

# International Tourism Newsletter

Special edition of ITC global services network



## NEWS

### International tourist arrivals up 4% reach a record 1.2 billion in 2015

2015 marks the 6th consecutive year of above-average growth, with international arrivals increasing by 4% or more every year since the post-crisis year of 2010. International tourist arrivals grew by 4.4% in 2015 to reach a total of 1,184 million in 2015, according to the latest [UNWTO World Tourism Barometer](#), launched in January 2016. Some 50 million more tourists (overnight visitors) travelled to international destinations around the world last year as compared to 2014.

Demand was strong overall, though with mixed results across individual destinations due to unusually strong exchange rate fluctuations, the drop in oil prices and other commodities which increased disposable income in importing countries but weakened demand in exporters, as well as increased safety and security concerns.

By region, Europe, the Americas and Asia and the Pacific all recorded around 5% growth in 2015. Arrivals to the Middle East increased by 3% while in Africa, limited data available, points to an estimated 3% decrease, mostly due to weak results in North Africa, which accounts for over one third of arrivals in the region. In North Africa, arrivals fell by 10%, having been affected by the instability and security problems in certain countries, especially Tunisia, Libya and Egypt.

To read more, click [here](#).

### Visa Openness levels continue to progress

The share of tourists required to obtain a visa prior to travelling continues to decline and is at its lowest level ever according to UNWTO's latest [Visa Openness Report](#) launched in January 2016. In 2015, 39% of the world population could travel for tourism without obtaining a traditional visa prior to departure as compared to only 23% in 2008. On average, 18% of the world's population was able to travel to a destination without a visa in 2015, while another 15% could receive a visa on arrival and 6% was able to obtain eVisas. Several areas of opportunity remain for destinations worldwide to improve visa application processes and entry procedures. For example, [Bahrain's new visa policy](#) recently extended e-visa facility to nationals from Egypt, Morocco, Kenya,

Ghana, Ivory Coast, Mozambique, Cameroon, Gabon, Senegal, Mauritius and Seychelles, bringing the total number of countries benefitting from e-visas to 113.

Overall, emerging economies continue to be more open than advanced economies. At the regional level, South-East Asia, East Africa, the Caribbean and Oceania remain the most open areas while Central Africa, North Africa and North America were in 2015 the most restrictive sub-regions.

UNWTO has been long advocating for the need to advance [travel facilitation](#) as a means to promote tourism development and multiply its socio-economic benefits. Data on visa policies is collected by UNWTO on an annual basis since 2008 and validated through surveys and communication with the Organization's Member States.

To read more, click [here](#).

---

## ITC's project to boost tourism in Kayah State

The International Trade Centre (ITC) together with the Netherlands Centre for the Promotion of Imports from developing countries (CBI) launched [a tourism project](#) in August 2014 to enhance the competitiveness of Myanmar's tourism industry and related supply chains, through an inclusive tourism approach for the benefit of local communities and enterprises. This project focuses on the scenic Kayah State, a region in the east of Myanmar which is home to an outstanding natural and cultural heritage.

The project works towards three main objectives:

- To increase the export capacities of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and local suppliers of goods and services
- To strengthen tourism related associations in Yangon and Kayah State and
- To facilitate and expand business linkages and technical partnerships

[With the support of UNWTO](#), ITC will be organizing a series of events at [ITB Berlin 2016](#) aimed at showcasing the tourism potential of Myanmar.

## RECENT EVENTS

---

### Tourism Ministers discussion on Tourism and Security

Ministers of Tourism and High Level officials from 86 countries gathered in Madrid on 22 January 2016 to discuss the development of closer collaboration mechanisms between tourism and security administrations to ensure a safe, secure and seamless travel framework. The meeting stressed the global nature of security challenges and the need to create global solutions while enhancing the collective support to countries affected.

Participants called for the integration of tourism in international and national emergency systems and highlighted the role of public-private sector cooperation, as well as the importance of strong communications and media partnerships.

At the meeting, the Minister of Tourism of El Salvador, Napoleon Duarte, shared a new initiative of the Ministers of Central America and the Dominican Republic, supported by UNWTO and UNODC that will create a regional taskforce to engage tourism stakeholders and security forces.

To read more, click [here](#).

