Abstract  The tourism industry remains one of the largest economic sectors in the world in terms of both employment creation and contribution to the global economy. However, the industry is sensitive to external shocks such as natural and/or human-induced disasters. This book documented the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the global tourism industry. This chapter (also serving as a policy brief) presents emerging key findings and conclusions, as well as policy recommendations that are embedded within the Sendai Framework of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and management. Drawing from past disasters, the emphasis is placed on building back better (BBB) global tourism systems post-COVID-19. The decision to pivot the chapter on the DRR and management framework that embraces the BBB concept is informed by the inevitable new global normal. The new global normal is characterised by increasing and more intense disasters across all spatial levels, from a local to a global scale, which normally results in severe negative impacts on all economic sectors as experienced during the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami in 2004 and the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019/2020. This orientation is further informed by the futuristic thinking that incorporates matters of building resilience and adaptation to disaster risks within the tourism industry. Therefore, the chapter provides the tourism industry and its key stakeholders with both immediate ideas for quick and big wins post-COVID-19 recovery pathways and future ideas to build resilience that permits adaptation of the tourism industry to future disasters. The development of globally accepted protocols enhancing health and safety, especially for the tourist and those working in the tourism and related industries, is recommended. Should these measures be fully upheld, then international travel, which is critical in the tourism sector, may resume sooner rather than later, with spill over effects on exciting domestic tourism too.

Keywords  COVID-19 · Tourism industry · “New normal” · DRR · Build back better · Stakeholders
16.1 Introduction

The impacts of previous epidemics, pandemics and/or other disasters on the tourism industry have been observed by Page et al. (2012) to differ according to the extent to which a country depends on the sector and its contribution to the gross domestic product (GDP). The authors also note that pandemics often lead to the shifting of demand from locations deemed to be unsafe to those perceived to be safer. However, unlike previous pandemics and disasters, the impact of COVID-19 has been global, with almost 100% of world destinations affected (UNWTO 2020a). This left very few (if any) alternative destinations deemed to be safe. In terms of recovery of the tourism industry from COVID-19, some like Peters et al. (2020) see the impossibility of the industry returning to the pre-COVID-19 normal. This is mainly attributed to the widespread negative impacts of the pandemic concerning issues such as job insecurity; higher unemployment rates in both tourism and other sectors across the economy; reduced savings, which will lead people to prioritise necessities; and tourism suffering as a luxury spend.

The book started by providing an overview of tourism, COVID-19 and global development agendas, including the politics of COVID-19 and the overarching methodological framework. Detailed chapters were developed to highlight the plight and responses of the global tourism system, giving attention to the following industries: aviation, hoteliers, restaurants, cruise ships, airports, entertainment and car rentals. Space was also allocated for chapters dealing with sports and religious tourism, preparedness and response to COVID-19, responses from stock markets and tourism-related shares, philanthropic activities and the emerging economic stimulus packages. Some of the emerging key findings and conclusions from the book are presented in the next section.

16.2 Emerging Key Findings and Conclusions

Overall, the key findings show that the COVID-19 pandemic slowed down and in some cases reversed the gains already made in the implementation of global development agendas, particularly the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (AfSD) and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The book also reveals that the unthinkable happened in the tourism industry, a near total shutdown of all international passenger travel at some point due to the pandemic leading to some tourism operations completely closing down in many places. Almost universally, there were national regulations put in place to subdue the rapid spread of COVID-19. The measures include social distancing, isolations, quarantines, lockdowns and curfews, among others. All these accelerated the rate at which the tourism and related industries were collapsing. Broadly, the following key impacts were witnessed: (1) death, illness and COVID-19-induced fear to potential tourists; (2) loss of revenue and income; (3) loss of employment and reduced work hours; (4) postponed sporting
and religious tourism events; (5) elements of unpreparedness by stakeholders across
the tourism value chain; (6) a historical global financial and other resources mobilisa-
tion movement; (7) blame and COVID-19 witch-hunting; (8) institution of eco-
nomic stimulus packages, mostly at a national level; and (9) concerted efforts by
key tourism stakeholders to accelerate the relaxation of lockdowns through lobby-
ing and the development of appropriate voluntary global start-up protocols.

