

**MUNIKL'26 UNWTO (The United Nations World  
Tourism Organization)  
STUDY GUIDE**

**Agenda Item: Strengthening tourism enterprises'  
resilience against natural disasters and fostering  
enterprises to follow a comprehensive disaster plan.**

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## **Letter from the Secretary General**

Dear Delegates, It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you all to the fourth annual session of Izmir Kız High School Model United Nations Conference. I am Ecrin Tügen, and I will be serving as your Secretary General for this conference. I am here to ensure you have an unforgettable experience in the best way possible.

During the conference, you will not only engage in diplomatic discussions, but you will also develop your leadership and communication skills, gain a deeper understanding of international issues, learn about the policies of other countries, practice crisis management, and socialize with delegates from other schools who may become your close friends. Briefly, this conference will offer you far more than you expect.

Of course, a great conference does not come together easily. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to my Executive, Organization, and Academic Teams, who have worked constantly and intensively throughout the entire process. I am certain that this conference will be amazing because of their hard work.

MUNIKL'26 has been my biggest dream for years; finally, my dream comes true with your interest and participation. I cannot fully express how grateful I am to all of you for being part of this journey. Wishing you a beneficial, enjoyable and truly unforgettable conference experience.

Warm Regards,

Ecrin Tügen

**Secretary General, MUNIKL'26**

## **Letter from the Under Secretary General**

Dear participants,

As the Under Secretary General of the United Nations World Tourism Organization, I am more than honoured to serve you at İzmir Kız Lisesi Model United Nations Conference 2026.

My name is Taylan Ekin Yetkin and I'm a freshman medicine student at Eskişehir Osmangazi Üniversitesi. I've been partaking in MUN conferences since 2022 so this is my 4th year doing MUN's. I was the Deputy Secretary General for MUNIKL'24 and an academic advisor for MUNIKL'25. I firmly believe that my expertise in the topic will help both our board and our delegates to have a better experience during these 3 days.

As İzmir residents, our committee and our agenda are highly important and relevant to us. The United Nations World Tourism Organization is a highly important body within the United Nations, with the scope of making world tourism more accessible, sustainable and responsible. Our agenda item "Strengthening tourism enterprises' resilience against natural disasters and fostering enterprises to follow a comprehensive disaster plan " underlines the possible threat of a natural disaster near a tourist area and the outcomes of the aforementioned threat. During our time, we will focus primarily on the medical wellbeing and safety of the visitors and the tourism workers in a possible natural disaster scenario. We will also economiche economical and social challenges faced afterwards by both the hosts and the visitors and we will propose cautions and solutions to minimize the negative effects.

Given my circumstances, sadly, I will not be able to attend the conference physically. But I will do what it takes to assist both my chairboard and my dear delegates. All being said, please recognize this study guide as the most important and the most fundamental part of your study. Please research and study thoroughly so that we can have a productive time.

Yours truly,

Taylan Ekin Yetkin

Under Secretary-General

## **Glossary**

Secondary peril: Secondary perils are the secondary effects of a natural hazard that typically leads to small-to-mid-sized losses, or a catastrophe that occurs as a result of a larger, "primary" event.

Mitigation: the act of mitigating something or the state of being mitigated : the process or result of making something less severe, dangerous, painful, harsh, extensive, or damaging.

After-Action Review: a qualitative review of actions taken to respond to a public health event or following a project or a public health intervention as a means of identifying and documenting best practices demonstrated and challenges encountered during the response to the event or the implementation of the project.

Crisis Management: the actions that are taken to deal with an emergency or difficult situation in an organized way.

Early Warning System: An integrated system of hazard monitoring, forecasting and prediction, disaster risk assessment, communication and preparedness activities, systems and processes that enables individuals, communities, governments, businesses and others to take timely action to reduce disaster risks in advance of hazardous events.

Resilient Infrastructure: systems and structures designed to withstand and recover from natural disasters and environmental changes. This concept is vital in disaster risk reduction (DRR), emphasizing adaptability and sustainability.

## **Introduction to the Committee**

- Founded in 1975, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), is the United Nations specialized agency responsible for the promotion of responsible, sustainable, and universally accessible tourism. As the leading international organization in the field, it serves as a global forum for tourism policy and a source of practical tourism knowledge.
- Headquartered in Madrid, Spain, the UNWTO's mission is centered on the belief that tourism is a major driver of economic growth, inclusive development, and environmental sustainability. The committee focuses on several key pillars, including economic development, leveraging tourism to create jobs and stimulate local economies, and sustainability, ensuring that tourism growth respects the environment and minimizes the carbon footprint of global travel. It also advocates for accessibility, promoting the right of every individual to experience travel and cultural preservation, fostering mutual understanding between different nations and peoples.

