



G20

SOUTH AFRICA 2025



Solidarity

Equality

Sustainability

Tourism Ministers' **Mpumalanga Declaration**

Skukuza, Mpumalanga, South Africa, 2025

G20 Tourism Ministers' Meeting

Mpumalanga Declaration G20 Tourism Ministers Meeting, 2025 Skukuza, Mpumalanga, South Africa

1. We, the Ministers of Tourism and senior representatives of the G20 members, invited countries and International Organisations present in Mpumalanga Province, South Africa on 12 September 2025 to discuss and build consensus around policy priorities and concrete actions to advance a sustainable, inclusive and resilient tourism agenda that responds to the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement, as well as the *UN Tourism Agenda for Africa – Tourism for Inclusive Growth*.
2. We welcome the four tourism priority areas identified by South Africa's G20 Presidency for the Tourism Working Group for the development of a sustainable, inclusive and resilient tourism sector namely: 1) Digital Innovation to enhance travel and tourism start-ups and MSMEs, 2) Tourism financing and investment to enhance equality and promote sustainable development, 3) Air connectivity for seamless travel, and 4) Enhanced resilience for inclusive sustainable tourism development¹.
3. We intend to continue the work initiated in previous G20 Tourism outcomes and call for further efforts to unlock opportunities and address challenges. This includes the priorities of Brazil's 2024 Presidency on assessing the implementation of Sustainable Tourism measures by G20 members and invited countries, stimulating technical cooperation between G20 members and invited countries and strengthening tourism as an engine of socioeconomic development. We also note the results of India's 2023 Presidency and Indonesia's 2022 Presidency.
4. We recognise that tourism plays an important role in advancing the main objective of the G20: fostering global economic cooperation and addressing major global challenges and crises and promote strong, sustainable, balanced and inclusive growth through international dialogue and coordinated action. By promoting dialogue, exchanging knowledge, and sharing best practices amongst

¹ Tourism Working Group Issue Note South Africa's G20 Presidency (2025)

the G20 economies, we aim to support strong, sustainable, balanced and inclusive growth and development of tourism.

5. We recall that, at the global level, the tourism sector has now fully recovered from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic with international tourist arrivals reaching 1.5 billion in 2024 and international tourism exports and direct tourism GDP surpassing the pre-pandemic values in 2023. However, this recovery has been uneven with certain destinations recovering faster than others and evolving global dynamics are impacting traveller sentiment and visitation². These results, driven by strong post-pandemic demand, robust performance from large source markets and ongoing recovery of emerging destinations underline the importance of continuing efforts to enhance the sector's resilience in order to better prepare for future challenges and crises and mitigate potential long-term impacts. We welcome the positive outlook for 2025 that points to continued growth in international tourist arrivals, with the first half of 2025 showing a 5% increase over 2024. While we welcome these results, we recall the need to manage tourism growth sustainably.
6. We recognise that strong, sustainable, balanced and inclusive growth and development of tourism is essential for tourism to remain a key driver of development and a major contributor to GDP and employment and other aspects of the SDGs. In the context of sustainable tourism, we encourage G20 members and invited countries to promote the full, equal and meaningful participation of youth, women, people in vulnerable situations, local communities and Indigenous Peoples, as appropriate, at all levels and in decision-making processes in all areas related to tourism, and to promote effective economic empowerment, mainly through decent work and income creation.
7. We further encourage G20 members and invited countries to embed sustainability and environmental considerations into tourism policies by shifting focus from visitor numbers to long-term value and impact, and prioritise low-emissions, resource efficient and biodiversity-friendly practices, while promoting circularity across the tourism value chain, in accordance with national strategies and needs.
8. We highlight our strong support for tourism innovation and investment, enhancing air connectivity, facilitating people-to-people contacts and developing inclusive and sustainable tourism practices in the spirit of the theme of South Africa's G20 Presidency – Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability.
9. We note the G20 Presidency documents discussed in the Tourism Working Group, namely 1) Action plan to enhance travel and tourism start-ups and MSMEs through digital innovation, 2) Report of the seminar on enhancing partnerships for tourism financing and investment for sustainable development,

² World Tourism Barometer, UN Tourism, January 2025

3) G20 Tourism report on air connectivity for seamless travel and 4) Action plan for enhanced resilience for inclusive sustainable tourism development.