With initial responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, the findings in this book reveal that generally, Asian countries were prepared to react quicker compared to
countries in other regions. This was mainly due to a regular epidemic and pandemic
outbreaks in the region. After several months of lockdowns and the implementation
of social distancing measures, world leaders (under pressure from citizens and resi-
dents) started implementing step-wise relaxations of these restrictions. The main
aim of relaxing the restrictions was to “flatten” the plummeting economic curve.
This was inevitable since by the end of March, and during April 2020, the main
noise in global economic systems was to focus on “flattening” both the COVID-19
and economic curves. Both these curves were of interest to the tourism industry. In
the next paragraphs, additional details on the overall impact of the COVID-19 pan-
demic on the global economy and selected tourism sectors are provided.

With the COVID-19 pandemic, it emerged that global international tourist arriv-
als were likely to drop by between 20% and 30% compared to 2019 (Gössling et al.
2020). In South Africa, which had one of the toughest lockdowns in the world, the
CEO of the Tourism Business Council highlighted that there was likely to be noth-
thing left if the industry was left to reopen only in December 2020 (Smith 2020).
From a survey on the impact of COVID-19 by the Cape Town Tourism Department,
it emerged that 56% of companies had no recovery plans in place, 36% partially
paid staff, while 31% put staff on unpaid leave and 18% retrenched employees.
About 83% of businesses sampled revealed that they were not likely to survive
beyond 6 months under prevailing lockdowns conditions (Ibid.).

The first line of defence by governments to the coronavirus was to prepare for
and prevent the spread of COVID-19 after the World Health Organisation (WHO)
declared a global pandemic on 11 March 2020. The precautionary measures
included the closure of ports (land, sea and air) and screening and testing for infected
persons. Precautionary measures also included the promotion of some measures
learnt from the 1918 influenza pandemic, as improved upon over time through expe-
riences of other outbreaks such as SARS, Ebola and MERS. The measures included
handwashing, good sneezing etiquette and social and physical distancing. These
measures led to negative chain impacts as many tourism establishments and busi-
nesses closed, among such were restaurants, hotels, B&Bs, cinemas, live shows and
amusement and national parks. Port closures also resulted in the total grounding of
airlines and an almost full closure of airports as these were now only servicing repa-
triations and the movement of essential goods and services like medicines, as well
as medical and security personnel.

The port closures and other COVID-19 preventive measures highlighted herein,
however, proved insufficient as the pandemic continued to spread rapidly across
the world. Nearly every country on earth recorded COVID-19 infections. From China
as the first epicentre, COVID-19 ravaged Europe, with Italy as its new global and European epicentre of infections. However, other European countries were badly hit by the pandemic, including Spain, the UK, France, Russia and Germany. In no time the pandemic spread to North America, with the USA becoming the new global epicentre. As this book was being finalised in June 2020, the USA was still the global epicentre both in terms of COVID-19 infections and deaths, although there were serious worries regarding Brazil, Russia and South Africa.

As the COVID-19 pandemic spiralled globally, many countries moved into response mode. This phase involved the continuation of awareness-raising, although the main activities were testing, contact tracing, self-isolation, quarantining of infected or suspected individuals and treatment. This meant huge investments in procuring COVID-19 specific quarantine centres, hospital beds, ventilators, testing kits, gloves, face masks and other personal protective equipment (PPE). Since many governments had not prepared for this huge expenditure, there was a need to set up national platforms to mobilise financial, technical and other resources. In countries such as South Africa, a COVID-19 Solidarity Fund was established. Earlier, the WHO had also established its own Solidarity Response Fund to assist in building COVID-19 response capacity in developing countries. Many donations came in from individuals, companies, nations and philanthropists. Governments and central banks came in with a variety of economic stimulus packages and repo rate cuts. From the preliminary findings, economic stimulus packages were generally much higher than the 2008/2009 global financial crisis economic stimulus packages. In certain instances, some central banks cut repo rates three times in less than 2 months as the gravity of the pandemic kept growing bigger and clearer. These countries include Canada, Pakistan and the Philippines. The tourism industry was among the priority sectors to receive the economic stimulus packages. However, the cruise ship industry was having challenges to access these packages as many companies were registered outside their countries of origin to avoid strict labour laws and taxes such as those from the USA. Debates were also ongoing as to whether airlines should benefit from economic stimulus packages as these should have been prepared financially for such pandemics (Rugy and Leff 2020).