- While the roots of international tourism cooperation date back to 1925, the UNWTO as we know it was officially established in 1975. A pivotal moment in its history occurred in 2003, when the UN General Assembly formally recognized it as a Specialized Agency of the United Nations. This elevated the committee's status, integrating tourism into the broader UN goal of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.
- UN Tourism is responsible for the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism geared towards the achievement of the universal 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). UN Tourism offers leadership and support to the tourism sector in advancing knowledge and tourism policies worldwide, advocating for responsible tourism and promoting tourism as a driving force towards economic growth, inclusive development and environmental sustainability. With a current membership of 159 countries, UN Tourism encourages the implementation of the Global Code of Ethics in Tourism, in order to maximize tourism's socio-economic contribution while minimizing its possible negative impacts.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE AGENDA ITEM

### I. The Intersection of Global Tourism and Natural Disaster Risk



The tourism industry acts as a vital economic engine and a primary source of annual income for numerous municipalities and sovereign nations. However, this engine is increasingly threatened by the rising frequency and intensity of natural disasters.

A critical point of concern for the UNWTO is the geographic concentration of risk: 12 out of the top 20 most visited cities globally are currently classified as being at "high" or "extreme" risk for natural disasters.

## The Developing World and the "Secondary Peril" Trap

More than half of these high-risk hubs are located in developing countries. In these regions, existing financial constraints and governance challenges create a compounding effect on disaster impact:

**Vulnerability to Secondary Perils:** While a "primary" event (like an earthquake or hurricane) causes immediate destruction, the lack of resilient infrastructure in developing cities notably increases vulnerability to secondary perils. These include post-disaster flash floods, landslides, fires from ruptured gas lines, and disease outbreaks caused by compromised water systems.

**The "Recuperation Gap":** Limited fiscal reserves and a lack of insurance penetration extend the physical and financial recovery period. For local residents—particularly those in the informal tourism sector (e.g., street vendors, independent guides)—a prolonged shutdown of the industry can lead to a total loss of livelihood.

**Visitor Deterrence:** The inability to recuperate properly and quickly tarnishes a destination's "safe image." Without a visible Comprehensive Disaster Plan, international visitors may avoid these regions for years, further starving the local economy of the capital needed for reconstruction.

## The Path Forward: Mitigation and Financial Solidarity

To address these systemic vulnerabilities, the international community must move beyond reactive aid and toward a proactive, dual-pronged strategy:

### I. Mitigation through Physical and Regulatory Precedents

National and local governments must implement rigorous physical precautions and regulations before a disaster strikes. This includes:

**Resilient Infrastructure:** Mandating disaster-resistant building codes for hotels and transport hubs.

**Standardized Regulations:** Establishing international safety certifications for tourism enterprises to ensure they follow a Comprehensive Disaster Plan (CDP).

**Early Warning Integration:** Investing in technology that provides real-time alerts to transient populations who may not speak the local language.

### II. Financial Resilience and Aftermath Support

Because the "rebound" of a city depends on its financial agility, a structured international plan for financial aid is crucial. This should focus on:

Parametric Insurance Models: Developing funds that provide immediate payouts based on disaster magnitude, bypassing long assessment delays.

Small and Medium Enterprises Protection: Specifically targeting financial assistance toward Small and Medium Enterprises to prevent the collapse of the local tourism ecosystem.

Public-Private Partnerships: Encouraging global tourism giants to invest in the resilience of the local communities that host their operations.

## II. EXAMPLES OVER THE COURSE OF HISTORY



### The 2023 Southeastern Türkiye Earthquake

#### Overview of the Catastrophe

On February 6, 2023, two seismic events of massive magnitude (M 7.8 and M 7.5) struck southeastern Türkiye and northern Syria. This disaster represents the deadliest natural event in the region's modern history and serves as a primary example of how natural hazards can lead to the total systemic collapse of a regional tourism industry.

#### 1. Catastrophic Outcomes and Data

The immediate results of the tremors were characterized by a complete breakdown of civil and economic life:

Mass Casualty and Displacement: The disaster resulted in over 59,000 fatalities total, with more than 53,537 occurring in Türkiye. Approximately 3.3 million people were left homeless, many of whom constituted the core workforce of the regional hospitality and service sectors.

**Physical Liquidation of Tourism Assets:** In cities like Antakya (Hatay), nearly 80% of the historical city center—the primary driver of cultural and religious tourism—was reduced to rubble. Iconic heritage sites, such as the Gaziantep Castle, suffered irreparable structural failures.

**The Repurposing Outcome:** In the 11 affected provinces, tourism activity did not just decrease; it ceased. Hotels that remained standing were immediately repurposed as emergency shelters or coordination hubs for the 9 million affected residents, effectively removing the region from the commercial tourism market for the foreseeable future.

