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COVID-19: UNWTO calls on tourism to be part of recovery plans

Tourism faces up to the COVID-19 challenge and public health is paramount due to the fundamental people-to-people nature of the sector.

· A cross-cutting economic activity unlike any other, and an integral part of the Sustainable Development agenda, tourism will play a key role in future recovery efforts.

· UNWTO calls on governments, international organizations and donor agencies to include tourism as a priority in recovery plans and actions.

· The World Health Organization continues to advise against the application of travel or trade restrictions to countries experiencing COVID-19 outbreaks.

Madrid, Spain, 6 March 2020 – In an update on the sector's response to the coronavirus COVID-19 outbreak, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) offers a first assessment pointing to a decrease in international arrivals and receipts in 2020. Public health measures need to be implemented in ways that minimize any unnecessary disruption to travel and trade. Since the start of the outbreak,

UNWTO has been working closely with the World Health Organization (WHO) to ensure this is the case.

UNWTO has revised its 2020 prospects for international tourist arrivals to a negative growth of 1% to 3%, translating into an estimated loss of US\$ 30 to 50 billion in international tourism receipts. Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, UNWTO predicted a positive growth of 3% to 4% for this year.

This first assessment expects that Asia and the Pacific will be the worst affected region, with an anticipated fall in arrivals of 9% to 12%. Estimates for other world regions are currently premature in view of the rapidly evolving situation.

UNWTO underscores that any estimate must be treated with caution and is likely to be updated. Preparing for recovery

UNWTO calls for financial and political support for recovery measures aimed at tourism, and to include support for the sector in the wider recovery plans and actions of affected economies. The impact of the COVID-19 outbreak will be felt across the

whole tourism value chain. UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili furthermore stresses that “small and medium sized enterprises make up around 80% of the tourism sector and are particularly exposed with millions of livelihoods across the world, including within vulnerable communities, relying on tourism”. Political and financial commitments are key to ensure that tourism can lead wider economic and social recovery, as proven in past disruptions on the back of the highly resilient nature of the sector and its ability to bounce back strongly.

In recent decades, tourism has come of age, and is now firmly established as an important contributor to sustainable development, economic growth, employment and international understanding. As the UN agency responsible for tourism and sustainable development, UNWTO stands ready to provide guidance and support for recovery measures of its members, the private and public tourism sector, including organizers of tourism events and fairs.



In 4 years, 494 attacks on health killed 470 patients and health staff in Syria

Every 4 days in 2019, a health facility in Syria was attacked. A majority occurred in the northwest, where the world's most urgent humanitarian crisis continues to unfold. March 2020, Geneva/Copenhagen/Cairo – The World Health Organization condemns in the strongest terms, attacks on health care that have been a hallmark of the complex humanitarian crisis in Syria that this month enters its tenth year.

“The data we can now reveal on attacks on health in Syria is a grim testament to a blatant disrespect for international humanitarian law and the lives of civilians and health workers,” said Richard Brennan, WHO's Regional Emergency Director in the Eastern Mediterranean. Of all armed conflicts across the globe, Syria has for years been one of the worst examples of violence affecting health care. Intentionally attacking sites where the sick and wounded are treated, to either restrict or deny civilians access to health care, is prohibited under international humanitarian law. Indiscriminate attacks in civilian areas can also result in damage to health care, reflecting a callous disregard for lives and welfare of the most vulnerable.

“What is troubling, is that we've come to a point where attacks on health – something the international community shouldn't tolerate - are now taken for granted; something we have become accustomed to. And they are still taking place. Only 2 weeks ago, 2 hospitals in Idlib governorate were carried out, injuring 4 health workers and temporarily suspending services,” said Brennan. A total of 494 attacks on health were confirmed between 2016 and 2019, 1 of

which 68% or 337 attacks were recorded in Syria's northwest; among the last areas in the country that are not under government control. The data show that attacks on health in Syria peaked in 2016 and were lowest in 2019, likely due to the reduced size of the area where active fighting was taking place. The fact that the northwest – Idlib, Aleppo and Hama – has suffered the lion's share of attacks compared to other regions in Syria, is notable. In 2019, 82% occurred in the northwest, 49% in 2018, 58% in 2017 and 85% in 2016. The total death toll in attacks on health care in Syria between 2016 and 2019 is 470, peaking in 2016 with 241 confirmed deaths. The lowest number of deaths recorded was in 2019 at 54, again due to the reduced territory undergoing military operations. Northwest Syria represents the highest total numbers of deaths in those 4 years – 309 or 66%.

In addition to the deaths, 968 people were injured by these attacks across Syria since 2016; many of whom have been left with permanent disabilities. “A clear example of how conflict impacts an individual's right to health is northwest Syria, where today only half of 550 health facilities remain open either due to insecurity, damage from previous attacks, threats of future attacks, or surrounding areas being completely deserted as people are forced from their homes,” Brennan marks.

“Health facilities are now the least safe places in the area,” said one physician, a few days after 2 hospitals in Darat Izza were hit in an airstrike on 17 February 2020. Another physician working in a child and maternity hospital in Harim in Idlib governorate, described to WHO how he and his medical team worked in constant fear of shelling.

A Joint Statement on Tourism and COVID-19 - UNWTO and WHO Call for Responsibility and Coordination

Madrid, Spain and Geneva, Switzerland, 26 February 2020 – As the current outbreak of the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) continues to develop, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) are committed to working together in guiding the travel and tourism sectors' response to COVID-19.

On 30 January 2020, the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak of COVID-19 to be a Public Health Emergency of International Concern and issued a set of Temporary Recommendations. WHO did not recommend any travel or trade restriction based on the current information available. WHO is working closely with global experts, governments and partners to rapidly expand scientific

knowledge on this new virus, to track the spread and virulence of the virus, and to provide advice to countries and the global community on measures to protect health and prevent the spread of this outbreak. Cooperation is key. The tourism sector is fully committed to putting people and their well-being first.

International cooperation is vital for ensuring the sector can effectively contribute to the containment of COVID-19. UNWTO and WHO are working in close consultation and with other partners to assist States in ensuring that health measures be implemented in ways that minimize unnecessary interference with international traffic and trade. Tourism's response needs to be measured and consistent,

proportionate to the public health threat and based on local risk assessment, involving every part of the tourism value chain – public bodies, private companies and tourists, in line with WHO's overall guidance and recommendations.

UNWTO and WHO stand ready to work closely with all those communities and countries affected by the current health emergency, to build for a better and more resilient future. Travel restrictions going beyond these may cause unnecessary interference with international traffic, including negative repercussions on the tourism sector.

