

Nature Positive Travel & Tourism – a ‘Guardian of Nature’

We, the “Travel & Tourism Sector”ⁱ,

Recalls that the Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity at its seventh meeting adopted Decision 7/14 that acknowledged sustainable tourism can provide significant benefits to biodiversity conservation, and the adoption of the Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development;

Recalls that the Conference of the Parties at its thirteenth meeting adopted Decision 13/3 that acknowledged the role of tourism in the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011 – 2020;

Recognises the importance of sustainably managed biodiversity-oriented tourism for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the provision of quality jobs and income for Indigenous peoples and local communities, and the need to protect it from unsustainable activities as outlined in the Pyeongchang Declaration of Non-Extractive Businesses;

Further recognises that tourism revenues can sustain protected areas, and the conservation, management, and restoration of ecosystems, sensitive areas and habitats, the recovery of threatened species, and Nature-based Solutions to help lessen climate change;

Recognises that tourism, in addition to agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture, depends heavily on biodiversity and its components, as well as on the ecosystem functions and services that they underpin, that these sectors also impact on biodiversity through various direct and indirect drivers, and that the consequent loss of biodiversity can impact these sectors negatively, potentially threatening food security and nutrition and the provision of ecosystem functions and services that are vital to humanity;

Further recognises that there are currently many unsustainable tourism practices that can have significant impacts on biodiversityⁱⁱ;

Acknowledges that the tourism sector, and its value chains can contribute to the achievements of the goals and targets of the Sustainable Development Goals and the post-2020 global biodiversity framework;

Takes note that Target 14 of this framework stipulates the integration of biodiversity and its multiple values into policies, regulations, planning and development processes, including environmental impact assessments, across all sectors including tourism, apply safeguards as necessary to implement the goals and targets of the framework;

Takes note that Target 15 of this framework requires business to regularly monitor, assess and disclose impacts on biodiversity, to reduce negative impacts, and increase positive impacts;

Recalls the Cancun Declaration on Mainstreaming the Conservation and Sustainable Use for Well-being, adopted December 2016, that acknowledged the need for sustainable practice to ensure tourism contributes positively to biodiversity through integrated policies, education and

capacity-building programmes on biodiversity, but *recognises* that the Travel & Tourism must continue to work to adopt its recommendations;

Takes note of the report, “**Nature Positive Travel & Tourism**”ⁱⁱⁱ, and accompanying toolbox, that supports tourism to recognise the biodiversity risks, impacts and dependencies of their economic actions, and to provide measurable and verifiable and actionable information using internationally reliable standards for improved decision-making to mainstream biodiversity and the promotion of environmental (including biodiversity), social, cultural and governance standards as appropriate; [SBI-3/15]

Takes note of the **Nature Positive Vision for Travel & Tourism (Annex 1)** prepared by the World Travel & Tourism Council on building a common view among key stakeholders on the measurement, monitoring and disclosure of corporate impacts and dependencies on biodiversity;

Commits to working collectively to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030 and, aligned with decision 14/29, commit to strengthening the global community on a path towards achieving the 2050 Vision laid out in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

Calls the Conference of the Parties at its fifteenth meeting to:

- 1) *Acknowledge* ‘tourism’ in Target 14 of the framework as a key sector requiring mainstreaming and integrating biodiversity safeguards throughout public and private operations, including along their supply, trade and value chains;
- 2) *Adopt* Recommendation SBI-3/15, the Long-Term Approach to Mainstreaming, recognising the role of tourism in providing opportunities for local, regional, national governments, indigenous and local communities and civil society, through Business & Biodiversity partnerships to invest in destinations, encourage community stewardship, recognise biodiversity risks through an exchange of experiences and best practices, to develop Nature-based Solutions and manage tourism activities in an ecological, economic and socially sustainable manner;

Acknowledging the mutual dependencies of tourism and nature, and tourism’s potential as a leading sector to support efforts to halt and reverse biodiversity loss and to protect and restore nature and transform humanity’s relationship with the natural world,

Recommends the Conference of the Parties and other Governments at its fifteenth meeting to adopt a decision that:

- 3) *Acknowledges* the role of tourism in the implementation of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework;
- 4) *Acknowledges* the ability for tourism to:
 - a. Generate significant employment and revenues that provides opportunities for countries, and their communities, to grow and prosper while protecting their biodiversity and natural heritage.
 - b. Connect billions of people with nature and educates travellers about the importance animal protection and nature conservation.