Priority one: Digital Innovation to enhance travel and tourism start-ups and MSMEs

10. We recognise that integrating digital innovation, especially Artificial Intelligence (AI), smart platforms, and data-driven solutions, is no longer a future ambition but a present necessity to help address the challenges faced by the tourism sector, and in particular MSMEs and rural communities.
11. Recognising that inclusive growth must be matched by preparedness for future challenges, we underscore the importance of improving crisis readiness and response in tourism through the use of AI and other digital tools for early warnings, effective communication, and rapid recovery from disruptions. This includes building the capacity of MSMEs through targeted training, facilitating affordable access to technology, and monitoring progress with clear and measurable indicators.
12. We recognise that the Presidency Action Plan to enhance Travel and Tourism Start-ups and MSMEs can support G20 Members and invited countries in translating their priorities into concrete actions, aligned with their national priorities, circumstances and sustainable development and the G20's broader agenda for inclusive, sustainable and digitally driven growth.
13. We encourage G20 Members and invited countries to undertake the following actions on a voluntary basis, in accordance with their policies, regulations and priorities, to empower tourism start-ups and MSMEs through digital innovation:
 - a) Integrate AI innovation into national tourism strategies;
 - b) Promote standardisation;
 - c) Build institutional capacity and develop training programmes;
 - d) Establish financial incentives for MSME digital transformation;
 - e) Foster Inclusive entrepreneurship & innovation ecosystems and Incubators;
 - f) Expand digital access and smart infrastructure;
 - g) Promote ethical and responsible AI adoption, in line with national priorities;
 - h) Strengthen security of and in the use of ICTs and digital trust;
 - i) Apply digital tools to monitor and reduce environmental impacts; and
 - j) Monitor progress and foster adaptive policy frameworks.

Priority two: Tourism financing and investment to enhance equality and promote sustainable development

14. We recognise the importance of working with international financial institutions and development banks to explore opportunities to scale up concessional financing and blended finance schemes, with tailored instruments for resilient tourism infrastructure.

15. We further recognise the importance of Official Development Assistance (ODA), including concessional resources, and financing instruments in promoting inclusion, namely for women, youth and people with disabilities, while attracting private capital into MSMEs and community-based initiatives.
16. We emphasise the importance of integrating tourism into national development strategies and the need to unlock financing for sustainable tourism. To complement scarce resources, we call for the mobilisation of public-private capital through transparent, predictable, and sustainability-aligned investment environments.
17. We underscore the importance of project preparation, blended and impact finance, advocating for the creation of equity funding schemes and risk-sharing facilities to lower barriers for private participation, with emphasis on transparency and accountability.
18. We reaffirm the importance of transparent governance, anti-corruption measures, and respect for the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) to foster investor confidence.
19. We stress the importance of stepping up efforts to quantify tourism's contribution to overall sustainable development, on the basis of the Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism (SF-MST), as this could unlock finance from public and private sources.
20. We recognise the importance of centralising financing information, promoting seamless procedures, and enhancing collaboration, enabling a more transparent and accessible investment landscape. Such an initiative should be supported by appropriate frameworks.

Priority three: Air connectivity for seamless travel

21. We recognise that connectivity plays a crucial role in driving tourism development, with air travel accounting for 56% of all international arrivals and more than 70% for over half of G20 economies. We acknowledge that enhancing air connectivity for seamless travel promotes solidarity, coherence among peoples, equal opportunity and sustainable development. The development of air travel should align with sustainability in its economic, social and environmental dimensions. We further emphasise the importance of promoting the sustainable development of air travel supported by technological progress, innovation, and Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF), Low Carbon Aviation Fuels (LCAF) and other cleaner energies.
22. We acknowledge that an enhanced coordination between tourism and civil aviation administrations could help foster partnerships between the tourism and transport sectors, promote air connectivity for seamless travel and advance

flagship projects in G20 economies such as the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM).