At this challenging time, UNWTO and WHO join the international community in standing in solidarity with affected countries.

UNWTO and WHO Agree to Further Cooperation in COVID-19 Response

Geneva, Switzerland, 11 March 2020 – The Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Zurab Pololikashvili led a high-delegation to the World Health Organization (WHO) headquarters in Geneva to further advance the two agencies' coordinated response to the worldwide Coronavirus COVID-19 outbreak. WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus welcomed the delegation to Geneva and thanked UNWTO for its close collaboration since the very start of the ongoing public health emergency. On the back of the productive meetings, the heads of both United Nations agencies stressed the need to include the following guiding principles:

- The importance of international cooperation and responsible leadership at this critical time,
- The solidarity of the tourism sector and of individual tourists, as well as the responsibility both have for helping minimize the spread and impact of COVID-19

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The key role tourism can play in both containing the COVID-19 outbreak and in leading future response efforts UNWTO Secretary-General Pololikashvili said: "The COVID-19 outbreak is first and foremost a public health issue. UNWTO is following the lead of WHO, with whom we have enjoyed an excellent working relationship from day one. This meeting reaffirmed the importance of strong cooperation and international solidarity and I welcome the Director-General's recognition of the role tourism can play both now and in the future." Proportionate Response Mr. Pololikashvili and Dr Tedros confirmed the two UN agencies' commitment to ensuring any response to COVID-19 is proportionate,

measured and based on the latest public health recommendations. Mr. Pololikashvili added that the tourism value chain touches upon every part of society. This makes tourism uniquely placed to promote solidarity, collaboration and concrete action across borders in these challenging times and also ideally positioned to once again drive future recovery. Responsible Communications At the same time, the heads of UNWTO and WHO called for responsible communications and reporting of the worldwide COVID-19 outbreak. The UN agencies stress the importance of ensuring all communications and actions are evidence-based so as to avoid stigmatizing sections of society and spreading panic. Next Steps UNWTO and WHO will liaise with UNWTO Members, as well as with the Chairs of all the UNWTO Regional Commissions and the Chair of the Executive Council to further advance tourism's response to the COVID-19 outbreak. UNWTO will also communicate with other UN bodies, including ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization) and the IMO (International Maritime Organization), and with IATA (International Air Transport Association) and with key sector stakeholders to ensure tourism's response is coordinated and consistent.

authorities, alongside our partners, in order to combat terrorism. We have taken note of the decision by the Malian authorities to recall Ambassador Toumani Djimé Diallo.

The visit by Tiébilé Dramé, who is meeting with the French authorities - government officials as well as national representatives -, reflects our countries' shared determination, within the framework of the new momentum created by the summit in Pau, to continue our close cooperation in support of the Sahel, its inhabitants and common security issues.

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In September last year, an internal UN Board of Inquiry started investigating a series of incidents in northwest Syria, since the signing of a Memorandum on Stabilization of the situation in the Idlib De-escalation area between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Turkey on 17 September 2018. The investigation covers destruction of or damage to facilities on the deconfliction list, containing UN-supported humanitarian sites such as

health facilities. The previous month, two thirds of the United Nations Security Council requested an inquiry based on the suspicion that making their location public through deconfliction had made these facilities a target and that some of the attacks had been deliberate. The Board of Inquiry has yet to present its findings. So far, in 2020, confirmed attacks on health in Syria are 9 – all of them in the northwest - resulting in 10 deaths and 35 injuries.

Lebanon – Meeting between Jean-Yves Le Drian and his Lebanese counterpart (Paris - February 28, 2020)

Jean-Yves Le Drian, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, received Nassif Hitti, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants of the Republic of Lebanon, today. The minister reaffirmed the strong ties of friendship between France and Lebanon and France's commitment to the Lebanese people in the context of the challenging circumstances facing the country. During this initial meeting, he reaffirmed that, three months after the holding of the meeting of the International Support Group for Lebanon (ISG), the Lebanese authorities needed to take action to address the challenges facing Lebanon, with the common interest of the Lebanese people as their sole concern.

He underscored the urgent need to take a range of economic, social and political measures to respond to the aspirations expressed by the Lebanese people since October 17. Jean-Yves Le Drian underlined that it was up to the Lebanese authorities to implement a credible plan to allow the country to resolve the crisis. This is the basis on which France stands ready, together with its partners, to support Lebanon. The minister reiterated France's commitment to maintaining Lebanon's disassociation from regional crises, a prerequisite for ensuring the stability of the country and the region. He reaffirmed that France, today and in all circumstances, stands alongside the Lebanese people.

United Kingdom – Visit by Amélie de Montchalin (London - February 28, 2020)

Amélie de Montchalin, Minister of State for European Affairs, attached to the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, is visiting London today. The minister of state will deliver a speech at Chatham House, an international affairs think tank, on the future of the partnership between the EU and the United Kingdom and the bilateral strategic partnership that we would like to further deepen in the area of security and defense, ten years after the signing of the Lancaster House Treaty. Amélie de Montchalin will reaffirm the EU's desire to reach an ambitious, balanced and long-term agreement within the framework of the negotiating mandate on future relations, adopted by the EU on February 25. Amélie de Montchalin will then meet with representatives of the French and British business community, notably including Carolyn Fairbairn, Director-General of the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), as well as members of the French Chamber of Commerce in the United Kingdom and foreign trade advisors. These meetings will provide an opportunity, following the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the EU, to exchange views on issues relating to France-United Kingdom trade relations.

Israel / Palestinian territories – Settlements (February 28, 2020)

France condemns the announcements by Israeli authorities regarding the



Embassy of France in the U.S.

THE DAILY PRESS BRIEFING

Statements made by the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs Spokesperson

Paris - February 28, 2020

Mali – Meeting between Jean-Yves Le Drian and his Malian counterpart (Paris - February 28, 2020)

Jean-Yves Le Drian, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, received Tiébilé Dramé, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of

Mali, today.

This visit took place a few days after the unacceptable remarks made by the ambassador of Mali to France regarding French army units. We deplored these remarks made by the ambassador of an allied country, where our armies are deployed at the request of the Malian

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construction of 3,401 housing units in the E1 zone, in East Jerusalem. This area is of strategic importance to the two-state solution and the territorial continuity of a future Palestinian state. Its expansion directly undermines the viability of a future Palestinian state, as the European Union has reiterated on several occasions.

