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**Topic: “Discuss current issues in tourism considering the UNWTO 2030 Agenda for**

**Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals”.**

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# Introduction

With 1.4 billion international visitors and receipts of US$1.7 trillion in 2018, the tourism industry is one of the world’s largest and most active economic sectors. This is a potent resource that can aid in the progress of the Agenda's Goals. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the UNWTO 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development have made tourism a focal point of international improvement initiatives (UNWTO, 2020).

# Background

The UNWTO's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Tourism provides a worldwide blueprint for responsible vacationing. It lays out a set of guiding principles and tactics to help the tourism industry evolve toward a greener, more sustainable future. The Agenda was endorsed by the UNWTO General Assembly in 2013 and is now being implemented in countries around the world. It is a comprehensive document that sets out a vision for tourism that is sustainable, equitable and inclusive.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Tourism is an important part of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which provide a global framework for achieving sustainable development and peace (Streimikiene et al., 2021). The Agenda provides a framework for action to ensure that tourism contributes to economic development, social progress, environmental protection, and the preservation of cultural diversity. The Agenda is focused on four main areas: sustainable management of resources; responsible tourism practices; equitable access to tourism benefits; and strengthening the role of the tourism sector in promoting global peace and security.

The UNWTO 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Tourism has been designed to provide a comprehensive framework for the implementation of sustainable tourism practices. It lays forth a variety of steps that the tourism industry may take to improve sustainability. The Agenda also provides a platform for dialogue, collaboration and cooperation between stakeholders in the tourism sector, such as governments, industry, NGOs, civil society and the academic community.

The UNWTO calls on all stakeholders to work together to promote the sustainable development of tourism. Governments should develop effective policies and regulations to promote sustainable tourism development, while the private sector should adopt sustainable business practices and invest in sustainable projects. Civil society and non-governmental organizations should also play an important role in promoting sustainable tourism development, by advocating for the protection of cultural heritage, the promotion of responsible tourism practices, and the empowerment of vulnerable groups.

Last but not least, the UNWTO stresses the importance of cooperation between tourism's many different sectors, including governments, businesses, NGOs, and civil society at large (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2020). The ideals of inclusiveness, equity, fairness, and respect should serve as the compass for this partnership, which is founded on a common concept of sustainable development.

The United Nations World Tourism Organization's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its accompanying Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a framework for the tourist industry to participate in the worldwide endeavor to improve the world. The tourism industry can play a significant role in attaining the Agenda and its Goals, and in realizing the United Nations' vision of a world in which all people can live in dignity, peace, and prosperity, through the promotion of sustainable and inclusive tourism development (Guo et al., 2019).

## Current Issues in Tourism

The tourism sector is still facing numerous challenges due to the current global health crisis and other sustainability issues. These include the lack of diversification and inclusivity in the sector, the increasing demand for travel and tourism, the need to reduce tourism’s environmental impact, and the need to address inequality and poverty in tourism destinations.

*1. Lack of Diversity and Inclusivity in the Sector:*

The global tourism sector is not as diverse and inclusive as it should be. The sector is still largely dominated by a handful of major players, and there is a lack of representation from different countries, cultures and social groups (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020). There is also a lack of diversity in leadership positions and a lack of gender parity in the sector. This lack of diversity has the potential to lead to a lack of understanding of the cultures and customs of the people who visit these destinations, as well as a lack of understanding of the local communities where tourists travel to.

*2. Increasing Demand for Travel and Tourism:*

The global travel and tourism industry is growing at an unprecedented rate, with the number of international tourist arrivals increasing every year. This increased demand has put a strain on the environment, with tourism activities such as air travel, cruise ships and large-scale resorts contributing significantly to climate change.

*3. Reducing Tourism’s Environmental Impact:*

In order to reduce its environmental impact, the tourism industry needs to move towards more sustainable practices. This includes reducing the reliance on fossil fuels for transport and energy, minimising the production of waste, and protecting and restoring natural ecosystems.