Although such economic stimulus packages are a good gesture, governments the world over were left in a dilemma regarding which sectors to prioritise and which planned programmes to put on a standstill or cancel altogether. As budgets were being shifted and repo rates cut, economies were also shrinking, and some countries projected huge shortfalls in tax revenues. Some statistics regarding the first quarter of 2020 GDP in selected countries are shown in Fig. 16.1. The worst affected country was China, which experienced an almost 10% GDP decline. This decline was likely to have ripple effects on other countries that have close trade links with China. In particular, the tourism industry was likely to suffer the most given that outbound Chinese visitors have the highest presence in destinations worldwide.

Debates were also raging regarding COVID-19 status in Africa as some still believed the peak was yet to be reached given the limited testing and case isolation capacity. A diplomatic war also erupted between the USA and Chinese administration as the USA continued building an unproven case that China had released the
coronavirus causing COVID-19 from its laboratory in Wuhan (deliberately or otherwise), rather than it being a natural zoonotic disease. Debates continued concerning the competence of the WHO Chief, with the USA also accusing the WHO head of conniving with China to hide the COVID-19 outbreak leading to a slow global response and preparedness. The manner in which China handled the notification of the coronavirus outbreak to the WHO remains worrying. This is so against the background that China was not a first-time offender. The country had been in a similar situation as it took months to notify the WHO of the SARS outbreak in 2002/2003. Although China accepted responsibility and managed to rebuild trust with the global community, the extent of the COVID-19 outbreak is beyond human imagination, and the backlash was growing. To this end, Japan joined the USA in the backlash by announcing huge incentives for its companies to relocate from China back to Japan or any other country of choice. However, it is important that the said tension was possibly fuelled by the raging demand for global economic and political dominance, particularly between China and the USA that was raging on at the time of this pandemic.

![GDP Figure](image)

**Fig. 16.1** Reduction in GDP growth due to COVID-19 (other sources put the figure at 6.8% [Financial Times, 2020. China’s GDP fall is a chance to ditch its national growth targets, Retrieved from https://www.ft.com/content/983d5074-805d-11ea-8fdb-7ec06edeef84 (accessed 11 May 2020)]). (Source: Authors, data from OECD (2020), MTI (2020) and The Guardian (2020))
Given that about 49% of the airlines’ expenses are fixed, their grounding meant that they were incurring costs even when they were not generating any revenue. Under normal circumstances, airlines require a cash reserve equivalent to 3 months of usual costs for them to be considered sound. However, as the pandemic hit, most airlines across the world had a median cash flow ranging between 1 and 2 months. The airlines in Europe and Pacific Asia were under severe strain, and this meant that their survival had to rely on an external cash injection. As such, jobs in the global aviation and supporting sectors were under threat. Airlines and airports also faced the unusual problem of parking space, exerting additional storage and parking costs to the already strained airlines. Most affected airlines were in North America, Europe and other regions that have a large number of flights, and the parking problem led to some companies retiring their old fleets earlier than originally planned. Besides acting as important transport nodal links, airports are also important economic hubs offering additional services including shopping malls, car rental facilities, ride and share services, conference facilities, lodging and logistics for exports and imports. Initial assessments showed that global airports were set to lose over $76 billion in the first few months of the pandemic outbreak, and this spilled over to loss of income for related air navigation companies and others in the airport value chain.

The cruise ship industry was almost devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic, with the industry cancelling almost all cruises around the world and in the process losing billions of dollars in potential revenue in the process. The pandemic further witnessed stock values of most cruising companies plunging by as much as 80% within a 2-week period in March 2020. This was their worst performance in living memory. In addition, cruise passengers were traumatised as they could not disembark in many jurisdictions, with some getting infected and also dying on board as documented in this book. The Diamond Princess is the commonly cited case in this space. However, the industry was poised to make a recovery post the COVID-19 crises, although it would not be a quick rebound. Rays of hope for the revival emerged with some regular passengers expressing a willingness to return to the cruise ships once the virus was under control and with some even making future bookings during this period. Investors were also showing faith in the industry by injecting funds into it during the COVID-19 lockdown. With the “no sail” order imposed by the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) likely to be lifted after 24 July 2020 (Froneman 2020), Carnival Cruise opened bookings for August 2020. The bookings surged 600% within 3 days, 200% compared to the same period in 2019. This act shows a ray of hope for some recovery in the industry. The only challenge was that the bookings were conditional to sailing orders being lifted.