- c. Operate sustainably to minimise dependency and impact on nature and ensure the natural heritage of destinations is conserved for future travellers and local communities.
 - d. Protect the rights of local and indigenous communities by enhancing the local economy, reducing impacts on nature, and stimulating progressive local development.
 - e. Sustain the conservation, management, and restoration of ecosystems and other effective area-based conservation measures, the protection of sensitive areas and habitats, the recovery of threatened species, and finance protect areas;
- 5) *Acknowledges* the commitment by the tourism sector to:
- a. Ensure their operations and value chains in destinations have a reduced environmental footprint, reduce the impacts of pollution and unsustainable use of resources, incorporate conservation and biodiversity monitoring, identify sites or species of importance, and innovate to develop Nature-based Solutions (in accordance with Target 15 of the framework);
 - b. Raise the environmental literacy of travellers, destination partners, suppliers and local communities, neighbours and employees, to cultivate an appreciation of nature and an understanding of the need for sustainable practices;
 - c. Support indigenous rights as a highly effective way to protect biodiversity, enabling people with a strong connection to the land or sea to make decisions about its use, and simultaneously creating tourism opportunities and local income generation;
 - d. Invest in destinations and those communities that live alongside wildlife, identifying animal and nature protection partnerships, encouraging community stewardship, and supporting local and national government initiatives to protect and manage areas of high biodiversity value;
 - e. Work with local and national authorities to address identified areas of negative impact and support national strategies to protect biodiversity and threatened species.
- 6) *Invites* Parties and other Governments to review and update the Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development (Decision 7/14) to ensure their alignment with the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and Decision 14/29, to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030 and, to achieve the 2050 Vision;

Invites Parties and other Governments, to take the following actions, as appropriate and in accordance with national legislation:

- a. To develop and adopt policies, programmes and frameworks, as well as strengthen existing ones, that facilitate Nature Positive actions and encourage sustainable nature-based tourism, noting that these activities rely on and can contribute to biodiversity conservation, and participation of all relevant institutions and stakeholders, including Indigenous peoples and local communities, subnational and local governments, the private sector and civil society;
- b. Adopt policies to reverse nature loss, control deforestation, crack down on illegal wildlife capture, killing and trade, protect vulnerable high biodiversity value habitats, and promote sustainable food consumption and production;
- c. To generate, integrate and use information on the positive and negative impacts on biodiversity of tourism for decision-making on the planning, operation and management of the sector, including with respect to investments, development of infrastructure, job creation, and in considering mechanisms for the reinvestment of tourism revenues on efforts to halt and reverse biodiversity loss and to protect and restore nature at the local or community level;

- d. To promote capacity-building, in particular for national and subnational protected areas agencies, including those working with coastal and marine ecosystems, and involving, as appropriate and in accordance to national legislation, the private sector, civil society and indigenous peoples and local communities, on development and implementation of financial instruments, such as entrance and tourism service fees, concessions and licences, and public/private partnerships, as appropriate, to complement and support investment in the establishment and maintenance of protected area systems and support sustainable tourism;
- e. Establish more sustainable revenue streams, including incentives and endowment funds, to support key biodiversity assets during tourism industry recessions, noting the serious impacts on protected areas during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- f. Protect at least 30% of terrestrial, freshwater and marine habitats, consistent with the High Ambition Coalition, through equitable measures that respect the rights and wishes of local people, including the land claims of indigenous groups.

