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Message of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development for World Tourism Day

The following message was given by His Eminence Card. Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson, Prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, on the occasion of World Tourism Day, which is celebrated each year on 27 September:

Message

Tourism for Inclusive Growth

The Person Behind the Data

On the occasion of World Tourism Day 2021, the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development wishes to recognize the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the business and workers engaged in the tourism sector, especially part-time, low-paid workers who qualify for governmental subsidies, and those workers who now find themselves without any economic support. Specifically, we would like to give special attention to the theme chosen by the World Tourism Organization for this year, *Tourism for Inclusive Growth*, as well as to the Organization's appeal to recognize that this is "an opportunity to look beyond the statistics of tourism and recognize that behind every number, there is a person".[1]

In the course of his Pontificate, Pope Francis has frequently encouraged the Catholic faithful and all people of goodwill to "go beyond" the numbers to "meet the person in difficulty; to exercise that creativity which enables one to find solutions to an impasse; to invoke reasons of human dignity in facing the rigidity of bureaucracy" and "promote the social and economic wellbeing of the whole of humanity, offering everyone the opportunity to pursue his/her own development."[2]

In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Holy Father encouraged the entire human family, saying “we cannot return to the false securities of the political and economic structures we had before the crisis.”[3] We need economic systems that give everyone access to the fruits of creation and the basic necessities of life: land, lodging and labor. This is, in fact, the *inclusive growth*, or in the language of Catholic Social Thought, the *integral human development* that the Dicastery would like to promote on World Tourism Day 2021. A development for every person, for all the dimensions of the person, that respects the earth, our ‘common home’. The pandemic has shown us how we are all connected to one another. In this light, tourism in one country suffers if people in other countries cannot travel due to health restrictions.

“We have to recover the knowledge that as a people we have a shared destination.”[4] Therefore, it is necessary to work towards an inclusive approach to tourism and resist the temptations of individualism and nationalism that are too common in our contemporary society. Only in this way can we avoid the “variant” of the virus that spreads when we foment a sick economy that only allows a few very rich people to possess more than all the rest of humanity, and when production and consumption models destroy the planet.

Therefore, on this World Tourism Day, the Dicastery encourages all to commit to a tourism that allows for encounters between people and in diverse places, where the admiration of beauty can foster respectful lifestyles for others and the planet.

We appeal to bishops and those responsible for safeguarding tourism to maintain close collaboration with local authorities in order to ensure a tourism that respects people and nature, and that promotes a just and inclusive economy. In this way, tourism can help build a world in which the full potential of each human being can be reached.[5]

We would like to express our most sincere gratitude to all those who support, both materially and spiritually, the tourism sector and the people who now find themselves in situations of economic difficulty caused by the suspension of tourism. Pastors in many local churches, along with their collaborators, and with the support of national and local Caritas groups, have multiplied efforts to find the best solutions to remedy situations of social need. This is a concrete example of inclusive development: that “new sense of fraternity, for mutual help and esteem”[6] that we desperately need.

Cardinal Peter K. A. TURKSON

Prefect

[1] UNWTO, World Tourism Day 2021 - Background Note, https://www.unwto.org/world-tourism-day-2021

[2] FRANCESCO, Addres of His Holiness Pope Francis to Participants in the World Congress of Accountants, 14 novembre 2014, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/november/documents/papa-francesco_20141114_congresso-mondiale-commercialisti.html

[3] FRANCESCO, "The COVID-19 Crisis Reveals What is in our Hearts," Op-Ed article in New York Times, Thanksgiving Day, 26 November 2020.

[4] FRANCESCO, "The COVID-19 Crisis Reveals What is in our Hearts," Op-Ed article in New York Times, Thanksgiving Day, 26 November 2020.

[5] Cf. FRANCESCO, Encyclical Letter *Laudato si'*, n. 84.

[6] FRANCESCO, Messaggio per la 4a Giornata Mondiale dei Poveri, 15 novembre 2020, n. 7.