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# Sustainable Tourism: Why It Matters More Than Ever

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Tourism is not marketing, is not management, is not sociology, is not economics, is not psychology, is not anthropology, is not geography...  
it is all of the above and much more.

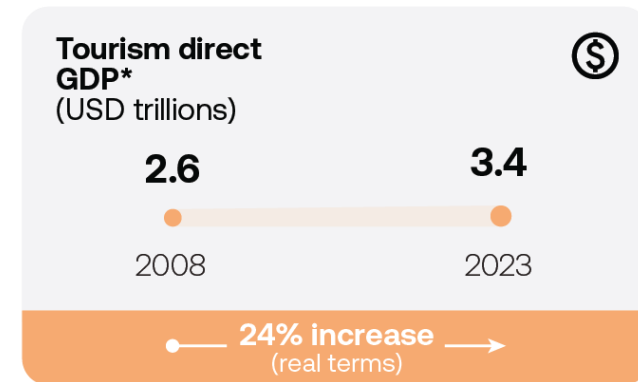
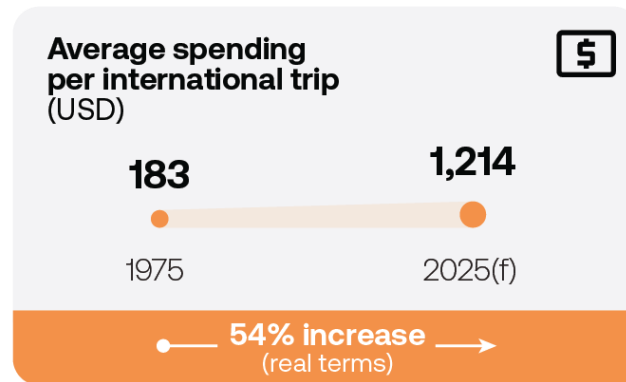
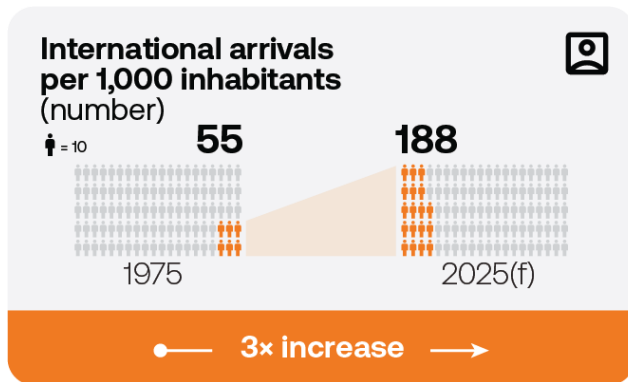
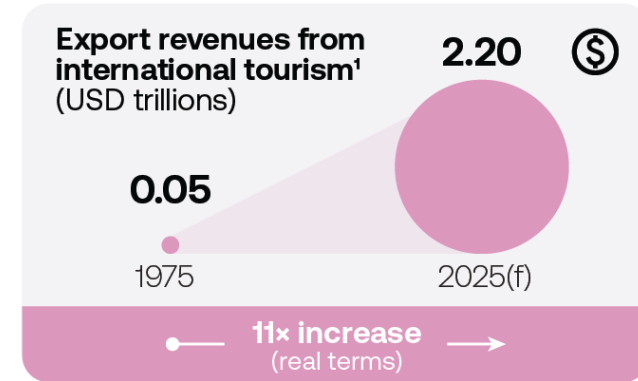
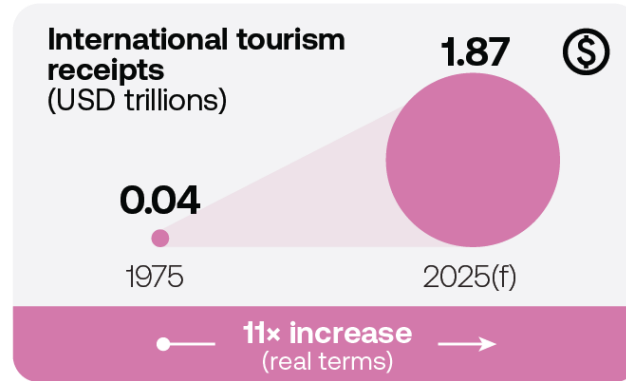
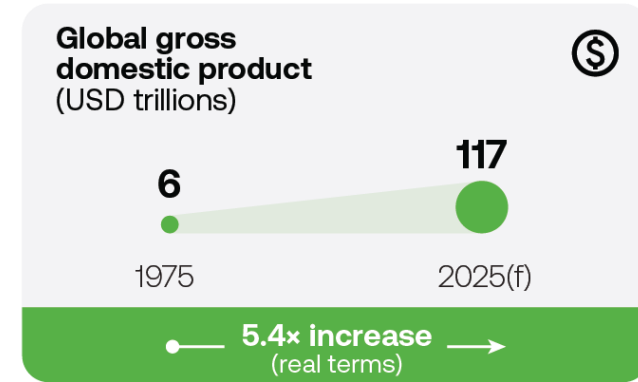
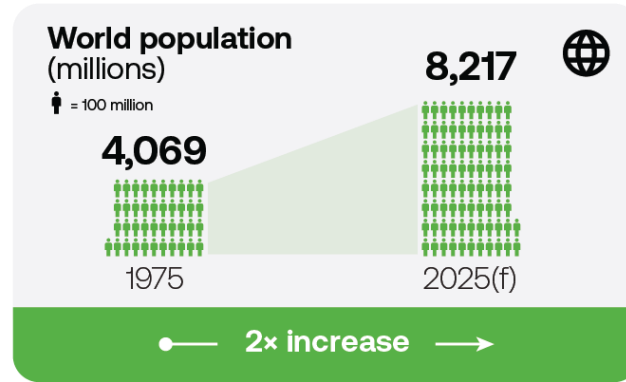
Prof. Jafar Jafari



