

## **United Nations declares 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development**

*The United Nations (UN) General Assembly has approved the adoption of 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development. The resolution, adopted on 4 December, recognizes “the importance of international tourism, and particularly of the designation of an international year of sustainable tourism for development, in fostering better understanding among peoples everywhere, in leading to a greater awareness of the rich heritage of various civilizations and in bringing about a better appreciation of the inherent values of different cultures, thereby contributing to the strengthening of peace in the world”.*

“The declaration by the UN of 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development is a unique opportunity to advance the contribution of the tourism sector to the three pillars of sustainability – economic, social and environmental, while raising awareness of the true dimensions of a sector which is often undervalued” said UNWTO Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai. “As the lead UN agency for this initiative, UNWTO is very much looking forward to proceeding with the organization and implementation of the International Year, in collaboration with Governments, relevant organizations of the UN system, other international and regional organizations and all other relevant stakeholders”, he added.

This decision follows the recognition by global leaders at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) that “well-designed and well-managed tourism” can contribute to the three dimensions of sustainable development, to job creation and to trade.

The decision to adopt 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development comes at a particularly important moment as the international community embraces the new Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), approved by the UN General Assembly last September. Tourism is included as targets under three of the SDGs - SDG 8: *Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all*; SDG 12: *Sustainable Consumption and Production* and SDG 14: *Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development*.