It emerged that there were unprecedented cancellations in accommodation bookings for hotels, B&Bs and other establishments due to travel restrictions, lockdowns and direct orders from governments for the sector to close. Faced with imminent collapse, hotels resorted to massive and systematic job layoffs and furloughs with most hotels temporarily shutting down. There was also a noted realist possibility of most hotels defaulting on their financial obligations such as loan repayments and servicing of rates. Most global hotel groups deferred or cancelled paying dividends to shareholders and suspended capital expenditure as highlighted in the book. Initial assessment showed that for the hotel industry alone, billions of dollars in potential
revenue was lost. The figure could translate into trillions of dollars if one considers the knock-on effect of hotel shutdowns on the entire tourism value chain.

COVID-19 also adversely affected the sports tourism industry. Most sporting events around the world were either cancelled and/or postponed. The events included professional football matches in major European, African and South American leagues, as well as sports mega events lined up in the first half of 2020. The highest profile sporting event that fell victim to COVID-19 was the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. The cancellations of sporting activities led to losses for the individual teams, broadcasters and sponsors, leaving most of them in financial distress. From an athlete’s perspective, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the loss of income as most sporting clubs significantly cut salaries with some reducing this by as much as 70%. The athletes also faced a major battle to remain fit during the period of the pandemic. This was a difficult task given the fact that they had no access to training facilities. In the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, there were visible commercial interests as employers seemed to have buried their heads in the sand, continuing with scheduled events even when it was no longer safe to do so. This facilitated the spread of the disease, risking the health and wellbeing of sports personalities and spectators. It took the contraction of the virus by several athletes for action to be taken. Like all the other sectors, the impacts of this pandemic on sports tourism was not only direct. Consequently, also affected were stakeholders in the supply chain, including batting syndicates and catering firms.

Religious activities, and by default religious tourism, were also negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in them being either being scaled down, cancelled or postponed. Such major events included Saudi Arabia’s Hajj and Umrah for Moslems as well as the Easter festivities for the Christian churches. There were loses made by stakeholders from both the hosts and receiving places. With some economies such as Saudi Arabia cashing in on the Hajj and Umrah, government revenue was reduced. Other industries in the value chain such as travel agencies, hotels, transport and restaurants also took a knock. Unfortunately, pilgrimages such as the Hajj and Easter are calendar-specific and cannot be rescheduled, and thus there were no possibilities to reschedule these in 2020. Consequently, there were instances of confrontations between governments and religious leaders when the latter ignored the lockdowns and social distancing measures. In some cases, ignoring government regulations resulted in many infections and in other instances deaths. Such instances were reported in Iran, South Africa, South Korea and India.

The book also investigated the impact of COVID-19 on the stock market, especially tourism-linked counters. It emerged that no previous infectious disease outbreak, including SARS, the Spanish Flu and Ebola, negatively impacted the stock markets the way COVID-19 did. Generally, stock markets reacted negatively to the emergence and tumultuous spread of the disease as measures were put in place by governments around the world to try and contain and limit the spread of the contagion, and by default, disrupted many (if not all) industries. Three major events were noted to have significantly shocked the stock markets, namely, (1) the lockdown in Wuhan, China, in January 2020; (2) the lockdown in Lombardy, Italy, in February 2020; and (3) the declaration of COVID-19 as a pandemic by the WHO on 11 March 2020. Tourism-related stocks were hardest hit as travel bans and lockdowns were
instituted in all global destinations. Figure 16.2 summarises the drop in share value (as a percent) of selected tourism-related firms during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Governments around the world responded to the COVID-19-induced shock on the stock markets by trying to reassure the markets through policy interventions and implementing multi-trillion-dollar rescue packages for distressed industries. The markets responded well to these packages with some industries making steady recoveries. However, shares in the tourism sector largely remained in the negative, and recovery was subdued. This is because a deep uncertainty remained as the pandemic continued to spread and intensify. Hence, confidence in the sector could only return once the pandemic was under control and restrictions on travelling removed.

