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Agenda item 17
Thematic session on "The impact of Artificial Intelligence and Innovation in Shaping Global Tourism" – Consideration and adoption of the Riyadh Declaration on the Future of Tourism

A/26/17
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Report on the Riyadh Declaration on the Future of Tourism

Executive summary

At the 123rd session of the Executive Council, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia proposed a series of outcomes for the 26th session of the General Assembly, which were supported by the Council. Among such outcomes is a ministerial declaration on AI in tourism.

A thematic session and debate on the topic will be held with a view to the adoption of the corresponding declaration.

The proposed "Riyadh Declaration on the Future of Tourism" is attached as Annex I to the present document and was circulated to the Member States by Note Verbale on 2 October 2025 with a deadline for inputs until 15 October 2025.

DRAFT RESOLUTION[1]

Agenda item 17
Thematic session on "The impact of Artificial Intelligence and Innovation in Shaping Global Tourism" –
Consideration and adoption of the Riyadh Declaration on the Future of Tourism
(document A/26/17)

The General Assembly,

Having heard the presentations and interventions of the thematic session and the ensuing debate,

1.	*Thanks* the speakers and the Members for their insights and contributions regarding the challenges and opportunities presented by the emergence of Artificial Intelligence for the tourism sector;

2.	*Recognizes* the urgent need to take action in order to manage this development and reap all its benefits;

Having examined the report on the Riyadh Declaration on the Future of Tourism (document A/26/17),

Noting decision [xxx] of the Executive Council on the Riyadh Declaration on the Future of Tourism,

3.	*Adopts* the Declaration;

4.	*Welcomes* the partnership-driven modality of the Executive Council for the preparation of a technical report on a future draft "Convention on the Future of Tourism" through the use of extrabudgetary resources exclusively;

5.	*Notes* that the sections of the Declaration relating to a future draft "Convention on the Future of Tourism" are subject to the receipt of extrabudgetary contributions to fund the preparation of the technical report; and

6.	*Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Executive Council at its first ordinary session in 2026 on the progress achieved and the funds mobilized for the future draft "Convention on the Future of Tourism".

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[1] This is a draft resolution. For the final resolution adopted by the Assembly, please refer to the Resolutions document issued at the end of the session.

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I. Programme of the thematic session on "The impact of Artificial Intelligence and Innovation in Shaping Global Tourism"

1. The structure of the thematic debate is proposed as follows:

    (a) Preliminary Remarks

    (b) Keynote: "The Future of Tourism: Artificial Intelligence and Global Investment Trends"

    (c) Official Handover of the Investment Guideline of Saudi Arabia

    (d) Award Ceremony of the UN Tourism Artificial Intelligence Challenge

    (e) Private Sector Leadership in Artificial Intelligence for Tourism

    (f) High-Level Policy Debate: "The Transformation of Tourism through Artificial Intelligence"

II. The Riyadh Declaration on the Future of Tourism

1. As reported to the 123rd session of the Executive Council (CE/123/8 Add.1), through a letter dated 22 April 2025, the Government of Saudi Arabia requested the support of the Executive Council and the collaboration of the Members towards the achievement of the following outcomes relating to Artificial Intelligence (AI) in tourism for the 26th session of the General Assembly:

    (a) **Global Framework to measure AI in Tourism**: Develop a standardized approach to assess AI readiness, adoption, and impact across the tourism ecosystem.

    (b) **Guidelines for AI Applications in Tourism**: Provide actionable global guidelines and sector-specific AI recommendations to support responsible AI adoption in tourism, in addition to a toolkit for policymakers and businesses, outlining the best regulatory practices and risk management strategies, combined with a training programme for Members on how to implement the Guidelines.

    (c) **Ministerial Declaration on AI in Tourism**: Set shared principles for ethical, inclusive, and responsible AI adoption across the tourism sector to be endorsed in the General Assembly.

2. The Executive Council, in decision 11(CXXIII) adopted on 31 May 2025, took note of these proposed outcomes and encouraged the Members to collaborate towards their realization.

3. On 2 October 2025, the Secretariat transmitted through a Note Verbale to the Member States the draft "Riyadh Declaration on the Future of Tourism" proposed by Saudi Arabia and invited them to review it and communicate any inputs or comments by 15 October to enable timely consolidation of a revised text.

4. The draft Declaration affirms the following objectives:

    (a) Act immediately to achieve sustainability

    (b) Advance digital transformation and innovation in the tourism industry

    (c) Strengthen sectoral resilience

    (d) Uphold strong data governance practices

    (e) Address workforce shortages and skills gaps

    (f) Promote culturally respectful and socially inclusive tourism

    (g) Confront the challenges of uneven tourist distribution

(h)   Improve tourism infrastructure and public safety

(i)   Ensure fair and inclusive tourism economies, and

(j)   Call on UN Tourism to draft a "Convention on the Future of Tourism" promoting such aims.

5.   Additionally, the draft Declaration tasks the Secretariat with the following deliverables:

(a)   Activate the AI Impact on Tourism Report and Recommendations Guide and present it at the Executive Council in 2026 at its first ordinary session;

(b)   Prepare a global maturity framework for AI and tourism and present it at the Executive Council in 2026 at its first ordinary session;

(c)   Prepare a report on Member State adoption and use of the AI Impact on Tourism Report and Recommendations Guide and present it at the Executive Council in 2027 at its first ordinary session; and

(d)   Prepare a technical report on the "Convention on the Future of Tourism" including an assessment of its possible scope and resources required for its development and present said report at the Executive Council within 12 months of the adoption of the Declaration.