France urges the Israeli authorities to reconsider these decisions and to refrain from any unilateral measures. All forms of settlement activity are illegal under international law and challenge the two-state solution on the ground. France, together with several other European countries, expressed its deep concern to the Israeli authorities with regard to these announcements, like those of February 20 concerning the settlements of Har Homa and Givat Hamatos in East Jerusalem. France reaffirms that the two-state solution, with both states living in peace and security within secure, recognized borders and with Jerusalem as the capital of both states, is the only way to achieve a just and lasting peace in the region. It stands ready to support any effort in this direction based on agreed international parameters and coming about through negotiations between the parties

Tunisia – Formation of the government (February 27, 2020)

France offers its congratulations to Elyes Fakhfakh and his government and its best wishes for their success, following yesterday's vote of confidence. The French authorities intend to pursue and strengthen our close dialogue with the new government, given the multilayered partnership that exists between our two countries and the important bilateral and multilateral milestones scheduled for 2020. Among other things, Tunisia will host the 18th Francophonie summit. We want to applaud the commitment of the outgoing government led by Youssef Chahed to strengthening our bilateral partnership.

Paris - March 2, 2020

Serbia – Meeting between Amélie de Montchalin and Jadranka Joksimovic, Minister for European Integration of the Republic of

Serbia (Paris - March 3, 2020)

Amélie de Montchalin, Minister of State for European Affairs, attached to the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, will receive Jadranka Joksimovic, Serbia's Minister for European Integration, on March 3.

The meeting will provide an opportunity to discuss bilateral relations, which were given new impetus by President Macron's visit to Belgrade on July 15 and 16, 2019. The two ministers will also discuss the negotiations on Serbia's accession to the EU in the context of discussions at the Council of the European Union on the reform of the accession process in order to make it more credible, appealing and reversible.

France supports the strategic decision made by Serbia to join the European Union and stands alongside it while continuing to support its efforts to implement the necessary reforms, especially with respect to the rule of law, which is at the heart of the European project.

Paris - March 4, 2020

Guinea Bissau (March 4, 2020)

France shares the serious concerns expressed on March 1 about the situation in Guinea Bissau by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), whose critical role it commends.

France urges Guinea Bissau's defense and security forces to distance themselves from politics and calls on all stakeholders to exercise restraint and to ensure respect for the legal and institutional framework in order to resolve the electoral dispute

United Nations – Resignation of Ghassan Salamé (March 2, 2020)

France noted with regret the announcement of the resignation of Ghassan Salamé, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Libya. Ghassan Salamé has carried out his mission with competence and conviction since June 2017. We commend his efforts to promote a ceasefire and the launch of inter-Libyan dialogue under UN auspices.

France hopes that this momentum can be maintained and calls on all stakeholders to commit to a lasting ceasefire,

improved control of resources and a representative and inclusive political dialogue.

France reaffirms its full support for the efforts of the UN secretary-general to this end.

North Korea – Firing of ballistic missiles (March 2, 2020)

North Korea announced on March 2 that it had conducted further ballistic missile launches

France reiterates its condemnation of these repeated launches which undermine regional security and stability and constitute violations of the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. France calls on North Korea to comply with the UN Security Council resolutions, to immediately engage in good faith in a process to ensure the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of its weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs and to refrain from any form of provocation.

Paris - March 5, 2020

Qatar – Meeting between Jean-Yves Le Drian, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, and his counterpart (March 4, 2020)

Jean-Yves Le Drian, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, received his Qatari counterpart, Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar, yesterday.

Jean-Yves Le Drian and his interlocutor signaled their attachment to the partnership between France and Qatar and underscored the need to continue to strengthen it. They notably welcomed the development of our economic exchanges and our cooperation in the cultural sphere in the context of the Qatar-France 2020 Year of Culture.

The ministers discussed the regional crises in the Middle East, regarding which our two countries engage in sustained and regular dialogue. With respect to Libya, Jean-Yves Le Drian and his counterpart reaffirmed the need for a lasting ceasefire that will be

upheld by all parties and for the swift implementation of the priorities outlined in the conclusions adopted in Berlin on January 19, notably the launch of a representative and inclusive inter-Libyan dialogue, involving all of Libya's neighbors and the regional partners. With respect to Syria, they expressed their shared concern regarding the dire humanitarian situation in the northwestern part of the country, as well as the risk of regional escalation. They agreed on the urgent need for a ceasefire and the need for a political solution in order to find a lasting solution to the crisis. European Union – Jean-Yves Le Drian's participation in the informal meeting of foreign affairs ministers and the Foreign Affairs Council (Zagreb - March 5-6, 2020) Jean-Yves Le Drian, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, will take part in the informal meeting of EU foreign affairs ministers in Zagreb on March 5 and the extraordinary session of the Foreign Affairs Council the following day.

During the informal meeting on March 5, the ministers will discuss relations between the EU and Russia as well as relations between the EU and Turkey. With respect to Russia, the discussion should initiate a substantive debate on the relationship, with due consideration for the five guiding principles agreed upon in 2016 in order to steer relations between the EU and Russia. With respect to the discussion on Turkey, the minister will stress the need for a firm and demanding dialogue on the different aspects of the relationship between the EU and Turkey, including with respect to the crises in Syria and Libya.

An extraordinary formal meeting of the Foreign Affairs Council will take place on March 6 to address the crisis triggered by the offensive by the Syrian regime and its supporters, notably its Russian supporters, in the Idlib region. Jean-Yves Le Drian will re-examine the serious political, humanitarian, migration and security consequences of this crisis. He will reaffirm the importance of European unity in order to work toward a de-escalation in Syria and to address the suffering of the civilian populations by strengthening European humanitarian assistance. The minister will call for the

rejection of any exploitation of the migration issue by Turkey while responding to the needs of the refugees in the region.

With respect to the concerns relating to the Coronavirus in EU countries, the ministers will also discuss this issue in order to reaffirm the need to strengthen coordination at the European level regarding the exchange of information, health measures, relations with third countries and public communication. These topics will also be included on the agenda of the extraordinary meeting of the EU Health Council on March 6 in Brussels. North Korea – Ballistic missile launches (March 2, 2020)

We were concerned to learn of reports of new ballistic missile launches by North Korea on March 2.

France reaffirms its condemnation of these repeated launches, which undermine regional security and stability and violate pertinent UN Security Council resolutions. France calls on North Korea to comply with Security Council resolutions, to engage immediately and in good faith in a process of complete, verifiable, irreversible dismantlement of its WMD and ballistic missile programs, and to refrain from any provocation.

COVID-19 – Israel

Does Israel's decision to no longer authorize French citizens to enter its territory due to fears of the spread of COVID-19 seem proportionate to the epidemiological situation in France? Is this the first time French citizens have been prohibited from entering a foreign territory due to the coronavirus?

As you know, the situation is very fluid and the authorities in each country concerned are taking measures related to the COVID-19 crisis.