The impact of the COVID-19 on the entertainment industry was another aspect investigated, with revelations that the pandemic devastated the industry to levels also never witnessed before. There was a loss of production time as well as cancellation of productions and film and music festivals. This led to the untold suffering of artists and losses of revenue by entertainment companies. In some instances, livelihoods changed overnight! Global giants in entertainment such as Box Office lost billions of dollars in potential revenue due to the postponement of major film launches and the shutting down of studios. These losses were likely to have long-term impacts on revenue. The television and entertainment sector found itself compromised. This was in terms of providing new content, an element that came at a time when there was large demand for entertainment during the lockdown periods where the audience was mostly available, as many people were not going to work or school. As a consequence, there was a rare growth in share price for the video on demand and streaming companies like Netflix and Showmax. As was witnessed
from other line industries in the tourism sector, firms in entertainment had to contain costs through rescheduling capital investments, laying off and furloughing employees. Unfortunately, the entertainment industry was likely to remain subdued as many lockdown relaxation levels were putting the industry in the last segments due to social distancing requirements that the industry cannot guarantee.

Given the magnitude of COVID-19 generally, and its foregoing impacts on the tourism sector, specifically, governments had to intervene through economic stimulus packages, including monetary policy measures. The economic stimulus packages remained one of the major immediate relief and response measures. However, it emerged that the road to recovery was never going to be quick or painless. No tourism business, small or big, was immune to the crisis. Big businesses run huge overheads, while small businesses usually have cash flow challenges. As such, solutions post, COVID-19 had to bring all stakeholders on board including governments, tourism industry, philanthropists, individuals and organised labour. Several typologies of economic stimulus packages emerged for the tourism sector, and these included grants and subsidies, use of voucher systems and domestic tourism promotions, drastic repo rate reductions, direct lending, tax waivers and reductions, social security payments, rent and utility payments, loan guarantees and debt moratorium and other debt repayment arrangements. Among eight economic stimulus packages tracked across 54 countries worldwide, the most popular included VAT, rent/utilities/local tax, social security, grants and subsidies, debt moratorium, loan guarantees, direct lending and income and corporate tax breaks in varied forms and degrees.

In the absence of a COVID-19 cure and/or vaccination, tight controls on human mobility are likely to remain in place the world over, ushering in the so-called new normal (WTTC 2020a). Johnson and Boone (2020) observe that as the world exited lockdowns, it was entering another challenging period of lock-ins. These lock-ins were likely to severely constrain international travel, a key pillar in the tourism value chain and recovery. Players in the tourism industry, therefore, needed to abandon their old ways of doing things and reinvent new strategies of operation that are in harmony with the new reality. The new normal in international travel although difficult to fully envision, was likely to witness every port of entry ramping up COVID-19 testing, quarantines or traveller, entry/departure declines and returns (whether arriving by air, sea or road). However, given the incubation period of COVID-19, such measures were likely to deter travellers, forcing them to stay home for a while. Besides the health aspect, the global economy was also likely to feel the effects of the pandemic for years to come and was likely to trigger a worldwide economic depression, which would further hurt the prospects of a quick recovery in the tourism industry. Figure 16.3 shows the projected revenue loss by the tourism industry in the year 2020.

The next and last section in this chapter focuses on policy recommendations. The authors hope to present a concise tabulation of action points and protocols that the tourism industry can utilise to realise quick and big wins in post-COVID-19 recovery. Although the main focus is on recovery, space is also reserved to reflect on preparedness as well as relief and response as countries across the world are at different stages in experiencing and addressing the pandemic.
16.3 Policy Recommendations: BBB Global Tourism Post-COVID-19

This policy recommendations section is structured around the DRR and management framework and cycle focusing on (1) preparedness, (2) relief and response as well as (3) recovery and reformation (embedding the BBB concept in rehabilitation and reconstruction). The BBB concept implies becoming more resilient, bouncing back quicker, and more efficiently as well as leaving no one behind after disasters (World Bank 2018). The perspectives on building resilience (including adaptive capacity) across economic sectors are well-articulated in current major global development agendas, especially the Sendai Framework and the Paris Agreement (Fig. 16.4). In the Sendai Framework, the scope of DRR was broadened to focus on both natural and human-made hazards, as well as related environmental, technological and biological hazards and risks, with health resilience strongly promoted throughout (UNDRR 2015). To this end, investing in DRR for resilience is one of the four main priorities for action. Resilience (adopted in the Sendai Framework) is then defined as:

The ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions. (UNDRR 2009: 24)

Resilience is also supposed to be promoted at workplaces that include tourism industries through both structural and non-structural measures (UNDRR 2015). It was due to be enhanced in national health systems, through the integration of disaster risk management, into all forms of the healthcare system at a local level.

![Projected revenue loss by the tourism industry in 2020. (Source: Authors, data from Statista (2020))](image)
Concerning tourism, the Sendai Framework makes direct reference to such under Priority 2 that focuses on strengthening disaster risk governance to mitigate the impact of the disaster. As such, the industry is supposed “to promote and integrate disaster risk management approaches throughout the tourism industry, given the often-heavy reliance on tourism as a key economic driver” (UNDRR 2015: 20). From the 2030 AfSD and the New Urban Agenda, the world committed to promoting sustainable tourism (UN Habitat 2016) and embedded this into selected targets, namely, 8.9, 12.b and 14.a, as presented in this book (United Nations 2015).

### 16.3.1 Preparedness

To holistically grasp the perspectives on disaster preparedness, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015–2030) should be recognised and elevated to be the overarching DRR framework explicitly covering the tourism sector as well. Although the WHO has a mandate over global health matters, pandemics such as COVID-19 remain one of the disasters listed under the Sendai Framework. For some reason, it seems the world has prioritised climate change-related disasters, many of which are not pandemics, with huge annual gatherings taking place to review progress. To this end, key business and development players, including those in the tourism sector, bought into this narrative. The climate change narrative also found its way into many other key global development agendas including the 2030 AfSD where SDG 13 (Climate Action) is somehow elevated among other SDGs.
with the United Nations Framework Convention given the mandate to strictly oversee it. Climate change also featured strongly in the United Nations Habitat III’s New Urban Agenda. Hence, the COVID-19 pandemic somehow reminded the world and the tourism industry to refocus and place all potential global disasters on an equal footing regarding preparedness. Like climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic became global and notably acute beyond anybody’s imagination.

There seems to be epidemic, pandemic and/or disaster fatigue settling in across countries. The same could be true for economic sectors such as tourism and related firms. However, the best way to be ready for any such eventualities is for countries to continuously learn from past disasters and refine their national, regional and global response protocols. Disasters come like a thief in the night! To this end, countries and regions that regularly experience epidemics and pandemics such as China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea and Asia, in general, were ready for COVID-19. This was so from the perspectives of existing comprehensive measures including having testing kits and protocols in place, contact tracing, general hygiene in terms of handwashing and other practices, ventilators, masks and mask-wearing, other PPE, self-isolation and quarantine. Hence the pandemic was quickly contained. The level and speed of response also seemed to be linked to the manner in which past epidemics and pandemics impacted economies, with Hong Kong, South Korea and Taiwan being good examples.

Time has also come to rethink WHO disease notification protocols and impact determinations. Drawing from improvements and emerging efficiencies in impact-based weather forecasting approaches, which has moved away from merely alerting stakeholders of certain measured and quantified millimetres of rainfall, amount of snow or wind speeds, etc., the sector now informs users of the nature of impacts from such. The users are more interested in the potential impact the measured millimetres of rainfall, amount of snow or wind speed will have on certain economic sectors. Hence it was not good enough for the WHO to indicate the various stages in the spread of COVID19, going from being a global health emergency to being declared a pandemic. The global citizens needed to understand the likely health, social, economic and other impacts across sectors, including tourism. Such information becomes more relevant and useful for preparedness and future planning. With the assistance of other United Nations agencies, professional bodies, academia and businesses, the WHO can start to draw up matrices indicating three to five levels of possible impacts of epidemics and pandemics across economic sectors. Known and past epidemics and pandemics can be used as baselines, as well as the COVID-19 experience.