23. We recognise the importance of multimodality in advancing the integration of various transport modes, including low-emissions alternatives to facilitate seamless travel, promote sustainable mobility and support the reduction of emissions by the tourism sector.
24. Recognising the different mandates of relevant ministries, we encourage G20 members and invited countries to champion modernised and comprehensive air service agreements. Updating these regulatory frameworks is a key opportunity to expand market access, open more routes, and support tourism development while promoting common goals in the areas of sustainability, aviation safety and security, and fair competition.
25. We encourage G20 members and invited countries to focus their efforts on the following areas of actions to enhance air connectivity for tourism at national, bilateral and multilateral level on a voluntary basis, in accordance with national policies, regulations and priorities:
 - a) Route development: enhance marketing, financial and/or economic levers;
 - b) Market access: open the skies, reduce barriers while ensuring fair competition;
 - c) Policy Coordination and Alignment: Create a new governance between tourism and air transport; and
 - d) Multimodal Integration and create conditions for Seamless Travel.

Priority four: Enhanced resilience for inclusive sustainable tourism development

26. We recognise that G20 members and invited countries are already engaged in and have undertaken initiatives consistent with the objectives of the Presidency action plan.
27. We recognise the need for G20 members and invited countries to promote inclusive tourism, recognising that sustainable and resilient development not only directly sustains and creates decent work, businesses and entrepreneurship, but also catalyses broader economic growth and expands opportunities for youth, women, people in vulnerable situations, local communities and Indigenous Peoples, as appropriate, with a practical and evidence-based approach.
28. We encourage the development of resilience frameworks and the use of sustainability certification and monitoring tools to assess progress at destination level. We support community-based early warning systems and promote nature-based solutions to build long-term resilience. We also encourage members to enhance the capacity of local stakeholders through education and foster inclusive governance mechanisms at appropriate levels ensuring equal

participation in resilience planning in alignment with the national context and priorities.

29. We reaffirm that social inclusion is a cornerstone of sustainable and resilient tourism. In this regard, appropriate indicators should be employed to measure progress in improving quality of life, reducing inequalities, and preserving cultural heritage. We stress the importance of policies that prevent displacement, protect the rights of workers, bridge the digital divide, and promote participation across generations. These objectives can be further advanced through capacity-building, local and community-based circularity, and the strategic reinvestment of tourism revenues into local infrastructure and social services.
30. We underscore that building resilience is a key condition for ensuring the long-term viability and competitiveness of tourism systems, and the economic and social well-being of local populations and destinations.
31. We encourage G20 members and invited countries to undertake the following actions on a voluntary basis, in accordance with their policies, regulations and priorities, to enhance resilience for inclusive and sustainable tourism development:
 - a) Embed sustainability and resilience as core pillars of tourism policy;
 - b) Strengthen crisis preparedness and rapid response;
 - c) Foster inclusive tourism that benefits and engages local populations and communities;
 - d) Drive economic and product diversification;
 - e) Unlock finance and support for tourism start-ups and MSMEs;
 - f) Invest in smart, sustainable and resilient systems;
 - g) Leverage data, technology and foresight;
 - h) Strengthen public-private collaboration; and
 - i) Support the development of sustainable tourism in under-developed or lesser-known regions.

Way Forward

32. We remain committed to advancing policies that foster a sustainable, inclusive and resilient tourism sector, while strengthening international and public-private cooperation.
33. We recognise the value of the G20 Tourism Working Group in promoting good practices and standards, including through the G20 Tourism and SDG Dashboard established during the Indian Presidency and in setting ambitious objectives for its members, drawing on existing national and international policies and measures, with the support of relevant international organisations.

34. We express our appreciation to the UN System, including UN Tourism, for its role as a knowledge partner and its technical support to the G20 Tourism Working Group.
35. We emphasise the need for continuous cross-sector collaboration to enhance tourism's economic and social impact, recognising the value of uniting tourism policy with other areas. We commend the South African G20 Presidency for taking the initiative to prioritise issues that, while primarily within the competence of other policy areas, significantly impact tourism and for reaching out to the respective work streams.
36. We express our gratitude to the South African G20 Presidency for its efforts and leadership in 2025 and look forward to enhancing our cooperation for further progress under the United States of America's G20 Presidency in 2026.