Our compatriots are advised to consult the Travel Advisory on the France Diplomatie site (<https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/conseils-aux-voyageurs/>), which is regularly updated based on the public health recommendations issued by the Ministry for Solidarity and Health. We recommend that French citizens who are traveling register on the Ariane portal in order to receive alerts.

We urge French residents living outside the country to sign up on the registry of French nationals abroad and to

update their contact information (cell phone numbers, email addresses) as necessary with local consulates.

COVID-19 – North Korea

Will representatives of the French Cooperation Office in North Korea be evacuated due to the risks linked to COVID-19, and if so, to which country?

Since late January, North Korea has taken drastic quarantine measures targeting foreign delegations and seriously hindering the operations of the French Cooperation Office in Pyongyang. In these circumstances, and in conjunction with our European partners, it was decided to temporarily close the French Cooperation Office until these measures are eased.

France continues to closely monitor the situation on the ground, and strongly advises French nationals not to travel to North Korea.

Situation of Fariba Adelkhan and Roland Marchal

Information concerning the health of two French researchers detained in Iran is increasingly alarming. Both of them are cut off from the world and do not have access to the care they need, according to their support committee. Do you still have access to Roland Marchal, and what is their health status, according to your information?

We are following the situation of our two compatriots with the utmost attention and are concerned by the state of their health.

We are working relentlessly to obtain regular consular access, in line with Iran's international commitments, and to secure their immediate release

Paris - March 6, 2020

Indian Ocean Commission – Visit by Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne (March 6-9, 2020)

Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne, Minister of State attached to the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, is visiting the Seychelles from March 6 to 9 to represent France at the Council of Ministers of the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), which brings together five member states: the Union of the Comoros, France on behalf of Réunion, Madagascar, Mauritius and the Seychelles.

This visit will provide an opportunity to demonstrate our commitment within the IOC while underscoring the importance to France of its neighborhood relations in the Indian Ocean, as reaffirmed by Jean-Yves Le Drian, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, during his recent visit to Mauritius, Madagascar and Mozambique. The Council of Ministers of the Indian Ocean Commission will formally adopt

the revised Victoria Agreement, which replaces the general cooperation agreement between the member states of the Indian Ocean Commission of January 10, 1984, as well as the additional protocol of 1989. This text reaffirms the IOC's identity as a regional neighborhood organization, reaffirms the unifying role of the French language and sets out the criteria for the granting of observer status.

During this visit, Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne will be received by Danny Faure, President of the Seychelles; he will meet with Vincent Mériton, Vice President and Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Didier Dogley, Minister for Tourism, Civil Aviation, Ports and Marine. The minister of state will underscore the importance of our geographic and strategic proximity in the regional context of the southwest Indian Ocean in the areas of maritime security, the fight against climate change and the development of the blue economy, including from an Indo-Pacific perspective.

Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne will also visit the facilities of the port of Victoria, whose renovation is being supported by the French Development Agency, in order to promote French expertise in the field of port management. In an archipelago, where 30% of GDP is dependent on tourism, the minister of state will meet with French professionals in this sector, which offers investment opportunities

Ukraine – Opening of the flight MH17 trial (The Hague - March 9, 2020)

The opening of the trial on March 9 in The Hague of the four suspects in the downing of flight MH17 on July 17, 2014, is an important step toward establishing the facts and bringing justice to the families and friends of the victims.

France reaffirms its support for the member states of the joint investigation team. It calls on Russia to fully cooperate with the Dutch judicial authorities, in accordance with UNSCR 2166.

Iran

You triggered the Iranian nuclear agreement's dispute resolution mechanism in early January. Since November, enriched uranium stockpiles have tripled, and the IAEA separately accused Iran of responding to a certain number of questions in connection with the possibility of undeclared nuclear material and activities, and of refusing access to two sites. Do you believe Iran is prepared to resolve the disputes it has with you?

As the International Atomic Energy Agency confirmed in its quarterly report, issued on

March 3, Iran is continuing to implement measures counter to the JCPOA, particularly with respect to the accumulation of low-enriched uranium as well as research and development.

These actions by Iran have serious consequences in terms of proliferation. That is why France, along with its E3 partners, triggered the JCPOA's dispute resolution mechanism on January 14, to open a space for dialogue, in line with the agreement, in order to find a solution that would make it possible to preserve that agreement. Discussions were initiated and the dispute examination timeline was extended on January 24 following an agreement among the participants. Our aim remains Iran's total return to compliance with the commitments set forth in the JCPOA.

As President Macron emphasized on March 3, France urgently calls on Iran to cooperate with the IAEA as it carries out its mission to verify Iran's nuclear obligations. France supports the Agency's impartial, professional work, as the minister assured its director general, Rafael Grossi, during his visit to France on March 3.

Syria

Can you comment on the ceasefire agreement concluded by the Russian and Turkish presidents, Vladimir Putin and Recep Tayyip Erdogan, in Idlib province, which entered into force on Friday?

France, together with its EU partners, takes note of the agreement reached yesterday by Russia and Turkey (see <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/fr/press/press-releases/2020/03/06/statement-of-the-foreign-affairs-council-on-syria-and-turkey/>). It is crucial that this agreement lead to an effective implementation on the ground of an immediate, lasting and verifiable cessation of hostilities.

We reiterate our call to guarantee full compliance with international humanitarian law, the protection of civilian populations, and unfettered access to humanitarian aid.

On both the national and European levels, France is stepping up its humanitarian assistance to civilians in the Idlib region, at a time when nearly a million people have been displaced and are living in extremely harsh conditions.

France reiterates that only a negotiated political settlement under the auspices of the UN, in line with Security Council Resolution 2254, can put in place the conditions for a lasting solution to the Syrian crisis. Côte

d'Ivoire

What do you think of President Ouattara's statement that he would not run in the presidential election?

France applauds the announcement by President Alassane Ouattara of Côte d'Ivoire that he would not be a candidate in the 2020 presidential election, and his desire to thereby open the way to a new generation of Ivorians.

This decision can only facilitate the holding of consensus-based, inclusive elections in Côte d'Ivoire. In this regard, France applauds the mobilization of efforts by the EU and the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, which will support the Ivorian electoral process and help facilitate the emergence of a national consensus.

This announcement bolsters the provision enshrined in the constitutions of all ECOWAS nations limiting presidents to two terms in office.

Paris - March 9, 2020

Switzerland – Meeting between Jean-Yves Le Drian and his counterpart, Ignazio Cassis (Paris - March 9, 2020)

Jean-Yves Le Drian, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, will receive Ignazio Cassis, Federal Councillor and Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of the Swiss Confederation, today.