ANNEX 1: NATURE POSITIVE VISION FOR TRAVEL & TOURISM

Travel & Tourism is intrinsically linked to biodiversity and nature. Over 80% of Travel & Tourism’s goods and services directly or indirectly rely on nature’s resources and functioning ecosystems. The popularity of nature-based tourism grows year on year, currently representing 50% of the Travel & Tourism market share, generating annual revenues of over US\$600 billion. Travel & Tourism generates millions of jobs and huge revenues that provide opportunities for countries, and their communities, to grow and prosper while protecting their biodiversity and natural heritage. However, since 1970, there has been a 69% average decline in species population sizes, with a quarter of all animals and plants identified as threatened with extinction. The sector can contribute to biodiversity loss, yet it has an absolute need for, and responsibility to contribute to the reversal of biodiversity loss; a target recognised as essential by the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and to progress towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Support the future Vision for Travel & Tourism

By 2030, the “Travel & Tourism Sector”^{iv} has adopted a ‘Nature Positive’ approach through integrating biodiversity safeguards, reducing carbon emissions, the impact of pollution and the unsustainable use of resources, and to protect and restore nature and its wildlife. Travel & Tourism will support and inspire governments, business, and society to implement the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and help transform humanity’s relationship with the natural world, and through investment in global destinations, become a “Guardian of Nature”.

To realise this Vision, Travel & Tourism Businesses and Industry Groups will commit to:

- Integrating a Nature Positive approach into core business operation and decision-making, including along their supply, trade and value chains by:
 - Regularly assessing impacts and dependency on nature, and measuring and monitoring key impacts indicators;
 - Defining and monitoring actions that mainstream of biodiversity protections, combining climate change impact mitigation with biodiversity protection and nature restoration;
 - Halting and reversing identified negative impacts, and supporting nature-based initiatives that make a demonstrable contribution to biodiversity protection and recovery leading to an overall positive impact;
 - Reporting publicly both progress against biodiversity targets, as well as the actions being taken, and seeking public/private partnerships, to support destination-based initiatives to protect and manage areas of high biodiversity value.
- Ensuring their operations and value chains in destinations have a reduced environmental footprint, incorporate conservation and biodiversity monitoring, identify sites or species of importance, and innovate to develop nature-based solutions;
- Raising the environmental literacy of travellers, destination partners, suppliers and local communities, neighbours and employees, to cultivate an appreciation of nature and an understanding of the need for sustainable practices;

- Supporting indigenous rights as a highly effective way to protect biodiversity, enabling people with a strong connection to the land or sea to make decisions about its use, and simultaneously creating tourism opportunities and local income generation;
- Working with local and national authorities to address identified areas of negative impact and support national strategies to protect biodiversity and threatened species.

To realise this Vision, Travel & Tourism encourages Governments to commit to:

- Adopting, integrating and enforcing the agreed Targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework;
- Recognising the commitment and role of Travel & Tourism as a leading sector to support efforts to halt and reverse biodiversity loss and to protect and restore nature;
- Working with the Travel & Tourism sector nationally and locally to develop and adopt policies, programmes and frameworks, as well as strengthen existing ones, that facilitate Nature Positive actions and encourage sustainable nature-based tourism, including through carefully designed and managed awareness and capacity building programmes;
- Adopting policies to facilitate public-private partnerships to encourage community stewardship, and incentivise conservation efforts;
- Establishing more sustainable revenue streams, including incentives and endowment funds, to support key biodiversity assets during tourism industry recessions;
- Adopting policies to reverse nature loss, control deforestation, pollution reduction, crack down on illegal wildlife capture, killing and trade, protect vulnerable high biodiversity value habitats, and promote sustainable food consumption and production;
- Protecting at least 30% of terrestrial, freshwater and marine habitats, consistent with the High Ambition Coalition, and through the reinvestment of tourism revenues, adopt equitable measures that protect and restore nature at the local or community level, while respecting the rights and wishes of local people.

This Vision for Travel & Tourism should be considered along with the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) publication “[Nature Positive Travel & Tourism: Travelling in Harmony with Nature](#)” which aims to help Travel & Tourism stakeholders understand and act on the urgent need to protect biodiversity and restore nature.

ⁱ Inclusive of tour operators, travel agents, providers of accommodation, airlines, and their respective networks and trade associations.

ⁱⁱ Land & sea use; Exploitation of natural resources; Climate change; Pollution; Invasive species

ⁱⁱⁱ *Nature Positive Travel & Tourism: Travelling in Harmony with Nature*. 2022 World Travel & Tourism Council [Nature Positive Travel and Tourism \(wtcc.org\)](#)

^{iv} Inclusive of tour operators, travel agents, providers of accommodation, airlines, and their respective networks and trade associations.