6.   The Secretariat notes that the technical report on the "Convention on the Future of Tourism" is not foreseen in the draft Programme of Work and Budget for the biennium 2026-2027 and its preparation will require the receipt by the Secretariat of extrabudgetary contributions.

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Annex I: Riyadh Declaration on the Future of Tourism

RIYADH DECLARATION ON THE FUTURE OF TOURISM

Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 10 November 2025

Cognizant of the centrality of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, which sets out seventeen Sustainable Development Goals as a shared blueprint for people, planet, and prosperity; the UN General Assembly resolution on the promotion of sustainable tourism, for poverty eradication and environmental protection; and the UN General Assembly resolution on the promotion of sustainable and resilient tourism,

Recalling the UN Tourism General Assembly's endorsement of the Chengdu Declaration on *Tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals*, which affirms tourism's contribution to economic, trade, and cultural links between developed and developing countries; the Kyoto Declaration on *Tourism and Culture: Investing in Future Generations*, which commits to implementing innovative policies, strengthening capacities for sustainable development, and advancing local community empowerment and responsible tourism; the UN Tourism General Assembly's approval of the *International Code for the Protection of Tourists*, which sets standards for assisting and protecting tourists; and the General Assembly's adoption of the *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism*, which sets out principles for responsible and sustainable tourism development,

Recognizing that rapid technological advancements—including Artificial Intelligence (AI) and other emerging technologies—have the potential to fundamentally transform the global tourism sector, providing opportunities for growth and innovation while also creating risks of deepening inequalities between States with different levels of sectoral development,

Embracing the fact that these technologies will have profound and multifaceted effects on the future of tourism, including sustainability and environmental pressures, capacity and digital innovation gaps, exposure to crises and resilience challenges, workforce shortages and skills mismatches, cultural and social integration, overtourism and uneven distribution of visitors, infrastructure limitations, public safety concerns, and inequitable distribution of tourism benefits,

Therefore, we, the Ministers responsible for tourism of the Member States of UN Tourism, gathered in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in the context of the 26th session of the General Assembly of UN Tourism, acknowledge that Artificial Intelligence marks a turning point in the history of tourism, redefining how people travel, how destinations evolve, and how communities thrive. We declare that all Member States should:

1. **Act immediately to achieve sustainability**, placing it at the heart of tourism development by accelerating the shift toward low-impact models, protecting fragile ecosystems, and addressing climate pressures through collective action and responsible investment.

2. **Advance digital transformation and innovation** in the tourism industry by prioritizing investment in digital infrastructure, incentivizing innovation across the tourism value chain, and supporting the responsible integration of emerging technologies, taking into account different levels of maturity and existing infrastructures, to enhance competitiveness, visitor experience, and destination management.

3. **Strengthen sectoral resilience** by advancing risk preparedness, investing in adaptive infrastructure and systems, and fostering rapid response and recovery mechanisms to ensure continuity and stability in the face of disruptions.

4. **Uphold strong data governance practices** that ensure privacy, cybersecurity, and digital rights protection for tourists and industry.

5. **Address workforce shortages and skills gaps** by investing in tourism education and training, enhancing the attractiveness of tourism careers, and fostering stronger partnerships between governments, industry, and academia to build a skilled and future-ready workforce.

6. **Promote culturally respectful and socially inclusive tourism** by engaging authentically with local communities, safeguarding cultural heritage, and protecting the social fabric of host societies.

7. **Confront the challenges of uneven tourist distribution** by promoting destination diversification, easing pressures on overcrowded sites, and supporting policies and innovations that channel tourism flows toward emerging or underserved areas with high experiential value.

8. **Improve tourism infrastructure and public safety** by strengthening basic services, enhancing transport and connectivity, and embedding safety, security, and accessibility standards in the planning and operation of destinations.

9. **Ensure fair and inclusive tourism economies** by supporting local entrepreneurship—including technological and AI-driven initiatives—empowering small and medium enterprises, and promoting models that guarantee fairer value distribution across rural areas, local communities, and diverse segments of the tourism supply chain. Member States should also engage with UN Tourism in its efforts to foster responsible engagement with AI platforms as enablers of innovation and inclusion, while also encouraging countries to identify and assess the risks and benefits of AI in tourism. Such efforts should involve cost-benefit analyses and impact assessments prior to adoption, with particular attention to privacy, labour markets, and accessibility.

10. **Call on UN Tourism to draft a *Convention on the Future of Tourism*** that promotes the ideas contained in this Declaration.

We further direct:

- The Secretary-General to activate the AI Impact on Tourism Report and Recommendation Guide and to prepare a global maturity framework or index for AI and tourism, to help Member States assess their readiness, identify gaps, and guide responsible adoption of AI in the sector, and to present (i) the work done to activate the AI Impact on Tourism Report and Recommendation Guide at the Executive Council's first ordinary session of 2026; and (ii) the global maturity framework for consideration and possible adoption at the Executive Council's first ordinary session of 2026.

- UN Tourism to (i) prepare a report on the Member State adoption and use of the AI Impact on Tourism Report and Recommendation Guide and to prepare a global maturity framework or index for AI and tourism, including recommendations on how to improve both instrument and their utility these instruments. This report should incorporate comments and the experience of the Member States; and (ii) present this report to the Executive Council at its first ordinary session of 2027.

- The Secretary-General, in close consultation with Member States, to prepare a technical report on a future draft *Convention on the Future of Tourism*, including an assessment of its possible scope and resources required to draft such a convention, and to present it to the Executive Council within 12 months of the adoption of this Declaration.