The global tourism industry has weathered many storms in the recent past. These include the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami that hit the Asian region; terrorist attacks such as the 9/11 event in the USA; the London, Bali and Paris bombings; and previous disease outbreaks such as SARS in 2003, swine flu in 2009 and the West African Ebola in 2014 (Higgins-Desbiolles 2020). Lessons from these crises led the tourism industry to advance toolkits of risk management, risk mitigation, crisis recovery and resilience to future challenges within its value chains (Hall
et al. 2018). From a disaster risk reduction (DRR) perspective, the industry tried to devise strategies for the prevention and preparation of incidences that it had faced in the past in accordance with the magnitude of the disasters. However, and despite these previous experiences, nothing could prepare the industry for the unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic turned out to be a perfect storm as it was of much higher intensity, magnitude, temporal and spatial resolution compared to past events. As a result, the tourism industry found itself in uncharted waters.

Although global preparedness for emerging infections with pandemic potential has improved by building and learning from past experiences, the focus has mainly been on the action taken when the infection had emerged, and not on prevention. It is therefore recommended that more emphasis needed to be put on prevention, which is less costly than taking action when there is already an outbreak, which is more expensive to control in the long term. Adopting the prevention health approach could substantially improve the situation, manage the related costs and reduce the threat of future incidents.

Generally, the tourism sector, like any other industry, seemed to have been ill-prepared for the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic came across like a level five global hurricane. It came across like a level five global cyclone. It was like a global earthquake of the highest magnitude. It was a global tsunami, indeed! Hence the tourism sector lacked the desired understanding in terms of the magnitude of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the capacity to deal with disaster risk governance remained weak. Furthermore, there was no convincing evidence from the tourism sector regarding investments in DRR for resilience building and adaptation. Yes, as highlighted earlier, global tourism systems had encountered isolated major disasters such as the 9/11 terrorist attacks, London bombings and the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami and had worked overtime to come up with disaster plans aligned to such. However, COVID-19 took the industry by surprise, such as no other modern pandemic had been witnessed, apart from the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic. Although similar, advances in travel, especially the airlines and cruise ships, meant the COVID-19 pandemic spread across the world literally overnight.

Given that pandemics such as COVID-19 can easily spread in confined and crowded spaces, the focus on improving preparedness in airlines, cruise ships and all ports of entry must be the priority focus for the future. Ports of entry failed to detect the coronavirus. As for the cruise industry, there is a need to improve its state of medical preparedness on board so that it relies less on ground-based facilities in the case of emergencies and future outbreaks. There is also the need to improve sanitation procedures on cruise ships, with guests being educated on the importance of good hygiene. Additional work on better evacuation and quarantine procedures from the cruise industry in the event of future outbreaks needs to be done too. Generally, the cruise industry did not respond quickly to the COVID-19 outbreak as voyages could have been suspended sooner. Modern forms of disease screening prior to boarding remain a possible solution to be enforced in the industry.
Since major gatherings, especially sporting events and pilgrimage, are known disease and pandemic super-spreaders, ongoing awareness-raising and education by the relevant authorities and religious leaders need ratcheting. Equally important is to engage religious leaders in terms of roles they could play to build community resilience to epidemics and pandemics. This could be done without unilaterally impeding their right to worship. The use of social influencers, religious and community leaders have been shown to bear good results in the fight against COVID-19 in many places. Hence scaling it up in other places impacted strongly recommended.

Many travellers would have been saving for a long time to embark on a holiday. This made it difficult to follow travel advice and go ahead with cancellations. With this in mind, the tourism sector should work with the insurance industry on a long-term plan to scale up travel insurance in preparedness for likely repeats of disasters of the COVID-19 magnitude or worse. This is likely to be an uphill task given that the insurance industry was already revising clauses in order to limit liabilities. Additional measures for individuals may include governments revamping unemployment and general health insurance.

Lastly, the tourism industry needs to come up with reformed DRR protocols, particularly revamping preparedness. The Sendai Framework for DRR and management remains the main guideline document for such. Both small and big businesses should develop scenarios on potential impacts and map out how particular industries in the tourism value chain must ready themselves.