The ministers will discuss the key international issues on which our countries are cooperating, notably including the situation in the Middle East. The minister and his interlocutor will reaffirm our two countries' attachment to the preservation of strong and effective multilateralism.

Jean-Yves Le Drian and Ignazio Cassis will also take stock of the forthcoming meetings focusing on relations between the EU and Switzerland.

The minister will discuss with his interlocutor our trusting and vibrant bilateral relations, especially in the border regions where our populations share catchment areas, the management of which requires close coordination between our two countries. The ministers will exchange views on the progress of negotiations relating to the management of water resources in the Rhone basin.

During this meeting Jean-Yves Le Drian and Ignazio Cassis will discuss the international response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis.

Bilateral relations between France and Switzerland are close and longstanding. We engage in regular political dialogue; the volume of our trade (€31 billion

in 2018) and the development of our cross investment reflect the mutual trust between our companies and our investors.

Tourism – Special meeting of the executive board of the Tourism Sector Committee convened by Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne (March 10, 2020)

Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne, Minister of State attached to the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, has convened a special meeting of the executive board of the Tourism Sector Committee on Tuesday, March 10 to discuss the consequences of the COVID-19 epidemic.

Introduced by the Prime Minister at the last Interministerial Tourism Council, the Tourism Sector Committee is an umbrella organization for all tourism professionals (government agencies, businesses, federations, professional associations, unions). It gives tourism professionals a voice in the development of tourism policies. This committee also facilitates the coordination of responses to exceptional situations affecting the sector, such as the coronavirus.

The purpose of tomorrow's meeting is to review the situation with professionals and to look at the consequences of the epidemic on this sector, especially in terms of visitor numbers, economic repercussions and jobs. It will highlight the measures taken by the government and facilitate the coordination of actions and responses by the various stakeholders.

Sudan – Attack targeting the Sudanese Prime Minister (March 9, 2020)

France condemns in the strongest possible terms this morning's assassination attempt against Sudanese Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok and his convey in Khartoum. It calls for a thorough investigation into the circumstances and perpetrators of this attack.

France reiterates its full confidence in the efforts of Prime Minister Hamdok and Sudan's transitional authorities to rebuild the country and set it on the path of peace and democracy.

Standing by the Sudanese authorities, it reaffirms its commitment to ensuring the success of the democratic transition that must steer the country toward free elections in 2022.

Greece – Migration

Is France part of the "voluntary coalition of countries" prepared to welcome the children of migrants stranded on the Greek islands, and if so, what will its contribution be?

We refer you to the Ministry of the Interior.

Handles \$5.4 Billion Sales In Its First Year

Nearly 1.7 Aircraft/Day for Entire Year

In its first year in operation, the exclusive pre-owned aircraft search portal of the International Aircraft Dealers Association (IADA) has handled more than \$5.4 billion dollars in pre-owned aircraft sales. Since the launch of IADA's www.AircraftExchange.com on Feb. 1, 2019, IADA dealers have recorded sales of 615 aircraft listed on the site. "The sales of previously owned aircraft have exceeded our expectations for a startup website and the momentum is building," said IADA Executive Director Wayne Starling. "In just the past five months, nearly 400 aircraft worth \$3.8 billion listed on our site changed hands."

The site's first year in operation generated nearly 1.7 aircraft sales per day on average, for 365 days of the year, Starling noted. "IADA has firmly established www.AircraftExchange.com as the go-to place for aircraft



sellers that want to see their aircraft sold by the best professionals in the business," he added.

The site generally averages more than 500 aircraft available for sale exclusively from IADA accredited dealers. There are almost 400 jets, over 70 turboprops, 20 piston aircraft, and 15 helicopters on the site today.

IADA has contracted with

Diane Levine-Wilson to ensure that aircraft search data provided exclusively by the accredited dealers on the organization's aircraft search website is accurate and up to date for buyers and sellers of business aircraft. She is a well-known and respected researcher in the aviation industry whose responsibility is protecting and safeguarding the integrity of the aircraft data presented on IADA's search portal, www.AircraftExchange.com.

Vertis Aviation launches VA Footprints as it pledges to offset carbon for all customers

Vertis Aviation, the Switzerland-based boutique charter company, is introducing a new carbon offset programme which commits to offsetting 100% of carbon emissions generated by charter flights it arranges. The programme, named VA Footprints, ensures that customers on each charter flight, no matter its route or distance, will have the associated greenhouse gas emissions offset at no expense to them. Vertis will pay the full carbon credit amount, on behalf of the customer, to demonstrate its commitment to a lower carbon aviation future, and the importance it gives to the growing climate crisis.

VA Footprints is launching at the beginning of March when all arranged charters will fall under the scheme. "We know the aviation industry is committed to reducing its carbon footprint but as concerns about climate change grow private aviation continues to garner attention for the amount of CO₂ emissions it generates. We recognize we are part of the problem and want to take a step, albeit small, towards being part of the solution," said Catherine Buchanan, COO Vertis Aviation.

Vertis is taking an innovative approach by varying the organisations it will contribute funds to. "We have decided to choose a different project each



month. This gives us the opportunity to make sure the donations are directed towards real issues that correlate to our client movements. For example, we often fly clients in and around South America and know that unimaginable amounts of the rain forest are currently being destroyed, so we would select a Brazilian carbon offset project focused on reforestation. Our business has always been client driven, this is just an extension of that philosophy," explains Buchanan. "This is an essential time for the future of the planet, we cannot wait until every aircraft is flying SAF, or being electrically propelled. The problem is clear and present, and we want to do something immediately. We believe the issue is more important than just signing up to a carbon offsetting organisation and that funds should be directed to projects that are making a difference

now," reiterates Buchanan.

To support the initiative Vertis will issue a monthly newsletter detailing the projects receiving funding, the reasons for selection, and the amount of metric tonnes of carbon emissions offset each month will also be issued. A new eye catching, double-leaf logo will highlight the scheme as Vertis encourages clients to make an additional contribution, as well as offset emissions each and every time they fly. "We want to make our customers think about this issue. We know they need executive aviation to support their business, but we want them to be aware of its negative environmental impact, and what they can do to reduce it. Our customers are invariably powerful and influential people, so we ask them to influence others to make a difference too."

Vertis has taken inspiration for VA Footprints from fellow industry professionals including Farnborough Airport which operates carbon neutrally and the industry's Sustainable Aviation Fuel coalition which aims to tackle the challenge of sourcing, delivering and uplifting SAF. "These leading companies have motivated us, and we hope that our initiative will stimulate industry colleagues to follow our footprints," concluded Buchanan.