**The Growth Loss Gap:** While tourism in the west of the country (Antalya/Muğla) remained stable, the disaster created a national growth deficit. Projections indicate that Türkiye's national tourist arrivals would have been 8% higher in 2023 had the earthquake not occurred, demonstrating that a regional disaster still stifles national economic potential.

## 2. Systematic Reasons for the Collapse

In the context of the UNWTO agenda, it is essential to analyze the reasons why this event was so devastating to tourism enterprises:

**Geographic Risk Overlap:** A primary reason for the vulnerability was the concentration of high-value cultural assets directly atop major fault lines. The tectonic attraction that often creates beautiful landscapes (mountains, thermal springs) also places tourism infrastructure in high-risk zones.

**Infrastructure Fragility and Bad Healthcare/Safety Systems:** The high death toll among tourists and staff was largely due to the failure of older hotel structures to meet modern seismic building codes. This lack of regulatory adherence turned accommodation facilities into death traps rather than safe havens.

**Vulnerability to Secondary Perils:** The earthquake triggered a chain of secondary perils—including the collapse of Hatay's airport runway, massive landslides blocking mountain tour routes, and fires in port cities. These secondary events paralyzed the supply chain, preventing the recuperation of the tourism flow.

**SME Financial Fragility:** The regional tourism economy was dominated by Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) with low profit margins. The primary reason these businesses could not recover is the "Recuperation Gap": without significant fiscal reserves or specialized insurance, these local enterprises faced permanent closure, causing a brain drain as tourism experts migrated to other provinces to find work.

## Overview of the Catastrophe

In late October 2025, Hurricane Melissa emerged as one of the most powerful Atlantic storms ever recorded, making landfall in Jamaica as a Category 5 hurricane with sustained winds of 185 mph. The storm's trajectory through the Caribbean—striking Jamaica, Haiti, Cuba, and the Bahamas—resulted

in a multifaceted humanitarian and economic crisis, particularly for nations where tourism is the primary pillar of the national economy.

## 1. Catastrophic Outcomes and Data

The physical and economic fallout of Hurricane Melissa provides a stark example of a sector's total vulnerability to extreme climatic events:

**Mass Casualty and Health Crisis:** The storm claimed at least 95 lives across the Caribbean, with 45 deaths in Jamaica and 43 in Haiti. Beyond immediate casualties, secondary health outcomes were severe; in Jamaica, flooding and contaminated water led to a lethal outbreak of leptospirosis, while damage to water systems in Haiti raised critical cholera concerns.

**Unprecedented Economic Loss:** In Jamaica, the physical damage was estimated at \$8.8 billion, representing nearly one-third of the nation's total GDP. The timing of the storm was particularly damaging, occurring just weeks before the start of the high tourism season, which typically accounts for 30 percent of the island's GDP.

**Disruption of Tourism Hubs:** While popular northern vacation areas like Ocho Rios were relatively unscathed, western tourism parishes such as Westmoreland and

Saint Elizabeth experienced almost total destruction. Over 120,000 structures had their roofs removed, and 77 percent of the national population lost power, paralyzing hotel and cruise port operations for months.

**Large-Scale Displacement:** Approximately 1.6 million people were affected in Jamaica alone, with 90,000 families in the western part of the island losing their homes. In Cuba, despite the evacuation of 735,000 people, the storm damaged over 215,000 homes and severely impacted the eastern tourism province of Santiago de Cuba.

## 2. Systematic Reasons for the Collapse

The severity of Hurricane Melissa's impact on tourism enterprises can be attributed to several systemic factors:

**Timing and Seasonal Dependency:** A primary reason for the economic severity was the "seasonal vulnerability." Because the disaster occurred in late October, tourism enterprises had no time to "recuperate" or repair facilities before the mid-December peak season, leading to a massive loss of projected annual income.

**Infrastructure and Utility Interdependence:** The collapse of the tourism sector was driven largely by the failure of public utilities. With over 60 aqueducts non-operational and 1.27 million people losing access to safe water, even undamaged hotels could not host guests due to the lack of basic sanitation and electricity.

**Agricultural and Supply Chain Failure:** In many Caribbean destinations, "farm-to-table" tourism is a key attraction. Melissa destroyed approximately 158,000 hectares of agricultural land, meaning local tourism enterprises lost their internal supply chains and were forced to rely on expensive imports, further draining their limited financial reserves.

**The SME Debt Trap:** Many local tour operators and boutique guesthouses in Haiti and western Jamaica operated without comprehensive catastrophe insurance. The primary reason these businesses failed to reopen is the lack of "liquid capital"—they could not afford the high cost of reconstruction while simultaneously servicing debts from the previous off-season.

### **III.Active Precautions Worldwide**

#### **1. Structural & Engineering Technologies**

**Seismic Base Isolation:** Used extensively in Tokyo and Istanbul. Buildings are mounted on flexible bearings (lead-rubber) that act as shock absorbers, allowing the ground to move while the structure remains stable.