*4. Addressing Inequality and Poverty in Tourism Destinations:*

Tourism can be a powerful tool for reducing poverty and inequality in tourism destinations. However, there is still a need to ensure that the benefits of tourism are shared equitably among all stakeholders, including local communities, businesses and governments. Tourism also needs to ensure that its activities are not detrimental to the livelihoods of local people or the environment.

## Explanation

Tourism has seen a remarkable growth in recent years, allowing more people to experience the cultures and landscapes of other countries and regions. However, there are still many issues in the tourism industry that need to be addressed. This essay will discuss three of these issues, including over-tourism, lack of access to tourism services and products for people with disabilities, and the industry’s high carbon footprint. One of the major issues in the tourism industry is over-tourism of certain destinations, which can lead to overcrowding and environmental degradation (Roxas et al., 2020). This problem has been exacerbated by the rise of low-cost airlines and online travel booking sites, which have made it easier for people to travel to popular destinations. Over-tourism can lead to congestion in popular areas, a decrease in the quality of life for local residents, and damage to the environment due to increased energy and water consumption (Almuhrzi and Al-Azri, 2019). To address this issue, local governments need to implement policies that limit the number of tourists in their destinations, as well as promote sustainable tourism practices. Another issue is the lack of access to tourism services and products for people with disabilities. People with disabilities often face challenges when travelling due to lack of suitable infrastructure and services. This is due to the fact that many destinations are not designed with the needs of disabled people in mind, and many tourist attractions and services are not accessible to them. To address this issue, governments, businesses, and organizations need to ensure that there are adequate facilities and services for people with disabilities in tourist destinations. The tourism industry also has a large carbon footprint, which is damaging to the environment. This is caused by emissions from transportation, as well as the increased demand for energy and water in tourist destinations. To address this issue, businesses and organizations need to focus on implementing more sustainable practices such as using renewable energy sources and reducing water consumption. Additionally, governments need to introduce policies that encourage more sustainable forms of transportation, such as rail networks and electric cars (Grilli et al., 2021).

The UNWTO 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Tourism is an important tool for guiding the tourism sector in its transition to a more sustainable future. The Agenda provides a comprehensive framework for the implementation of sustainable tourism practices, and sets out a range of actions that the sector needs to take in order to make tourism more sustainable. The Agenda is focused on four main areas: sustainable management of resources; responsible tourism practices; equitable access to tourism benefits; and strengthening the role of the tourism sector in promoting global peace and security.

The Agenda provides a platform for dialogue, collaboration and cooperation between stakeholders in the tourism sector, such as governments, industry, NGOs, civil society and the academic community. It also provides a framework for measuring progress towards sustainable tourism, and for monitoring the impacts of tourism on the environment and local communities.

The UNWTO 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Tourism provides an opportunity for governments, industry, NGOs and civil society to work together to develop and implement sustainable tourism practices (Martínez et al., 2019).

# Practical application of UNWTO 2030 Agenda

*1. Establishing sustainability standards:* The UNWTO 2030 Agenda encourages governments and other stakeholders to establish sustainability standards that define the minimum requirements for responsible and sustainable tourism development. These standards can be used to evaluate tourism activities and to ensure that they are consistent with the principles of sustainable tourism. Governments and other stakeholders can also use these standards to set targets for sustainable tourism development and measure their progress.

*2. Developing green certification programs:* The UNWTO 2030 Agenda promotes the development of green certification programs that recognize the efforts of businesses, organizations and communities to adopt sustainable practices. Such programs provide incentives for businesses and organizations to adopt sustainable practices, and can be used to measure and report on the performance of sustainable tourism activities (Bhatia et al., 2022).

*3. Promoting sustainable transport:* The UNWTO 2030 Agenda encourages governments and other stakeholders to promote sustainable transport systems that reduce the environmental impacts of tourism activities (Sthapit, 2021). This includes encouraging the use of public transport and the adoption of low-carbon technologies such as electric vehicles, as well as investing in infrastructure to support sustainable transport.