AviationManuals Starts 2020 with 62 Fortune 100 Flight Departments and Expanded Services



AviationManuals ended 2019 with an expanded product line, record revenues and now supports a client base that operates over 4,500 aircraft worldwide, including 62 Fortune 100 company flight departments. Leading the surging interest were new digital operations manual offerings and a growing engagement with ARC, the company's iPad app for Safety Management System (SMS).

"We are adding around 700 new clients per year and we've had double digit revenue growth now for four consecutive years," said CEO Mark Baier. "Not only was 2019 another great year, but AviationManuals also began the new year with a nearly 90 percent increase in January 2020 sales volume compared to January 2019," he added. ARC SMS App Popular with Part 91 Operators

"The iPad app for our ARC Safety Management System was downloaded 1,500 times in 2019 alone, and we have twice as many ARC users now as two years ago," Baier said. "Flight departments use us and our software to make managing their manuals and SMS easy."

With a current active client base operating around 4,500 business aircraft, AviationManuals has established itself as the world's dominant provider of aviation operations manuals and digital support for worldwide business aviation. The number of digital subscribers to the company's popular International Operations/Procedures Update service alone now tops 1,000. 2019 an Active Year

In 2019, AviationManuals joined forces with the International Business Aviation Council (IBAC) to make IS-BAO certification more convenient, expanded its offerings with a new FBO manual, released an LOA guide, and unveiled an EFVS package for pilots. Additionally, the company increased its staff over 30 percent during the year and moved into its new larger headquarters near Washington, D.C. to help support its expanded product line and additional clients.

AviationManuals, based in the Washington, D.C. area, is a provider of digital operations manuals with update services, as well as SMS software and iPad apps for fixed-wing, rotary-wing, drone operators, and FBOs worldwide. Founded in 1996, the company has produced thousands of manuals. Products and services include SMS Software, Flight/Company Operations Manuals, FBO Manuals, International Operations and Procedures Manuals, Minimum Equipment Lists, Emergency Response Plans, and Internal Audit Programs, as well as Letters of Authorization (LOA) support for RVSM, Data Link (CPDLC / ADS-C), PBN (RNP-10 / -4, NAT HLA, B-P-RNAV, and RNP-1), Enhanced Flight Vision Systems (EFVS), and EFBs.

AviationManuals is a member of the National Business Aviation Association (NBAA), International Business Aviation Council (IBAC), and the National Air Transportation Association (NATA). For more information on AviationManuals, go to www.aviationmanuals.com.

Ostara Nutrient Recovery Technologies Inc. & City of Atlanta Announce Official Launch of Nutrient Recovery Facility

New Nutrient Recovery Facility at R.M. Clayton Water Reclamation Center
Recovers Phosphorus for Reuse as Sustainable Fertilizer, Crystal Green®

Ostara Nutrient Recovery Technologies Inc. (“Ostara”) in partnership with The City of Atlanta Department of Watershed Management (“DWM” or “the Department”) has announced the official opening of a state-of-the-art Nutrient Recovery Facility at the R.M. Clayton Water Reclamation Center (“WRC”). The facility will recover valuable phosphorus, helping protect local waterways from nutrient pollution, while producing an environmentally sustainable fertilizer. This is Ostara’s 22nd full-scale project and has been delivered to the City of Atlanta Department of Watershed Management under a design-build agreement and financed through a unique operating lease model. “Partnering with progressive organizations, like the City of Atlanta, and providing the capital and the technology to



bring circular solutions to local communities is our core focus,” says Dan Parmar, President and CEO of Ostara. “Together, we don’t just recover phosphorus, we clean water to grow more food, transforming the nutrients we recover into high-efficiency fertilizers that help build resilient cities and food

systems from source to field. We’re very proud of our work with the City of Atlanta.” “The Ostara Pearl® Nutrient Recovery facility will recover phosphorus that can be repurposed from reclaimed water, help protect local waterways from nutrient pollution, and create new revenue by producing an environmentally sustainable fertilizer,” said Kishia L. Powell, Commissioner, City of Atlanta Department of Watershed Management. “This new system is a cutting-edge approach to achieving core strategic priorities that will enhance operational efficiency, increase fiscal responsibility and improve customer service.” Ostara’s Pearl Technology Achieves Cost Savings, Protects Local Watershed & Improves Operations

STATEMENT FROM MANITOBA GOVERNMENT

The official Opposition have indicated its intent to prevent the budget and budget speech from being considered by the Manitoba legislative assembly as scheduled this afternoon. This is an abuse of parliamentary privilege and is

very disrespectful to the guests and media who have come legislature for the presentation of Budget 2020.

In the event that the budget and budget speech are not able to be considered by the

legislative assembly on Wednesday, March 11, it will be the government’s intention to bring it forward for consideration in the legislature on Thursday, March 12.

PROVINCE WORKING WITH OTHER JURISDICTIONS TO PURCHASE PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT FOR HEALTH WORKERS AND PATIENTS

Equipment Will Ensure Patients and Front-Line Workers Have the Protective Equipment They Need To Stay Safe and Minimize Spread of COVID-19: Friesen
The Manitoba government is

working with the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), and provinces and territories, to co-ordinate a procurement effort of protective equipment to prepare for the possibility of

confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the province, Health, Seniors and Active Living Minister Cameron Friesen announced today. “Our government, along with provinces and territories, is

taking inventory of the personal protective equipment (PPE) currently in our jurisdiction, and planning for what would additionally be required in the event of an outbreak,” said Friesen. “Ensuring staff throughout the health system have access to the equipment and supplies required for safe patient care and their own personal protection is a priority.”

Manitoba Health, Seniors and Active Living (MHSAL) is co-managing a provincially co-ordinated Incident Management Structure to ensure appropriate planning, preparation, mitigation and response to the evolving COVID-19 situation, the minister added. While Manitoba has an adequate supply of PPE at this time, this purchase will ensure the province is well positioned to manage any additional demand on resources that would accompany potential or confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Manitoba.

Current inventory of PPE supplies is being closely monitored, and regions and sites have been asked to take steps to ensure supplies of PPE, including procedure/surgical masks and N95 respirators, are maintained and that providers and staff are aware of their appropriate clinical use.

The purchase will help to ensure patients, staff, and front-line health workers, have appropriate protective equipment at a competitive price. The determination of the volume of supplies needed is undertaken collaboratively with the assistance of the Public Health Agency of Canada. Most personal protective equipment used in clinical environments will not spoil.