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# International tourism 1975-2025



Source: World Tourism Organization (UN Tourism), UN Tourism based on IMF and UN DESA Data as of September 2025.

\*) Data for tourism direct GDP is only available from 2008 (earliest) to 2023 (latest).  
1) Revenues include international tourism receipts and passenger transport fares.



# International tourist arrivals by region

% change from 2019

## World

2023: -10%  
 2024: +0%  
 2025: +4%

Source: UN Tourism  
 (Data as of January 2026)  
 2025 data are provisional

## Americas

2023: -9%  
 2024: -1%  
 2025: -1%

## Europe

2023: -4%  
 2024: +2%  
 2025: +6%

## Africa

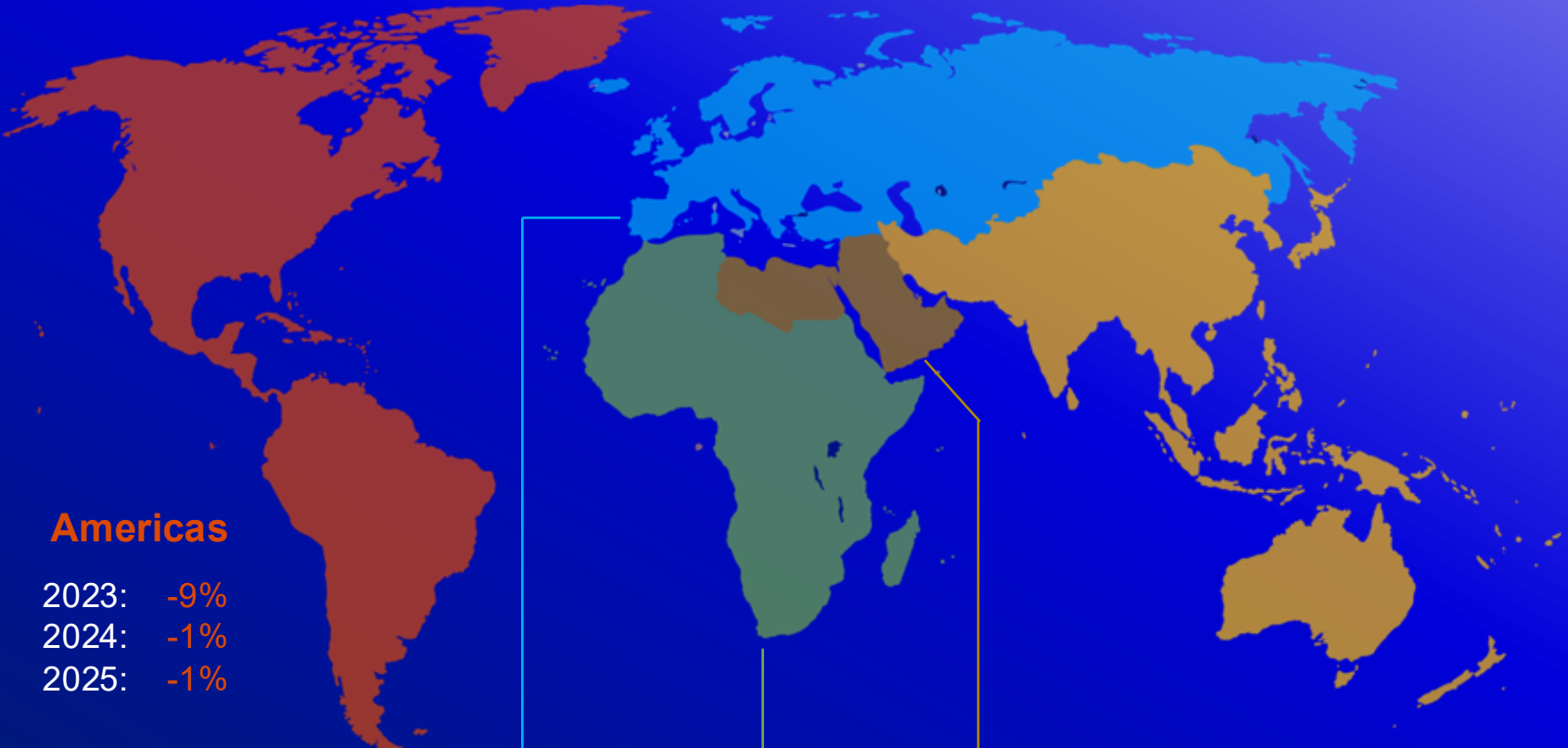
-5%  
 +8%  
 +17%

## Middle East

+30%  
 +35%  
 +39%

## Asia Pacific

-31%  
 -14%  
 -9%



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The designations and images in this map do not imply the expression of opinions whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the World Tourism Organization (UN Tourism) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers.