**Tuned Mass Dampers (TMD):** High-rise landmarks (e.g., Taipei 101) utilize a massive internal pendulum to counteract the sway caused by high winds or earthquakes.

**Sacrificial First Floors:** In hurricane-prone coastal zones (e.g., Miami, Caribbean), the ground floor is designed to allow water to pass through without compromising the building's structural integrity.

**Tsunami Evacuation Towers:** Vertical evacuation structures in low-lying coastal areas (e.g., Japan, Indonesia) designed to provide immediate high-ground refuge for thousands of tourists and locals within minutes.

#### **2. Digital Early Warning Systems (EWS)**

**Cell Broadcast Technology:** Utilizing the EU-Alert or J-Alert standards to push instantaneous, unblockable emergency notifications to every mobile device in a specific geographical cell, bypassing network congestion.

**Multilingual Crisis Apps:** Tourism-centric apps (e.g., Safety Tips Japan) that use GPS to push real-time disaster alerts and evacuation routes in the traveler's native language.

**EW4All Initiative (UN):** A 2026 global standard ensuring every person on Earth is protected by early warning systems, focusing on closing the "last-mile" gap in developing tourist hubs.

#### **3. Policy & Urban Planning Frameworks**

**"Sponge City" Urbanism:** Adopted by cities like Bangkok and Shanghai, this policy replaces non-porous concrete with green roofs, rain gardens, and permeable pavements to absorb flash flooding.

Zoning & Managed Retreat: Policies that strictly limit or prohibit new permanent tourism infrastructure in "high-velocity" flood zones or on active fault lines.

Mandatory Risk Assessments: Under the UNDRR 2026 Guidelines, new hotel developments must submit a multi-hazard resilience plan to secure operating licenses.

#### 4. Resilience & Educational Tourism

Disaster-Preparedness Tourism: A growing niche where travelers visit recovery sites (for example Fukushima, Ishikawa) to learn about reconstruction and support local economies through "Hope Tourism."

Community-Based Preparedness: Training hospitality staff (hotel concierges, tour guides) as "First Responders" to manage panicked crowds during a disaster event.

### **IV. Other Organizations Related To Our Agenda**

Although our organization is the main governing body in the United Nations for sustainable and safe tourism, it is also important to know other worldwide organizations to relieve stress and damage in tourist areas.

#### 1. Specialized Tourism Resilience Organizations

World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC): A global authority representing the private sector. It works with governments to standardize safety protocols and manages initiatives to restore traveler confidence after disasters.

Global Travel and Tourism Resilience Council: Dedicated to crisis management, this council facilitates public-private partnerships to provide financial and logistical aid specifically to tourism-dependent economies.

Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA): Provides specialized disaster recovery toolkits and funding guidance for destinations in the Asia-Pacific region, focusing on risks like typhoons and earthquakes.

#### 2. International Relief Funds and Networks

IFRC (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies): The world's largest humanitarian network. It provides emergency shelter and medical aid in tourist hubs, often serving as the first responder for both locals and stranded visitors.

TUI Care Foundation: A private-sector fund that provides direct grants to local businesses and artisans in tourist areas to help them rebuild their livelihoods after natural disasters.

World Bank (Catastrophe Deferred Draw Down Option): A financial instrument providing immediate liquidity to tourism-dependent nations after a disaster, ensuring they can maintain or repair essential infrastructure.

International Rescue Committee (IRC): Deploys emergency response teams to disaster zones within 72 hours, focusing on sanitation, health, and protection in heavily impacted regions.

### 3. Collaborative and Regional Initiatives

Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism: A framework that coordinates funding for climate adaptation, helping cities build resilient infrastructure like seawalls and flood-absorption systems.

Global Humanitarian Overview (GHO): A collective UN funding appeal that includes specific budget allocations for large-scale disasters in major regions like the Middle East and Asia-Pacific.

European Commission (rescEU): A regional reserve of resources (firefighting planes, medical teams) that assists European destinations during wildfires, floods, or seismic events.

### **Questions to Ponder**

- 1.How do we reach tourists who have no phone or internet during a sudden disaster?
- 2.How can we alert visitors who do not speak the local language during an emergency?
- 3.How do we ensure elderly or disabled tourists are not left behind during a fast evacuation?
- 4.How can we prevent "dead zones" in cities from blocking life-saving emergency signals?
- 5.How do we help tourists who lose their passports and money during a natural catastrophe?
- 6.How can we stop network crashes from blocking emergency alerts in crowded tourist spots?
- 7.How do we guide tourists to safety when they are unfamiliar with the city's layout?
- 8.How can we provide real-time updates to travelers who are currently in transit or on flights?
- 9.How do we keep tourists calm and informed when local sirens are the only warning tool?
- 10.How can we verify that every visitor has been safely accounted for after a major event?

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