Based on current planning assumptions, including supplies required by Manitoba’s regional health authorities, service delivery organizations, personal care homes and fee-for-service clinics, the

projected cost is an estimated \$35.2 million. PPE supplies are being utilized as health-care facilities and sites across the province in line with clinical recommendations. This includes use by staff of gloves, gowns, procedure or surgical masks and face/eye protection when dealing with any patients who have flu-like symptoms (cough, fever, difficulty breathing). Procedure or surgical masks are also provided to patients who show these symptoms, as well as anyone accompanying them.

Staff performing certain procedures are required to wear an N95 respirator in addition to eye-protection, gloves and a gown. Efforts to ensure staff are appropriately trained and fit-tested for the N95 are underway across the province.

“The government and public health officials are reminding Manitobans the risk of acquiring COVID-19 in Manitoba remains low, but is increasing given events occurring in Canada and around the world. We must continue to prepare for this virus in Manitoba,” said Dr. Brent Roussin, Manitoba’s chief public health officer.

The Manitoba government is working with Shared Health, Manitoba’s regional health authorities and service delivery organizations as well as the Public Health Agency of Canada to share information and best practices.

Common personal prevention and preparedness measures for viruses such as COVID-19 and influenza include regular hand washing with soap and warm water or an alcohol-based hand cleanser. Additional precautions include covering your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing, and staying home when you are sick, regardless of recent travel. Avoid close contact with anyone showing symptoms of a respiratory illness, such as coughing or sneezing



Chairman Reed Speaks on Supporting U.S. Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Exports through Global Gas Infrastructure Development Delivers Remarks to Nearly 100 LNG Stakeholders at Event Hosted by the United States Trade and Development Agency (USTDA), LNG Allies, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce’s Global Energy Institute



Manitoba Recognizes International Women's Day with Launch of Empower Women 20/20 Awards

Manitoba is recognizing International Women's Day by launching a new awards program to honour women who have made outstanding contributions to the advancement of gender equality, Sport, Culture and Heritage Minister Cathy Cox, minister responsible for the status of women, announced today.

"Women make important contributions that enrich all aspects of life in Manitoba including community service, law, education, arts and culture," said Cox. "As we celebrate International Women's Day in 2020, I'm proud to announce the 'Empower Women 20/20 Awards', which will honour the outstanding women who have helped to further gender equality in our province." In all, 20 awards will be presented to recognize women

who have developed activities, programs or movements to advance gender equality in Manitoba, reflecting the province's rich diversity and regional representation. The Manitoba Women's Advisory Council will play a role in reviewing all the award nominations.

International Women's Day (March 8) is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating women's equality.

This year marks the 100-year anniversary of the election of Edith Rogers, the first woman elected to the Manitoba legislative assembly.

"Manitoba women began the movement of women getting the right to vote and be elected to the provincial legislature in 1916 and the 1920 election

was the first after the change in legislation," Cox said. "Edith ran in 1920, 1922 and 1927 – winning her seat in all three elections. Beyond her career in politics, she was also active with various organizations in Manitoba and was a strong advocate for soldiers' dependents after the First World War."

The names of this year's award recipients will be announced during Gender Equality Week, Sept. 20 to 26. More information and nomination forms can be found at:

www.gov.mb.ca/msw/empower_women_2020.html.

The International Women's Day 2020 campaign theme is Each for Equal. Follow the conversation online at #IWD2020 and #EachforEqual.

Canada's climate plan is on track to deliver the largest emissions reduction in the country's history but these initiatives are just the beginning. The federal government will continue to bring forward new and enhanced climate action measures to exceed its 2030 target and achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

Quotes

"Manitoba is committed to becoming Canada's cleanest, greenest and most climate-resilient province. We are working to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions in a meaningful, real way and we are dedicated to helping industry make important energy-saving changes that will benefit both the environment and the economy. We believe the trucking industry wants to do its part to reduce carbon emissions, and this program will help us collectively transition to a low-carbon economy, creating a more sustainable and prosperous future for all Manitobans and Canadians." —Conservation and Climate Minister Sarah Guillemard

"Programs like the one launching today will help create good jobs and help us build the strong clean economy of tomorrow. And as we aim for net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, our government is committed to supporting Canadians across the country in transitioning to a cleaner, more prosperous future for our kids and our grandkids." —Terry Duguid, parliamentary secretary to the minister of environment and climate change

"Red River College is proud to play a role in driving sustainability forward through Manitoba's Efficient Trucking Program. This initiative builds off the College's commitment

to sustainable technology and to cultivating meaningful partnerships that will benefit not only our community in Manitoba but will also contribute to a positive ripple effect of fuel efficiency in the heavy-vehicle industry across the Christine Watson, interim president and CEO, Red River College

"The Manitoba Trucking Association is pleased to be part of the launch of Manitoba's Efficient Trucking Program. We appreciate the opportunity to have provided industry insight into the current intake and hope to see future phases of the program expand on what we believe will be a very successful initiative." —Terry Shaw, executive director, Manitoba Trucking Association

- An applicant can request a rebate for multiple devices on a single vehicle and trailer, as well as multiple devices for multiple vehicles and trailers owned or operated by the same applicant as part of a single application up to a maximum rebate of \$20,000 per truck and trailer combination.

- The trucking industry directly and indirectly contributes more than \$2 billion to Manitoba's GDP and directly and indirectly employs approximately 4.6 per cent of the Manitoba labour force.

- New heavy-duty vehicle greenhouse-gas regulations and investments in low-carbon transportation are important parts of Canada's climate plan. These regulations will make our transportation sector more competitive by saving new vehicle owners approximately \$1.7 billion in fuel costs annually by 2030.

- For provinces where the federal price on pollution applies, including Manitoba, small and medium-sized businesses, like truck drivers, could be eligible for the Climate Action Incentive Fund.

3,200 More Manitobans Employed in February

Strong Start to 2020 with Employment Increasing By 9,700: Fielding and Eichler

Manitoba's employment levels are off to a strong start in 2020, according to the latest report from Statistics Canada, Finance Minister Scott Fielding and Economic Development and Training Minister Ralph Eichler announced today.

"Our government is moving forward on our commitment to grow Manitoba's economy and create 40,000 new jobs over the next four years by fixing our finances and making the province an attractive place to do business," said Fielding. "Manitoba's labour market remains strong as shown by our solid track record to date." The latest figures show an

employment increase of 3,200 in February in Manitoba. It follows an increase of 6,500 in January, resulting in approximately 9,700 more Manitobans working in the first two months of 2020.

According to the latest figures, Manitoba increased by more than double the national average. The increase in employment in February was accompanied by a decline in Manitoba's unemployment rate to five per cent, down from 5.1 per cent in January and 5.3 per cent in 2019. Manitoba continues to have the second lowest unemployment rate among Canadian provinces.

