The Rt Hon Sir Keir Starmer, MP  
Leader of the Labour Party  
United Kingdom  

4 August 2020  

Dear Sir Keir Starmer, MP  

A call for your personal engagement and leadership to recover global Travel & Tourism  

First, we wish to thank you for your leadership during these unprecedented and difficult times and for your cooperation with the UK government. The travel and tourism sector globally has been devastated with 120 million jobs impacted and the livelihoods of their many dependents. This situation calls for unprecedented collaboration within countries, internationally and between the public and private sectors to recover travel and tourism and the global economy.

We are writing to inform you that we have written to the Prime Minister to seek his urgent personal engagement and commitment to ensure the proactive international collaboration and alignment that is desperately needed. In the firm belief that this is a non-partisan issue, we are asking you for the same personal engagement and commitment to work with and support the Prime Minister and the government on this issue. The United Kingdom has a proud history of coming together when the world needs it most.

As you will be aware, Travel & Tourism has been a critical catalyst for economic growth, and is responsible for 330 million jobs, or one in ten jobs globally, and 10.3% of global GDP (USD 8.9 trillion). In the UK, travel and tourism in 2019 accounted for 9% of the total economy and almost 4 million jobs, of which 2.9 million are now at high risk.

The restart and recovery of Travel & Tourism, and its associated economic and social benefits, is highly dependent on rebuilding traveller confidence and a consistent alignment amongst countries.

According to medical experts we can protect lives and recover the economy by supporting travelling and the application of the following four measures in a global consistent way:

1. **Wearing a mask**: This should be mandatory on all modes of transport throughout the entire traveller journey, as well as when visiting any interior venue and in locations where there is restricted movement which results in close personal contact and required physical distancing cannot be
maintained. According to medical evidence, such measures can reduce the risk of the spread by up to 92%\(^1\).

2. **Testing and contact tracing** – We need extensive, rapid and reliable testing before departure and/or after arrival (symptomatic and asymptomatic would-be travellers), supported by effective contact tracing tools. The application of multiple tests will help to isolate infected people.

3. **Quarantine for positive tests only**: Quarantine for healthy travellers should not be necessary and damage the economy if testing and effective containment measures are in place before departure and/or at arrival. This can replace blanket quarantine in a more targeted and effective way significantly reducing the negative impact on jobs and the economy.

4. **Reinforcing global protocols and standardise measures**: The adoption of global health and safety protocols will help rebuild traveller confidence and ensure a consistent, coordinated and aligned approach of the travel experience in addition to significantly reducing the risk of infection. We also support the Public Health Corridor Concept which promotes a clean and safe end-to-end journey.

We are convinced that the countries of the G-7 can rescue the world from this unprecedented crisis by acting in an effective and coordinated way that will allow us to bring back more than 120m jobs and livelihoods affected. We are calling on the G7, plus Australia, The Republic of Korea and Spain (as ten of the top global tourism source markets) to work together to commit to and deliver the measures needed.

This matter is truly of outstanding importance and urgency to the future well-being of literally billions of people around the world. As such, we have sent similar requests to all the heads of government of the ten major source markets for international Travel & Tourism as well as to the leaders of the opposition, in the firm belief that this is a non-partisan issue requiring full support, coordination and commitment.

**Can we count on your commitment?**

We intend to make public on Monday 10 August our proposals and requests to the ten governments. We urge the selected countries to hold an urgent COVID-19 global summit on restarting Travel & Tourism to deliver a coordinated action plan with immediate impact.

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\(^1\) Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health
We therefore respectfully request your response to this letter before Friday 7 August, so that we can confirm your personal engagement to work with the UK government in a non-partisan way to re-start the travel and tourism sector and rebuild the economy while still maintaining public health.

WTTC and all our Members are fully committed to support the UK and other countries globally in this endeavour of resolving the worst crisis of our generation.

Thank you in advance and with our highest respects,

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