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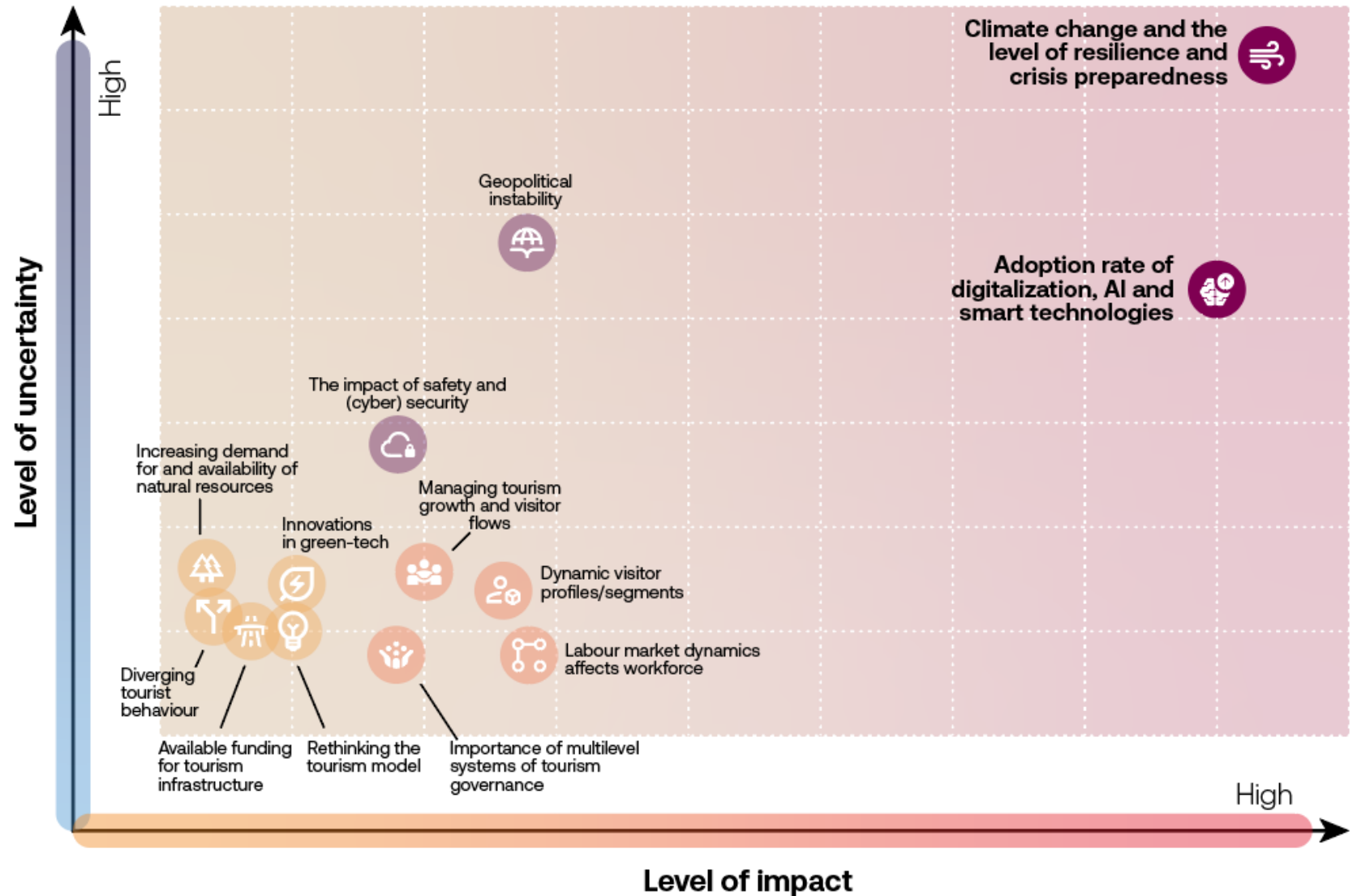
## Impact and uncertainty around technology and climate change, shape future scenarios

The 13 forces that drive change in tourism were **critically reviewed, enriched and assessed** in the strategic foresight sessions.

The sessions were also used to **rank forces in terms of impact and uncertainty**.

### 13 forces that drive change in tourism

Ranking by level of uncertainty and level of impact



# Policy Enablers of Tourism Development

## Criteria & Indicators

### 01 People

- Decent Work
- Gender Equality
- Inclusion of Marginalized Groups
- Accessibility
- Education & Skills Development
- Consumer Protection
- Satisfaction of Host Communities and Residents
- Visitor Satisfaction
- Safeguarding & Promotion of Cultural Heritage

### 02 Planet

- Biodiversity
- Climate Action
- Plastics
- Sustainable Consumption and Production
- Energy, Water & Waste

### 03 Prosperity

- Business Development & Entrepreneurship
- Tourism Investment
- Workforce & Human Capital
- Diversification & Economic Resilience
- Digitalization & Innovation
- Air, Land & Sea Connectivity
- Visa Openness
- Quality Assurance

### 04 Governance

- Institutional Framework
- Regulatory Framework
- National Tourism Policy Readiness & Alignment
- Policy Monitoring & Evaluation
- Transparency & Accountability Mechanisms
- Measurement for Evidence-based Policies
- Whole Government Approach, Vertical Coordination and Public-Private-Community Partnerships
- Crisis Preparedness & Management

# UN Tourism initiatives



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# Blue Tourism at the Heart of Ocean Action

## UN Tourism Contribution to Global Ocean Initiatives

### Mobilizing Finance for the Blue Economy - One Ocean Finance Facility

Co-designed with **UNCDF, UNEP, UNDP**

Unlocks **blended & innovative finance**  
Supports:

