

# Coronavirus: UNWTO forecasts loss of up to US\$50 billion in international tourism receipts for 2020

By **Mary Jane Pittilla** on March, 9 2020 | Industry News



In an update on the tourism sector's response to the coronavirus outbreak, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has pointed to a decrease in international arrivals and receipts in 2020.

"Public health measures need to be implemented in ways that minimize any unnecessary disruption to travel and trade," the tourism body said on March 6.

Since the start of the outbreak, UNWTO said it had been working closely with the World Health Organization (WHO) to ensure this was the case.

UNWTO has revised its 2020 prospects for international tourist arrivals to a negative growth of 1% to 3%, translating into an estimated loss of US\$30 to US\$50 billion in international tourism receipts. Before the outbreak, UNWTO predicted a positive growth of 3% to 4% for this year.

This first assessment expects that Asia and the Pacific will be the worst affected region, with an anticipated fall in arrivals of 9% to 12%. Estimates for other world regions are premature in view of the rapidly evolving situation, said UNWTO, underscoring that any estimate must be treated with caution and is likely to be updated.

UNWTO called for financial and political support for recovery measures aimed at tourism, and to include support for the sector in the wider recovery plans and actions of affected economies.

The impact of the outbreak will be felt across the whole tourism value chain, it said. UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili stressed that "small and medium sized enterprises make up around 80% of the tourism sector and are particularly exposed with millions of livelihoods across the world, including within vulnerable communities, relying on tourism".

Political and financial commitments are key to ensure that tourism can lead wider economic and social recovery, as proven in past disruptions on the back of the highly resilient nature of the sector and its ability to bounce back strongly, said UNWTO.