



**High-level virtual event
Sustainable mountain tourism
International Mountain Day 2021**

Background

International Mountain Day (IMD) is celebrated around the world every year on 11 December. The day is a chance to raise awareness about the importance of mountains to life, to highlight opportunities and challenges in mountain development, and to build alliances that will bring positive change to mountain peoples and environments around the world.

The theme of this year's IMD celebration, "Sustainable mountain tourism," highlights the potential of sustainable tourism to support and progress local economies, preserve natural and cultural heritage, and conserve landscapes and biodiversity in mountains.

Mountain destinations attract a growing number of visitors. While tourism is one of the sectors that has been most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic – with an immense impact on economies and livelihoods on all continents – visits to open air, less crowded, domestic destinations have increased, opening new opportunities for mountain tourism.

To ensure the sustainability of mountain tourism it is essential to measure its impact, manage resources and waste, define the carrying capacity of destinations, advance digitalization and invest in sustainable infrastructure and products. The COVID-19 pandemic offers mountain destinations and businesses an opportunity to rethink the products and services they currently offer and aim at a more inclusive and sustainable future.

A new study by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) features examples of best practices and initiatives from all over the world from Mountain Partnership members – including governments, intergovernmental organizations, NGOs and UN agencies – and from the UNWTO Members States and network. The publication provides practical guidelines and recommendations in the spirit of building back better for mountain tourism in the future.

This event aims to promote dialogue and cooperation to tap mountain tourism's full potential to contribute to sustainable development. The event highlights the work that many Mountain Partnership members and UNWTO Member States are doing to ensure that mountain communities are not left behind in the spirit of the UN 2030 Agenda.

The IMD event will feature a high-level segment, a panel on best practices in mountain tourism, and a session featuring the Mountain Partnership Goodwill Ambassadors. The event will target: Mountain Partnership members (over 430 members, including governments, IGOs, private sector, NGOs, universities, research institutes, alpine clubs and mountaineering associations), other mountain stakeholders, FAO decentralized offices, resource partners, youth, environmental activists and individuals worldwide.