**STATEMENT BY**

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**HIGH-LEVEL THEMATIC DEBATE ON TOURISM**

**UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY HALL, 4 MAY 2022**

**Mr. President,**

**Excellencies,**

**Distinguished delegates,**

I am honored to join you in today’s High-Level Thematic Debate on sustainable and resilient tourism.

I wish to thank the President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Abdulla Shahid, for putting the spotlight on tourism that took a sharp hit from the pandemic and had multi-sector spill overs.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a significant decline in tourist arrival, with almost 1 billion fewer international tourist arrivals than during pre-pandemic levels. This is a 73 percent fall from 2019.

Obviously, this has drastically impacted people’s income and livelihood in many countries, including in my country, Indonesia, of which has more than 34 million people depend on tourism and creative economy sector.

And the impact is more severe for low-income and small island countries.

After battling the pandemic for almost two years, the light at the end of tunnel seemed near.

Investing in resilient tourism should indeed be the main pathway for global tourism. Through Indonesia’s experience, I concur that sustainable tourism is meant to elevate the dignity of local culture, wisdom and its environmental well-being.

In this critical period of recovery, we can no longer do business as usual. We need to shift our orientation, from mass tourism to quality tourism, of which tourists could experience the best of the best with opportunities for them to spend more time in a destination.

**Excellencies,**

Without a doubt, a safe and inclusive recovery means restoration of the tourism sector, particularly investment in sustainable tourism.

While increasing tourism activity since late last year prefigures a vigorous rebound… recovery remains fragile due to the vulnerability of the tourism sector.

Any form of disruption in the global economy, can lead to an unsettling effect on tourism. Notwithstanding disruption emanating from climate change and biodiversity loss is at a crisis point. The transformative role that tourism is expected to play will greatly depend on our collective efforts to address biodiversity and the climate change crisis.

As such, it is paramount to strengthen and enhance investment in a resilient and sustainable tourism sector. And in today’s challenging environment, when the need for economic recovery is so pressing, fiscal spaces are tight, and various development challenges persist, there are number of actions that we can take.

To initiate opportunities for collaboration, we need to think out of the box, availing of innovative financing as a solution. Blended finance and growing role of the private sector needs to be encouraged to finance sustainable tourism.

We can strengthen the private sector’s role in innovative financing for tourism by sharing knowledge on the performance of blended finance mechanisms that are effective in producing the desired outcomes.

It would be beneficial to gain a broad understanding of how different types of innovative financing mechanisms address specific problems to attract greater attention and manage risk.

Subsequently, it is key to strengthen the community’s role as agent of change for tourism transformation.

**Mr. President,**

**Excellencies,**

**Distinguished delegates,**

Under Indonesia’s G20 Presidency and as part of our effort in building a resilient and sustainable tourism sector, we will focus on advancing the recovery of tourism through strengthening the community’s role as agents of change for tourism transformation.

We have worked with the UNWTO to design a comprehensive guideline, pinpointing communities as the ‘Rockstar’ of the recovery process. The “*Guidelines for Strengthening Communities and MSME as Tourism Transformation Agents - A People Centered Recovery*” mapped out global collaboration on pertinent agendas of transformative tourism sector, encompassing five G-20 tourism issues:

**First,** developing human capital related to employments, skills, entrepreneurship, and education.

**Second**, enhancing innovation, digitization, and creative economy.

**Third**, women and youth empowerment.

**Fourth**, climate action, biodiversity conservations, and circular economy.

And **fifth**, strengthening policy, governance, and investment frameworks.

In addition, to ensure a resilient tourism sector, it is vital to also strengthen the Global Health Architecture.

Considering the severe impact of the pandemic on tourism, and to prepare for a future outbreak like COVID-19, the tourism sector needs to have the resiliency when pressures on the health sector arise.

Specifically, we need to look at on how we can harmonize health protocols standards for cross-border travels.

The Tourism Working Group (TWG) of the G20 that will convene on 10-11 May 2022, in the context of Recover Together, Recover Stronger would welcome your inputs in today’s dialogue that includes views on health protocols.

Before concluding, I am delighted to inform all of you that this year Indonesia will host two main global events in tourism and creative economy. The first one is the World Tourism Day 2022 with the theme of “Rethinking Tourism”, to be held on September 27th, and “The World Conference on Creative Economy” to be held in October 2022.

Finally, **Mr. President,** the crucial role of tourism cannot be overemphasized, particularly in the face of the triple headed beast of COVID-19, Climate Change and Conflict that have been the sources of division.

Tourism is inherently dependent on people-to-people contact, and in times like today, recovery in the tourism sector will be more important than ever to bring people together.

I thank you.

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