

A Joint Statement on Tourism and COVID-19 - UNWTO and WHO Call for Responsibility and Coordination

27 February 2020
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As the current outbreak of the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) continues to develop, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) are committed to working together in guiding the travel and tourism sectors' response to COVID-19.

On 30 January 2020, the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak of COVID-19 to be a Public Health Emergency of International Concern and issued a set of Temporary Recommendations. WHO did not recommend any travel or trade restriction based on the current information available. WHO is working closely with global experts, governments and partners to rapidly expand scientific knowledge on this new virus, to track the spread and virulence of the virus, and to provide advice to countries and the global community on measures to protect health and prevent the spread of this outbreak.

Cooperation is key

The tourism sector is fully committed to putting people and their well-being first. International cooperation is vital for ensuring the sector can effectively contribute to the containment of COVID-19. UNWTO and WHO are working in close consultation and with other partners to assist States in ensuring that health measures be implemented in ways that minimize unnecessary interference with international traffic and trade.

Tourism's response needs to be measured and consistent, proportionate to the public health threat and based on local risk assessment, involving every part of the tourism value chain – public bodies, private companies and tourists, in line with WHO's overall guidance and recommendations.

UNWTO and WHO stand ready to work closely with all those communities and countries affected by the current health emergency, to build for a better and more resilient future. Travel restrictions going beyond these may cause unnecessary interference with international traffic, including negative repercussions on the tourism sector.

At this challenging time, UNWTO and WHO join the international community in standing in solidarity with affected countries.