



## ***The Secretary-General***

### **Subject: Congratulatory Message for WTCF Changsha Fragrant Hills Tourism Summit 2022**

On behalf of everyone at UNWTO, I send my greetings to all delegates attending this year's WTCF Fragrant Hills Tourism Summit in Changsha, China.

The Summit is held at a pivotal time for our sector. The pandemic hit tourism hard. Every global region was affected, beginning in Asia and the Pacific. Now, as the world opens up again and the restart of tourism gets underway, we must seize the opportunity to transform our sector.

In September, I was in Asia and the Pacific for the occasion of World Tourism Day. In Bali, we celebrated around the theme of 'Rethinking Tourism', stressing that now is the time to step up our efforts to build a more inclusive, sustainable and resilient sector. The role of cities here cannot be overstated. We also need enhanced cooperation: between countries, between the public and private sectors and between destinations and tourists themselves.

I am pleased to say that UNWTO and the World Tourism Cities Federation have enjoyed a long and fruitful working partnership. I would like to congratulate the tenth anniversary of the foundation of the Federation and thank Secretary-General Yang Shuo for his unfaltering support and for working with us to advance several important initiatives. Notably, UNWTO and WTCF have signed two MOUs for cooperation on the development of tourism cities, and last year, UNWTO was proud to participate in the Agenda for the Future Development of World Tourism Cities (2021-2023), initiated by WTCF.

Now, this Summit sends an important message to cities everywhere. It serves to urge them to rethink the role of tourism in their urban agendas as a driver of inclusivity and sustainability.

Under the theme "*Reshaping City Tourism and Promoting Sustainable Development*", today's Summit will serve as a platform for pooling efforts from governments, tourism authorities, industry associations, tourism-based companies, as well as experts and scholars towards the advancement of a resilient, inclusive and sustainable recovery of tourism leaving no one behind in line with both the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda.

This momentum calls for cities to reflect and reshape their long-term vision of tourism to unfold its full potential as a driver of development, employment and socio-economic growth, through effective policies and governance models that ensure a public-private-community collaboration.

I trust this Summit will help the sector advance shared solutions for boosting the competitiveness and sustainable development of tourism and cities. From our side we will continue to work to provide our Members States and the sector with the most relevant and updated knowledge and policy guidance to advance our sustainability and innovation agendas.

Looking further ahead, I am sure that we have a chance to work together with WTCF, the Chinese Government and other Member States to shape a better and resilient tourism sector and I hope to see some of you in the forthcoming 2023 UNWTO Mayors Forum for Sustainable Tourism.

I wish you all a very successful and productive summit.



Zurab Pololikashvili

Secretary-General

World Tourism Organization