- Ocean health
- Climate-smart solutions
- Coastal community resilience

Focus on **SIDS & LDCs**  
Engagement toward UN Ocean Conference 2028



Global Tourism Plastics Initiative (2025), Global Tourism Plastics Initiative: Annual Progress Report 2024, UN Tourism, Madrid

### Strengthening Global Commitments Ocean Tourism Pact

With French Government, IDDRI, Ocean & Climate Platform

### Under the One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme

#### Key actions:

Coastal & Maritime Tourism Working Group  
Implementation of:

- **Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism**
- **Global Tourism Plastics Initiative**



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## International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories (INSTO)

- A global network of observatories monitoring the economic, environmental, and social impacts of tourism at destination level.
- Supports evidence-based, sustainable, and resilient tourism management through systematic measurement and monitoring.
- Currently connects 45 members worldwide, facilitating collaboration and science-driven sustainable tourism policies.
- Recent INSTO activities include a 2024 global meeting in Mallorca focused on advancing governance, measurement, and science-based sustainability indicators beyond GDP.
- INSTO's role is pivotal in ensuring tourism benefits local communities while balancing economic growth, environmental preservation, and social well-being.



6 observatories in Spain (Barcelona, Islas Canarias, Málaga, Mallorca, Navarra, Vizcaya)



# Sustainability and resilience

The Safety of Destinations (SAFE-D) Initiative offers structured guidance for crisis preparedness (extreme weather events and systemic shocks)  
Focused on key areas:

- Crisis Preparedness & Early Warning
- Emergency Response & Coordination
- Post-Crisis Recovery & Resilience
- Tourism Safety Standards & Regulations
- Tourism Police & Law Enforcement Cooperation
- Global Knowledge Exchange & Capacity-Building

- **SAFE-D Challenge for Europe (2025):** A initiative supporting startups, SMEs, and public authorities developing innovative solutions for destination safety and crisis response
- **Malta Challenge (2026):** Green technologies for Urban Heat Mitigation in Malta for an improved experience for residents and visitors.

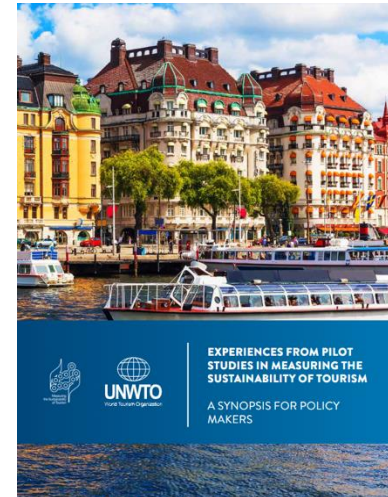


# The Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism



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- UN Tourism, in partnership with leading countries, the International Labour Organization and the United Nations Statistics Division, created a multidisciplinary and multi-stakeholder Expert Group on Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism to lead the development of a Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism.
- The Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism (MST) is an internationally agreed reference framework for measuring the economic, social and environmental aspects of tourism.
- MST supports the production in countries of reliable, internationally comparable data on the performance of countries and subnational tourism destinations when it comes to the sustainability of tourism.
- Pilots contributed real-world lessons that tested the conceptual direction presented in the framework from the perspectives of both policy relevance and technical feasibility. Over the past years, 29 pilots have been carried out.
- These experiences show that it is possible to measure in a comparable way the full breadth of elements that comprise the sustainability of tourism within a single integrated framework
- .
- Funding seems to be an important challenge faced by countries in advancing the implementation of the MST.
- The second most commonly mentioned challenge is the lack of support or interest from the policy community



# International Year of Sustainable and Resilient Tourism 2027

A UN-designated year to position tourism as a transformative driver of sustainable, inclusive and resilient development – bridging Agenda 2030 and beyond.

- 1 **Support** Member States in translating sustainability into practical policy
- 2 **Raise** global awareness of tourism as an engine for sustainable, inclusive and resilient development
- 3 **Advance** global dialogue on tourism's role beyond 2030
- 4 **Strengthen** skills, knowledge and institutional capacities across the sector
- 5 **Deliver** measurable impact by strengthening governance, standards and national coordination



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# Thank you



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