preparedness of the sector to deal with future crises;
 - (d) work towards stronger linkages between the tourism infrastructure, policy and regulatory environments and invest in the sustainable economy and in digital infrastructure, including digital skills;
 - (e) create an enabling environment for entrepreneurship, innovation and sustainable tourism enterprises, including through investments, credit programmes, support for business continuity and productivity growth as well as financial inclusion for micro, small and medium-sized tourism enterprises;

- (f) provide for fair wages, decent working conditions, OSH and protect all workers against violence and harassment;
 - (g) ensure access to universal, comprehensive, adequate and sustainable social protection to all engaged in the tourism sector;
 - (h) put in place strategies and policies to ensure equality and non-discrimination, particularly focused on those in vulnerable situations; promoting broader gender equality, including equal opportunities, equal remuneration for work of equal value, equal participation and equal treatment;
 - (i) ensure that a work-life balance is promoted and respected with limits on working time, bearing in mind the particular situation in the tourism sector;
 - (j) actively engage in diversified skills development, certification, TVET systems, and lifelong learning policies, programmes and strategies, including through social dialogue and partnerships across the education and training sectors, to promote decent work opportunities for all in the tourism sector to enable it to better respond to the changing requirements.
- 18.** Governments, employers' and workers' organizations and all enterprises, including multinational enterprises, in the tourism sector should observe the principles of the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy.
- 19.** The Office, based on its mandate reinvigorated by the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work and the Global call to action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient, should:
- (a) promote the ratification and effective implementation of up-to-date international labour standards, ILO declarations, instruments and tools relevant to the tourism sector, including the *ILO guidelines on decent work and socially responsible tourism* and strengthen the capacity of constituents to respect, promote and realize the fundamental principles and rights at work (see appendix);
 - (b) build the capacity of constituents to develop strategies and engage in effective social dialogue to ensure full and productive employment and decent work for all and a just transition in the sector, and to effectively participate in the design and implementation of acquired skills certification, TVET systems, and lifelong learning and skills development programmes;
 - (c) strengthen its support to tripartite constituents for the design and implementation of strategies to achieve a human-centred recovery that is sustainable, inclusive and resilient to the COVID-19 pandemic and future crises;
 - (d) develop statistics and research, collect and regularly disseminate good practices and data on trends and developments in the tourism sector, including resilient and sustainable recovery practices as well as on recruitment and retention of workers and existing and newly emerging labour shortages and possible measures to address them; prepare a draft blueprint on productivity challenges and the promotion of an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises in the tourism sector in order to generate full, productive and freely chosen employment and decent work for all with a view to inform a tripartite forum. Promote the coordination of data collection and research in relevant international organizations, in particular the OECD, UNDP, UNEP and UNWTO;
 - (e) organize regional meetings and workshops, including with the International Training Centre of the ILO, to promote the use and implementation of the *ILO*

guidelines on decent work and socially responsible tourism as well as other guidance included in the appendix;

- (f) design and implement development cooperation projects to advance decent and sustainable work in the sector, taking into account the diverse circumstances, needs, priorities and levels of development of its Member States including through expanded South–South and triangular cooperation;
- (g) promote, using all relevant means of action, international cooperation and reinforce its tripartite mandate by including constituents in leading and cooperating with relevant multilateral organizations, particularly the OECD, UNEP, UNWTO and WHO as well as enhance collaboration with relevant regional organizations to promote policy coherence at all levels in pursuit of a human-centred recovery and growth of the tourism sector that is inclusive, sustainable, and resilient.

Appendix

Non-exhaustive list of ILO declarations, instruments and tools referred to in the technical meeting on COVID-19 and sustainable recovery in the tourism sector

International labour standards

Fundamental Conventions

- Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87)
- Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98)
- Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), and the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930
- Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105)
- Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)
- Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)
- Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100)
- Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111)

Governance (priority) Conventions

- Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81)
- Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122)
- Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129)
- Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144)

Technical Conventions

- Right of Association (Agriculture) Convention, 1921 (No. 11)
- Right of Association (Non-Metropolitan Territories) Convention, 1947 (No. 84)
- Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102)
- Hygiene (Commerce and Offices) Convention, 1964 (No. 120)
- Invalidity, Old-Age and Survivors' Benefits Convention, 1967 (No. 128)
- Holidays with Pay Convention (Revised), 1970 (No. 132)
- Workers' Representatives Convention, 1971 (No. 135)
- Rural Workers' Organisations Convention, 1975 (No. 141)
- Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No. 142)
- Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978 (No. 151)
- Collective Bargaining Convention, 1981 (No. 154)

- Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155) and the Protocol of 2002 to the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981
- Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156)
- Termination of Employment Convention, 1982 (No. 158)
- Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159)
- Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169)
- Night Work Convention, 1990 (No. 171)
- Working Conditions (Hotels and Restaurants) Convention, 1991 (No. 172)
- Part-Time Work Convention, 1994 (No. 175)
- Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (No. 181)
- Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183)
- Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187)
- Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190)

Technical Recommendations

- Consultation (Industrial and National Levels) Recommendation, 1960 (No. 113)
- Workers' Housing Recommendation, 1961 (No. 115)
- Hygiene (Commerce and Offices) Recommendation, 1964 (No. 120)
- Working Conditions (Hotels and Restaurants) Recommendation, 1991 (No. 179)
- Private Employment Agencies Recommendation, 1997 (No. 188)
- Job Creation in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Recommendation, 1998 (No. 189)
- Maternity Protection Recommendation, 2000 (No. 191)
- Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation, 2002 (No. 193)
- Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195)
- Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Recommendation, 2006 (No. 197)
- Employment Relationship Recommendation, 2006 (No. 198)
- HIV and AIDS Recommendation, 2010 (No. 200)
- Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202)
- Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204)
- Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017 (No. 205)
- Violence and Harassment Recommendation, 2019 (No. 206)

Declarations

- Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up (1998)
- Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization (2008)
- Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (2017)
- Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work (2019)

Other ILO tools

- *Guidelines on occupational safety and health management systems (ILO-OSH 2001)*
- *Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all (2015)*
- *General principles and operational guidelines for fair recruitment (2019)*
- *Guidelines on decent work and socially responsible tourism (2017)*
- Global call to action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient (2021)