



New WTTC report provides recommendations to drive recovery and enhance resilience of the Travel & Tourism sector

High testing costs and continued travel restrictions hinder accessibility of travel and create elitist system

With only 34% of world population fully vaccinated, immunisation inequality threatens economic recovery

London, UK: The World Travel & Tourism Council ([WTTC](#)) and the Ministry of Tourism of Saudi Arabia launched today an important new report that highlights the pain points to restore international mobility, and recommendations to drive the recovery of the Travel & Tourism sector, while enhancing its resilience.

With the pandemic bringing international travel to an almost complete standstill, due to border closures and severe travel restrictions, Travel & Tourism suffered more than any other sector over the past 18 months.

The sector's contribution to global GDP fell from nearly US\$ 9.2 trillion in 2019, to just US\$ 4.7 trillion in 2020, representing a loss of almost US\$ 4.5 trillion. Furthermore, as the pandemic ripped through the heart of the sector, a shocking 62 million Travel & Tourism jobs were lost.

This new report highlights WTTC's latest economic projections which reveal the sector's recovery is set to be slower than expected this year, largely linked to continued border closures and challenges linked to international mobility.



The sector's contribution to GDP is expected to rise by a modest 30.7% year-on-year in 2021, representing only US\$ 1.4 trillion increase, and at the current rate of recovery, Travel & Tourism's contribution to GDP could see a similar year-on-year rise of 31.7% in 2022.

Meanwhile, the sector's jobs are set to rise by a mere 0.7% this year, representing only two million jobs, followed by 18% increase next year.

Representing the worst crisis for the Travel & Tourism sector, COVID-19 not only impacted the global economy, but also the wellbeing and livelihoods of people all over the world.

Before the pandemic began to severely impact the sector, Travel & Tourism was one of the largest sectors globally, responsible for one in four new jobs created worldwide between 2015-2019 and was a key enabler for socio-economic development and poverty reduction, offering unique opportunities to women, minorities, rural communities, and youth.

This new report from WTTC, in partnership with Ministry of Tourism of Saudi Arabia reveals pain points that focus on the urgent challenge to restore international mobility, framed by the need to address the weaknesses of the sector shown during the pandemic by redesigning a more sustainable, inclusive, and resilient future.

This important new report demonstrates how international border closures, uncertainty due to changing rules, the prohibitive cost of testing, and the lack of reciprocity and uneven vaccination rollout have hindered the recovery of the Travel & Tourism sector during the past 18 months.

By June 2020, all countries still had some form of travel restrictions, playing an important role in the drop in international spending by 69.4% that year. These restrictions, ever-changing and confusing, continued to significantly affect traveller's confidence to book, as there was no clear pathway, nor global consensus, in terms of testing requirements, quarantine, and vaccination standards.

According to the report, the latest global traveller sentiment survey published by Oliver Wyman shows only 66% plan to travel abroad in the next six months, and less than one in 10 (9%) have booked a future trip, showing the continued uncertainty of traveller's decision-



making. Costly PCR tests continue to have a detrimental impact on travellers, reversing any progress of making travel accessible and creating further inequalities.

Julia Simpson, President & CEO WTTC, said: “The Travel & Tourism sector is key for many livelihoods which continue to be affected by the failure to harmonise and standardise COVID-19 regulations worldwide. There is no excuse for a patchwork of regulations, countries need to join forces and harmonise the rules. Many developing countries rely on international travel for their economy and have been left devastated.

“As is stands, only 34% of the global population have been fully vaccinated, showing that there are still large vaccine rollout inequalities globally. A swift and equitable immunisation plan, alongside worldwide reciprocal recognition of all WHO approved vaccines, is needed to safely reopen international travel and promptly resume the economic activity.

“WTTC recognises the importance of restoring consumer confidence, and we have developed, with the public and private sector working together, a set of harmonised Safe Travel protocols for 11 industries across the Travel & Tourism sector. Our globally recognised Safe Travels stamp has been adopted by more than 400 destinations worldwide.”

His Excellency Ahmed Al Khateeb, Minister of Tourism for Saudi Arabia said: “This report shows the impact COVID-19 has had on the global travel and tourism industry - and the unevenness of the recovery now underway. We need to be clear: unless tourism recovers economies will not recover.

“We must come together to support this critical industry, which before the pandemic was responsible for 10% of GDP globally. With this report, Saudi Arabia is calling for the sector to come together to Redesign Tourism for a more sustainable, inclusive and resilient future.”

The report outlines recommendations to achieve a swift recovery of the Travel & Tourism sector, as COVID becomes an endemic.

A focus based on international coordination to reopen borders, fair testing conditions, and digitalisation for travel facilitation, together with sustainability and social impact at the core of the sector, will restore international mobility and the Travel & Tourism sector. These



measures will save millions of jobs, and enable communities, businesses, and destinations which rely on the Travel & Tourism sector, to fully recover and prosper again.

To read the report in full, please visit:

[Wttc.org/Portals/0/Documents/Reports/2021/Uniting to Restore International Mobility.pdf](https://www.wttc.org/Portals/0/Documents/Reports/2021/Uniting%20to%20Restore%20International%20Mobility.pdf)

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