**TWENTY-FIFTH INTER-AMERICAN CONGRESS OF** OEA/Ser.K/III.26.1

**MINISTERS AND HIGH-LEVEL AUTHORITIES OF TOURISM** CIDI/TUR-XXV/DEC. 1/21

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VIRTUAL

DECLARATION OF PARAGUAY

TOWARD THE RECONSTRUCTION AND REBUILDING OF TOURISM POST COVID-19

(Adopted at the sixth plenary session and subject to revision by the Style Committee)

WE, THE MINISTERS AND HIGH-LEVEL AUTHORITIES OF TOURISM OF THE MEMBER STATES OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES (OAS), meeting virtually on October 6, 202, for the Twenty-fifth Inter-American Congress of Ministers and High-Level Authorities of Tourism;

CONSIDERING that the theme of the Twenty-fifth Inter-American Congress of Ministers and High-Level Authorities of Tourism, “Toward the Reconstruction and Rebuilding of Tourism, Post COVID-19,” underscores the notion that rebuilding and reactivating tourism in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic is essential to the sustainable development and economic growth of all OAS member states;

CONSIDERING ALSO that travel and tourism remain one of the most integral and resilient segments of the global economy, while also being the sectors most vulnerable to disturbances and destabilizing events like the COVID-19 pandemic, and climate change, among others;

CONSIDERING FURTHER that the tourism sector has been one of the hardest hit by the pandemic, with an estimated decrease in tourist arrivals in 2020 of 72% worldwide, and 69% in the Americas, in addition to border restrictions and decreased passenger demand, and that tourism businesses, particularly micro, small, and medium-sized tourism enterprises, have been disproportionately harmed by the decline in economic activity;

CONSIDERING ALSO that rural and urban communities, many of which provide tourism services as part of the community tourism offer, have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic;

RECOGNIZING that travel restrictions remain in place in many OAS member states in an effort to contain the spread of the virus and the emerging variants that cause COVID-19 and that tourism businesses continue to feel the impact;

RECOGNIZING ALSO that the member states have taken extraordinary measures to support tourism businesses, particularly micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises impacted by the decline in tourism activity and have adopted public policies and strategies to mitigate the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic;

RECOGNIZING FURTHER that the aviation sector is an important catalyst for tourism, bearing in mind that most tourists reach their destinations via air, and that cruise tourism is one of the most popular and dynamic segments of international travel and tourism and has been recognized as one of the fastest growing categories in the leisure travel market;

RECOGNIZING AS WELL that at its second special meeting, the Inter-American Committee on Tourism (CITUR), under the chairmanship of México, established four specialized working groups to: 1) “Standardize Biosafety Protocols for Travel and Tourism in the Americas” (Chile); 2) “Develop an Agenda on Climate Change and Sustainable Tourism Development in the Americas” (Colombia/Costa Rica); 3) “Develop a 2050 Agenda for the Americas” (Mexico); and 4) “Develop a Recovery Action Plan for the Cruise and Airline Industries in the Post-Pandemic Stage” (Jamaica);

CONSIDERING that the introduction of vaccinations and the immunization of people in the member states have been important factors in the uptick in economic activity and that the adoption of biosafety protocols, the streamlining of entry requirements, and the development and testing of initiatives like digital passports and health certificates have facilitated a return to travel and tourism in some destinations;

CONSIDERING ALSO that, despite the positive impact of vaccination programs, COVID-19 vaccine distribution has been uneven in the OAS member states, giving way to uneven recovery in tourism activity and hindering the full recovery of the tourism sector in member states; and

CONSIDERING FURTHER that the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has selected “Tourism for Inclusive Growth” as the theme for World Tourism Day 2021, thereby paying tribute to the sector’s ability to drive development, promote respect, equality and create opportunities for millions of people around the world, representing an important aspiration for tourism in the post COVID-19 pandemic phase in the Americas,

WE, THE MINISTERS AND HIGH-LEVEL AUTHORITIES OF TOURISM OF THE MEMBER STATES:

1. Recognize the importance of continuing to work to build consensus for coordinating actions among countries in order to build resilience in the tourism sector and restore confidence among travelers so that tourism recovery in the Americas may be robust and sustained.
2. Call for inter-agency and inter-sectoral collaboration, particularly among health, immigration, transport and tourism officials, to provide appropriate guidance on how to build trust among travelers in order to pave the way for the return of international visitors and support businesses in the tourism value chain so they may remain open.
3. Encourage the preparation of a flexible recovery plan of action that takes a multidimensional approach and includes, among other things, standardized biosafety and protocols, that facilitates safe and efficient travel, sustainable tourism that considers climate change and tourism communities, public-private partnerships, and continued support for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises and other tourism businesses adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.
4. Urge consideration be given to the voluntary adoption of a regional digital health certificate to facilitate travel among the countries of the Americas, establishing proof of vaccination against COVID-19, negative test results, or recovery from the disease, in line with other successful practices around the world.
5. Urge equitable distribution of vaccines as considered by each member state to be safe and effective, among and within countries in order to support a safe and successful resumption of tourism.
6. Instruct the General Secretariat to continue working with the relevant entities in order to support the recovery of community tourism in the Americas, and in particular, continue with the consolidation of the Indigenous Tourism Collaborative of the Americas, which is a network of original peoples leaders and public and private sector and civil society tourism organizations, in order to promote the sustainable growth and development of indigenous communities throughout the Americas.
7. Also request the General Secretariat to support the working group that was installed in the presence of the Secretary General of the United Nations World Tourism Organization and at the request of the Mexican chairmanship of the Inter-American Committee on Tourism (CITUR), in order to unify the efforts made for the rebuilding of the tourism sector at the continental level and the world tourism agenda.
8. Instruct the General Secretariat to prepare the draft work plan based on this Declaration and the action plans of the four CITUR working groups created in August 2020, for consideration by the ministerial process authorities.
9. Give special recognition to Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Jamaica, and Mexico, and to request the General Secretariat to continue to support the efforts of the four specialized working groups established at the Second Special Meeting of the CITUR in August 2020 to support tourism in the Americas post COVID-19.
10. Acknowledge the work of Mexico in its capacity as Chair of the CITUR of the Organization of American States (OAS) for the 2018-2021 cycle, as well as Jamaica and Panama as Vice-Chairs.
11. Thank the Government of Ecuador for its offer to host the Twenty-sixth Inter-American Congress of Ministers and High-Level Authorities of Tourism in 2024.
12. Thank the Government of Paraguay and its National Tourism Secretariat for their commitment and their contribution to the success of the Twenty-fifth Inter-American Congress of Ministers and High-Level Authorities of Tourism, held virtually within the framework of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development.

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