---

### FITUR – International Tourism Trade Fair, 20-24 January 2016, Madrid

[FITUR](#), the International Tourism Trade Fair, is a global meeting point for tourism professionals and the leading

trade fair for inbound and outbound Ibero-American markets. FITUR celebrated its 36th staging from 20 to 24 January 2016.

Over its five-day staging, the Trade Show thus received 231,872 visitors (professionals and general public). Particularly noteworthy was professional participation, with 124,659 visitors, a turnout that demonstrates the importance of FITUR on the international circuit of tourism sector events.

UNWTO undertook a number of events and activities at FITUR-2016.

- **INVESTOUR – VII Tourism Investment and Business Forum for Africa, 21 January 2016**

After seven editions with progressive increases in terms of both participants and projects, [Investour](#) has become one of the prime catalysts for the development of African tourism in Spain, and specifically at FITUR.

Organized jointly by [UNWTO](#)/FITUR/Casa Africa, the main objective of INVESTOUR is to promote the development of sustainable tourism in Africa, while encouraging exchanges on investment and business opportunities in Africa. The just passed 7th edition was attended by more than 400 professionals of the sector and some twenty African tourism ministers. This year session was devoted to the discussion of current issues that are most relevant for the development of African tourism, such as investment, Africa's image and air connectivity.

Africa's tourist arrivals are expected to grow by between 2% and 5% in 2016. According to estimates, the number of tourists travelling to Africa will reach 134 million in 2030 compared to the current 54 million tourists.

For more information, [click here](#).

- **UNWTO and Casa Árabe Ministerial Round Table on Tourism Development Policies and Strategies in the Middle East and North Africa region: Sustaining Growth through Shocks**

In the framework of FITUR 2016, Casa Árabe and [UNWTO](#) jointly organized on the 21 January 2016 the fourth Ministerial discussion forum on Tourism Development Policies and Strategies in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region under the heading Sustaining Growth through Shocks. The discussion focused on current trends and short term prospects of tourism in the region in the context of a turbulent regional scenario and persistent uncertainties over the global economic outlook, as well as on strategies and measures to enhance Tourism safety and security, accelerate and consolidate recovery, sustain growth, boost destinations competitiveness and promote investment.

This year, the Ministers of Tourism of Algeria, Jordan and Sudan, in addition to the Tourism Ministers of Morocco, Lebanon and Palestine participated to the debate.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

---

### ITB BERLIN, 9-13 March 2016

As the Leading Travel Trade Show, [ITB Berlin](#) is the foremost business platform for global touristic offers. The [UNWTO](#) has partnered with [ITC](#) to promote the Kayah State of Myanmar at this year's ITB Berlin 2016. With the aim of promoting partnerships and business links among interested tourism stakeholders, a series of activities will be held to present the incredibly rich tourism potential of Kayah State, a region home to an outstanding natural and cultural heritage.

---

### Regional Conference in Jordan, 24-25 April 2016

[The Regional Conference on Tourism for Development and Inclusive Growth](#), hosted by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), and the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities of the Kingdom of Jordan, will be a two-day conference with the aim to facilitate dialogue among key tourism stakeholders, to

identify challenges and best-practices that are specific to the region in order to provide comprehensive recommendations for tourism development in the future, encompassing the following three priority areas:

- **Provide access to training and employment opportunities** in the effort to address the large inclusion gaps concerning youth and women, and to reduce regional employment and skills disparities. This would incentivize entrepreneurship in productive sectors in goods and services related to the tourism value chain.
- **Enhance resource and energy efficiency** through improved building standards and increased capacity in building management. This would entail creating better understanding of resource efficient operations, and increasing competitiveness.
- **Strengthen local SMEs** to become integral parts of the complex tourism value chain, which requires integrating trade policy dimensions into tourism planning at the national level and the corporate level, particularly with regards to sector-specific and local institutions.



TRADE IMPACT  
FOR GOOD

To submit an information item for circulation through the ITC-UNWTO International Tourism Newsletter (special edition of Global Services Network), please send an email to [tradeinservices@intracen.org](mailto:tradeinservices@intracen.org) or [geneva-representative@unwto.org](mailto:geneva-representative@unwto.org)

To subscribe to ITC Global Services Network, [click here](#).

To unsubscribe to ITC Global Services Network, [click here](#).