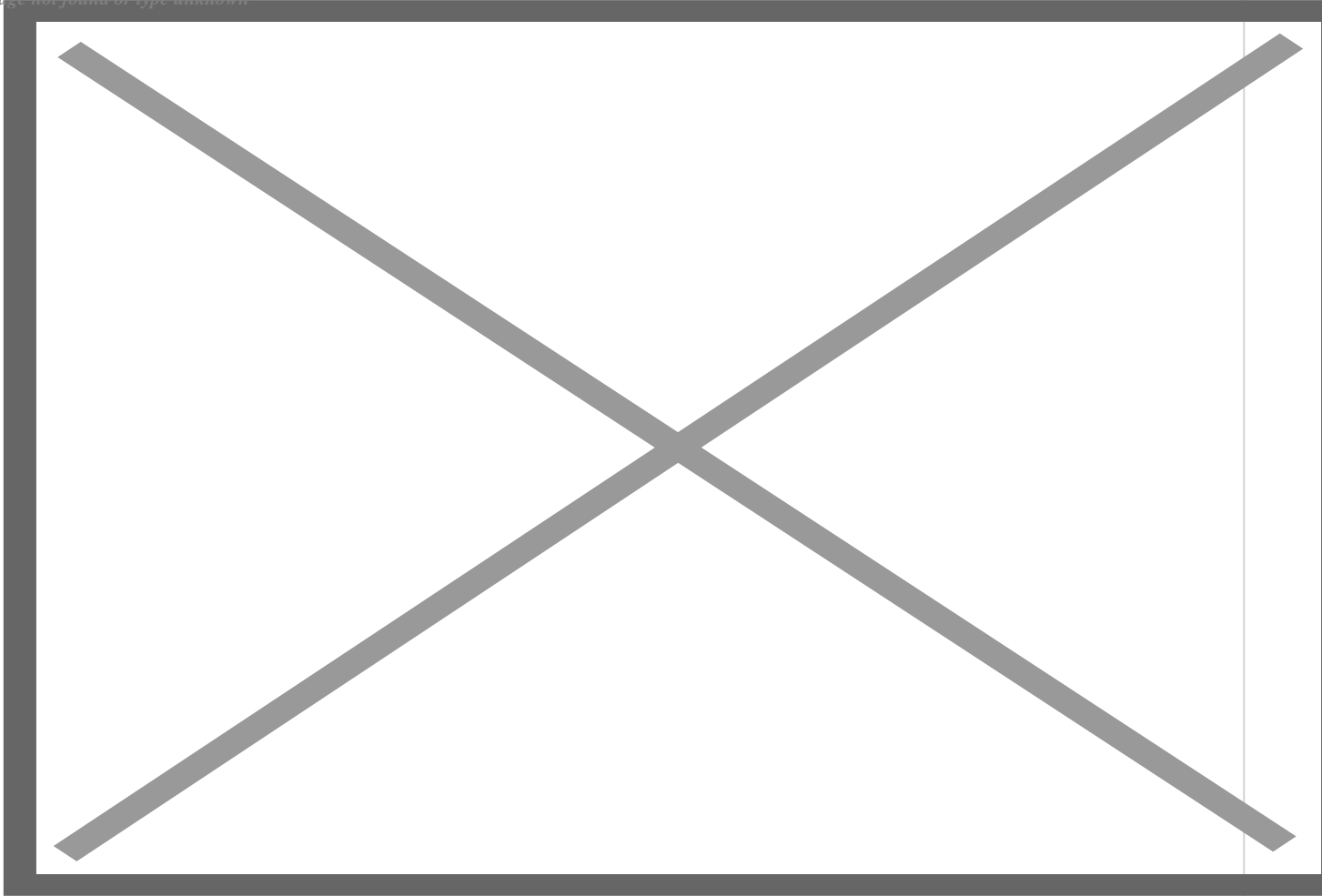


UN reports reveals COVID-19 tourism hit could top \$4 trillion

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The UN does not expect international tourism to return to pre-pandemic levels until 2023 at the earliest [File: Reuters]

United Nations, June 30 (RHC)-- The economic effects from the plunge in tourism since the coronavirus pandemic emerged last year could be more than \$4 trillion, a United Nations report said on Wednesday.

The joint report by the UN's World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) found the lack of widespread vaccination in developing countries was leading to mounting economic losses.

“Tourism is a lifeline for millions and advancing vaccination to protect communities and support tourism’s safe restart is critical to the recovery of jobs and generation of much-needed resources,” UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili said in a statement. He noted many developing countries are highly dependent on international tourism.

The outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic brought international air travel to a near halt for much of last year as many countries refused to allow non-essential travel. That punched a \$2.4 trillion hole in tourism and related sectors last year, and the report warned a similar loss may occur this year depending on the distribution of COVID-19 vaccines.

“The outlook for this year doesn’t look much better,” Ralf Peters from UNCTAD’s trade analysis branch told a news conference. “The first three months were again bad, there was not much travelling happening. There is an expectation of a certain recovery in the second half of the year, at least for North America and Europe to a certain extent,” he added, crediting vaccinations.

With COVID-19 vaccination rates wildly uneven -- with some countries having inoculated less than one percent of their population while others have topped 60 percent -- the economic damage will be concentrated in those countries with low vaccination rates.

The report found “the asymmetric roll-out of vaccines magnifies the economic blow tourism has suffered in developing countries, as they could account for up to 60 percent of the global GDP losses.”

It noted they already suffered the biggest drops in tourism arrivals last year, estimated at between 60 percent and 80 percent.

“In international tourism, we are at levels of 30 years ago so basically we are in the ’80s ... Many livelihoods are really at threat,” said Zoritsa Urosevic, Geneva representative of the Madrid-based UNWTO.

Although the tourism sector is expected to recover faster in countries with high vaccination rates such as the United States, the UNWTO does not expect international tourism to return to pre-pandemic levels until 2023 at the earliest.

<https://www.radiohc.cu/index.php/en/noticias/internacionales/262414-un-reports-reveals-covid-19-tourism-hit-could-top-4-trillion>



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