

**To participants, organizers and guests of  
the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Ukraine International Travel Market - UITM'2018**

**Ladies and gentlemen!**

On behalf of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the United Nations tourism agency, I welcome all the participants, guests and organizers of the 25th Ukraine International Travel Market - UITM'2018

Thanks to our cooperation to develop the sector, international tourism reached new records in 2017 – 1.322 billion international tourists travelled the world. Ukraine received 14 million of these, which provided US\$ 1.3 billion in earnings to support development of the society and economy through tourism. This positive growth is the perfect backdrop for celebrating UITM's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Ukraine serves as an important example of the development opportunities that tourism has the potential to create. But tourism worldwide still faces challenges to adapting to the biggest trends of today. Foremost among these is the technological revolution. Digital technologies continue transforming the way we travel, connecting us on global level and empowering the vulnerable. Our challenge, in tourism in all sectors, is to continue harnessing their power for sustainable development while safeguarding against potential risks attached. With this in mind the official celebrations of the World Tourism Day 2017, celebrated last September in Hungary, was dedicated to the digitalization of tourism.

With Ukraine currently witnessing a surge in high-tech companies, and Kyiv hosting a huge array of enterprise companies, startups and IT pros, this could prove an important avenue for further tourism development, I encourage Ukraine to facilitate investment in technology that has the potential to bring positive disruption and sustainable and inclusive development in cities.

I trust that together we will continue to advance the competitiveness of the tourism sector with the contribution of events such as UITM. International tourism exhibitions serve as one of the main platforms for dialogue, expansion and strengthening of business relations within the global tourism community. UITM is an important outlet for the rest of the world to get to know Ukraine, its incredible hospitality and its considerable tourism investment potential.

I wish all participants a productive UITM 2018!

**Zurab Pololikashvili**  
**Secretary-General**  
**World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)**