



Message for World Tourism Day 2015

Taleb Rifai, Secretary-General, World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

“One Billion Tourists, One Billion Opportunities”

This year’s World Tourism Day is an opportunity to celebrate the transformative potential of one billion tourists.

Today, more than one billion tourists travel to an international destination every year. These billion tourists have made tourism a leading economic sector, contributing 10% of global GDP and 6% of the world’s total exports.

Yet these big numbers represent more than just economic strength – they reflect tourism’s vast potential and increasing capacity to address some of the world’s most pressing challenges, including socio-economic growth, inclusive development and environmental preservation.

As a sector behind as many as one in eleven jobs worldwide, tourism is a valuable source of livelihood for millions of people. Built around the millions of cross-cultural encounters happening every day in different corners of the world, tourism is also a gateway to greater understanding of the world beyond our borders, the first step in building peace and between communities and nations.

Tourism is more than just about reaching a destination – tourism has a global reach. Every time we travel, we become part of a global movement that has the power to drive positive change for our planet and all people.

This 27th of September, let us celebrate the value of the “One Billion Tourists” and work together in making tourism a true instrument of opportunity and inclusion. Let us all turn the power of one billion into a genuine force for good.