*4. Supporting local communities:* The UNWTO 2030 Agenda promotes the involvement of local communities in the planning and management of tourism activities. This includes providing opportunities for local communities to benefit from tourism activities, such as through employment and economic opportunities, and ensuring that local communities are consulted and involved in the decision-making process.

*5. Protecting cultural heritage:* The UNWTO 2030 Agenda encourages governments and other stakeholders to protect and promote cultural heritage. This includes developing policies and regulations to protect cultural heritage sites, promoting sustainable tourism activities that respect and promote cultural heritage, and investing in infrastructure to preserve cultural heritage sites.

*6. Promoting responsible tourism:* The UNWTO 2030 Agenda encourages governments and other stakeholders to promote responsible tourism activities that respect local cultures, protect the environment, and contribute to the economic and social development of communities. This includes developing policies and regulations to promote responsible tourism, encouraging businesses and organizations to adopt responsible practices, and investing in education and training programs to raise awareness and promote responsible tourism (Spenceley and Rylance, 2019).

*7. Establishing a national sustainable tourism policy:* This involves developing a comprehensive strategy to promote sustainable tourism practices that takes into account the economic, social and environmental impacts of tourism. It also involves setting out goals and objectives to be achieved, and developing and implementing measures to ensure that they are met.

*8. Developing sustainable tourism products and services:* This involves creating tourism products and services that are sustainable and meet the needs of tourists and local communities. This includes providing accessible and affordable accommodation, transport, food and entertainment, and promoting responsible and sustainable tourism practices.

*9. Strengthening the role of the tourism sector in promoting global peace and security:* This involves promoting responsible tourism practices and working with other sectors to promote peace and security. This includes working with governments, industry, NGOs and civil society to promote sustainable tourism practices, such as developing tourism products and services that promote peace and security.

*10. Establishing effective monitoring and evaluation systems:* This involves setting up systems to track, measure and evaluate the impacts of tourism on the environment, local communities and other stakeholders (Romeo et al., 2021). This includes establishing systems to measure and monitor the economic, social and environmental impacts of tourism, as well as setting up systems to ensure that the goals and objectives of sustainable tourism are met.

The UNWTO 2030 Agenda is a comprehensive approach to sustainable tourism, and it identifies six key areas of focus. These include:

*1. Social inclusion and well-being:* This includes the promotion of social inclusion, respect for cultural diversity, and human rights, as well as the promotion of health and well-being.

*2. Resource efficiency and environmental management:* This includes the promotion of resource efficiency, the reduction of environmental impacts, and the management of natural resources.

*3. Economic growth and prosperity:* This includes the promotion of economic growth and prosperity, the generation of decent work, and the reduction of poverty.

*4. Connectivity and mobility:* This includes the promotion of connectivity and mobility, the improvement of infrastructure, and the facilitation of access to destinations.

*5. Capacity building and education:* This includes the promotion of capacity building, education, and training, in order to ensure that tourism is managed responsibly and sustainably.

*6. Governance and empowerment:* This includes the promotion of effective governance, the strengthening of institutional capacity, and the empowerment of local communities.

The UNWTO 2030 Agenda provides a global framework for sustainable tourism, and it is intended to guide governments, businesses, and other stakeholders in the development and management of the tourism sector (Hall and Seyfi, 2021). Implementing the Agenda requires the collaboration of all stakeholders, and it is important to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the Agenda and its objectives.

# Conclusion

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the UNWTO 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development lay the groundwork for tourism's participation in the fight for a better world. The tourism sector has the potential to be a powerful force for positive change and can help to promote sustainable development and reduce poverty and inequality in tourism destinations. Yet, there are still many obstacles that the tourism industry must overcome, such as a lack of diversity and inclusiveness, rising travel and tourism demand, the need to lessen tourism's environmental impact, and the alleviation of poverty and inequality in popular tourist hotspots. To ensure that tourism can be a force for good, it is essential that these issues are addressed.

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