



Presented by: Iberostar Group

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The Importance of Tourism for managing, protecting, conserving and restoring marine and coastal ecosystems, particularly for SIDS and LDCs.

The health of the ocean is intrinsic to the benefits the tourism sector derives from it. The sector profits from a healthy ocean and the destinations and communities we operate in are dependent on the services it provides. Hundreds of millions of people flock yearly to the ocean to connect with nature and seek well-being and recreation. Increasingly, people interact with the ocean through activities such as diving, snorkeling, sailing, and more. The habitats and biodiversity of the coasts and oceans are the reason our travelers visit hotels and resorts. Coral reefs alone, according to a study commissioned by the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean, generate 11.5 billion US\$ annually in tourism revenue.

Global environmental change, including climate change, is aggravating worldwide disasters. In the last 10 years, insurance companies have paid out over 300 billion US\$ for coastal storm damage and by 2050, it is expected that sea-level rise and increased extreme weather events will cost urban areas more than 1 trillion US\$ annually (ORRAA). Beach and coastal tourism make up the primary portfolio for most leisure tourism. Iberostar alone has identified that **exposure to extreme weather events, natural disasters, and climate change is the number one threat to its business**. Not only will extreme weather patterns have a direct impact on the infrastructure and operations, but before that the financial impact will be perceived through insurance costs and investment risk assessments in future developments. According to the University of Waterloo, Ontario, in the Caribbean alone, it is estimated that about 30% of resorts would be partially or fully inundated by one meter of sea-level rise, and 60% would be at risk of beach erosion and beach loss.

At Iberostar, we see the need for the tourism industry to **reestablish marine and coastal health and strive towards resilient ecosystems with functioning ecosystem services that will build regenerative and resilient tourism**

destinations. For us, that means the valuation and protection of nature that provides benefits to our operations, the tourism sector, and the destinations and communities we operate in. This action requires the **commitment of governments and the collaboration of public and private stakeholders**, to set enabling conditions for scalable and replicable solutions that reach the necessary tipping points to have resilient and regenerative destinations.

Iberostar created a Coastal Health Roadmap that we believe meets many of the objectives and principles presented during the UN Ocean Conference 2022. These guiding principles, that meet the societal challenges identified by IUCN, will set the action agenda for Iberostar, but believe these are clear business cases and pathways for other tourism sector stakeholders to follow.

Principles

1. Climate risk mitigation through NbS and green-blue infrastructure investments. This includes the restoration and sustainable management of coral reefs, mangroves, seagrasses, dunes, marshlands and other marine and coastal ecosystems.
2. Being carbon neutral by 2030, primarily through decarbonization of operations, and high-value carbon sequestration projects that support biodiversity conservation and community engagement.
3. Protection and restoration of the most valuable tourism assets of a destination - beach and water - using NbS to address beach loss and improve water quality.
4. Regreening of hotels and destinations, with efforts to reduce water consumption, eradicate invasive species and reintroduce native species.
5. Enable economic well-being of communities, through sustainable tourism and alternative livelihoods, while protecting the ocean.

Iberostar agrees with the statements of other proponents, that action needs to be science-based and data-informed to ensure well-managed ecosystems for the long term. We believe the tourism sector has to integrate action into operations as part of our day-to-day business. It must be inclusive of the value chain and the employees and customers while working in collaboration with key stakeholders at destinations at the national and international level.

We have seen with dismay that the tourism voice is not sufficiently present at the ocean dialogue, despite it being predicted to be by 2030 the largest ocean economy (OECD). We urge you all to give tourism a seat at the ocean table and we urge tourism stakeholders to take immediate action for the preservation of our ocean.

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