"We are working with industry and employers to ensure Manitoba workers will have the knowledge and skills they need to meet the needs of in-demand careers now and in the future," said Eichler. "This is proving to be an effective strategy to continue job market growth."

The province's labour force has increased by 2,800 workers, a 0.4 per cent increase, while the country's rate as a whole increased by 0.2 per cent. Compared to the previous February, the labour force increased 1.3 per cent in Manitoba.

Canada and Manitoba Launch Application Process for the Efficient Trucking Program

A growing number of Canadians are choosing clean transportation. This choice saves energy and money while protecting the environment and building clean transportation networks brings good jobs and economic growth. That's why the Government of Canada is focusing on finding faster, cheaper, cleaner ways to get Canadians where they are going.

Today, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, the Honourable

Jonathan Wilkinson, and Conservation and Climate Minister Sarah Guillemard, launched the application process for Manitoba's Efficient Trucking Program.

This program is now accepting proposals that will support retrofits in the transportation sector. Eligible applicants can receive a rebate of up to 50 per cent on fuel-saving devices and technologies like idling technologies, low-rolling resistant tires and trailer skirts. The program will be delivered

by Red River College and will reduce energy consumption and emissions in Manitoba. Interested applicants with innovative technologies have until March 31 to apply through

www.gov.mb.ca/climateandgreenplan/index.html

The Efficient Trucking Program will receive up to \$5.9 million through the Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund. The government of Manitoba is also contributing \$5.9 million toward the program.

Manitoba Government Enhances Film and Video Production Tax Credit

Manitoba Government Removes Red Tape Around Film Production Traffic Control

Manitoba Implementing Plans to Support Staff Affected by Correctional Centre Closure

Province Proposes Amendments to The Credit Unions and Caisses Populaires Act



HSBC WORLD RUGBY SEVENS SERIES

VANCOUVER



Canada Sevens thrill record breaking rugby crowd in Vancouver

Largest rugby crowd in Canadian history with 39,533 fans packed into BC Place. Hosts thrill home fans with three wins, 14 tries and a place in the quarter-finals. South Africa, New Zealand and Australia also top pools with perfect records. Quarter-final line up: South Africa v USA, New Zealand v Fiji, Australia v England, Canada v Spain. Remaining tickets for finals

day available at www.canadasevens.com

Hosts Canada raised the roof of BC Place in Vancouver as a record breaking 39,533 crowd cheered the home team to three stunning victories over France (31-21), Fiji (26-21) and Wales (29-7) to top Pool B and set up a quarter-final clash with Spain on Sunday.

FIBA competitions suspended



Considering the current situation with the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and in order to protect the health and safety of players, coaches, officials and fans, FIBA today has announced that all FIBA competitions are suspended as of tomorrow, Friday, 13 March

2020.

FIBA will continue to monitor the situation on a daily basis and will evaluate the options for the continuation or not of the respective competitions when and if the situation allows for it.

FIFA Congress rescheduled due to COVID-19

On account of the spread of COVID-19, numerous international bodies and public health authorities have advised against the organisation of international events.

Concerns over the health and well-being of participants, as well as travel restrictions in many countries, have resulted in the cancellation or postponement of many such events in various parts of the world.

New research links Japan's Rugby World Cup hosting with national pride and excitement boost



Rugby World Cup hosting was a catalyst for national pride growth in Japan, capturing the imagination, growing rugby interest and leaving a positive legacy for the sport, according to a major new study.

Japan 2019, which was won by South Africa, saw the best-ever performance of the Japanese Brave Blossoms as the hosts became the first team from Asia to reach the quarter-finals during a tournament that broke viewership, engagement, match and fan-

World Rugby sets four-year blueprint to develop future stars of the emerging unions



World Rugby has announced details of the new strategy for its High Performance Combine in the Pacific Islands, focusing on identifying, developing and investing in domestic Pacific Island talent to participate at Rugby World Cup 2023 and 2027.

Launched in 2018, 51 players have graduated from the High Performance Combines in the Pacific Islands of which 13 players were prepared for international rugby with Frank Lomani (Fiji) and James Faiva (Tonga) progressing to star at Rugby World Cup 2019 in Japan.

The World Rugby-funded programme gives emerging talent access to some of the world's best coaches and strength and conditioning experts, preparing players for the modern elite rugby environment. The programme is delivered in cooperation with the Pacific Rugby Players who assist

to deliver wellbeing and personal development workshops.

Players are assessed and evaluated at the conclusion of the Combine by World Rugby's High Performance consultants with the programme's elite being offered an opportunity to be placed within the world's elite competitions. World Rugby's Scholarship programme has seen players placed into teams with the Gallagher Premiership, Global Rapid Rugby, Mitre 10, Major League Rugby, PRO14, Superliga Americana de Rugby and Super Rugby.

The new four-year cycle begins with the Pacific Combine in Suva, Fiji, on 15-18 March, which is hosted immediately after the World Rugby Pacific Challenge 2020 (6-14 March). The programme will run annually with the aim to nurture test-level talents and reflects World Rugby's wider commitment to support Pacific

FIBA team up with TicketSocket for the next five years

FIBA and TicketSocket, a ticketing service operating worldwide, have entered into an agreement to provide state of the art ticketing solutions for FIBA events around the globe.

As part of this five-year partnership, TicketSocket will build a fully customized white label ticketing solution that will be made available to Local Organizing Committees of FIBA events, which in time may be offered to FIBA's member federations as well.

TicketSocket is leading the way in empowering brands and sports event rights holders and

organizers to secure control over a strategic area of their business.

TicketSocket's white label ticketing and registration solution allows organizations to own their branding, have full control over revenue and ticketing fees,

increase overall sales with the right social marketing tools, and, most importantly, own their own customer data. TicketSocket is among the few companies who can provide truly international coverage and is trusted by some of the largest event organizations.

The partnership will allow participating Local Organizing Committees and National Federations to maximize the revenue generated from ticket sales of FIBA events and also allow FIBA to build a global database of basketball fans. With this partnership, TicketSocket becomes the Official Global Ticketing Provider of FIBA and Preferred Ticketing Provider of FIBA which gives access to association and IP rights as well as sponsorship exclusivity in the ticketing category.

FIBA Secretary General, Andreas Zagklis said: "We are very happy to welcome TicketSocket on board as FIBA's Preferred Global Ticketing Partner. This partnership will not only be a great benefit to our Local Organizing Committees and National Federations by providing them with a resource to help maximize their ticket sales and revenue, but it will also help us in our strategic objective of enlarging the FIBA family. We are confident this partnership will be successful for both organizations and we look forward to a successful collaboration."