16.3.2 Relief and Response

With virtually all global destinations still under some form of COVID-19 travel restrictions as per the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) as of the 8 May 2020 report, relief and response measures remained a reality (UNWTO 2020a). The UNWTO further details that 25% of all destinations worldwide had undergone at least 3 months of travel restrictions, with 40% having such for at least 2 months. About 156 destinations had completely closed their borders for international travel (57% in Africa, 80% in the Americas, 70% in Asia and the Pacific, 83% in Europe and 62% in the Middle East). This resulted in a huge business transaction burden in the tourism sector.

While it remained a huge challenge for many countries to have prepared for COVID-19, relief and response measures depended heavily on timely warnings from the WHO. Unfortunately, the WHO, in turn, relies on timely member states notifications, which China allegedly might not have done. Overall, governments and private entities should continue with economic stimulus packages and favourable monetary policies, especially those aimed at bailing out SMMEs. Although some jurisdictions such as Canada, Pakistan and the Philippines cut their repo rates three times, and many others did so twice, there remains room for more cuts where these are still above zero basis points. Where there is still a leeway to institute additional
rounds of economic stimulus packages. Urgency in this regard is paramount. Social safety nets, including unemployment benefits and insurance, were also triggered. However, if room to manoeuvre still existed, more should have been or should still be done. All commonly applicable COVID-19 economic stimulus packages – including relief on income generation constraints and relief from corporate taxes obligations, direct lending, loan guarantees, debt moratorium, grants and subsidies, social security as well as rent/utility measures – must be brought fully on board. These may also be extended in the recovery phase.

One of the tourism sectors that was difficult to deal with in terms of relief was arts and sports. There were vulnerable members from these industries that governments did not place on the radar early enough. This was made more complex by certain huge clubs in other countries that were filing for relief, only to be pressurised to withdraw the claims. While it may be rather late to consider the affected members for relief, measures to assist the sector to recover quicker were more appropriate, including bailouts for certain organisations and individuals.

### 16.3.3 Recovery and Reformation

To assist member states with gradual recovery from COVID-19, the UNWTO designed the “COVID-19 Tourism Recovery Technical Assistance Package” (UNWTO 2020b). From the package, the UNWTO emphasises that all stakeholders in the tourism sector must come to terms with the new reality in the hospitality, travel and tourism sector. The package is structured around three pillars, namely, economic recovery, marketing and promotion as well as institutional strengthening and building resilience. The concept of building resilience draws the reader back to the Sendai Framework’s DRR and management framework and the BBB concept. From the economic recovery front, both quantitative and qualitative impacts of COVID-19, particularly on SMMEs, should be assessed, with appropriate economic measures implemented. As for marketing, appropriate promotion strategies covering the identification and targeting of markets that can aid quicker recovery, product diversification and coming up with attractive pricing and packaging guidelines were necessary. Lastly, institutional strengthening and resilience building would focus on enhancing working conditions in terms of health, safety and restoring consumer confidence. It would also focus on skills enhancement and the development of other relevant protocols. Some of these matters were picked up by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC). The UNWTO further mapped the SDGs that the COVID-19 Tourism Recovery Technical Assistance Package would impact on (Table 16.1).

The WTTC also came up with a supporting initiative to the UNWTO assistance package. The WTTC’s “Safe Travels Global Protocols” initiative was designed for the new normal in the tourism sector (WTTC 2020a, b, c). The Safe Travel Global Protocols was gaining momentum and acceptance from key stakeholders post-COVID-19 recovery. The global protocols (fully endorsed by authors of this work)
act as common protocols and procedures for the tourism sector and were being created for the following: hospitality, outdoor retail, aviation, airports, cruise, tour operators, convention centres and MICE, car rental and insurance industries. The protocols are segmented into four pillars highlighted in Fig. 16.5. The first two global protocols for the hospitality and outdoor retail industries were released on 12 May 2020. The reader is directed to the WTTC website for future Safe Travel Global Protocols that were still to be developed.

Linked to the WTTC global protocols tourism de-risking model, South African Tourism (2020) developed a three-phase recovery model focusing on the “local first” (domestic), regional and international tourism. The three phases each had twin sub-phases (I and II) aided by transition points. The transition point within domestic tourism includes the implementation of health protocols by the tourism sector. To move from domestic into regional recovery and spaces, the transition point involves the lifting of regional country border closures and the institution of globally accepted health protocols such as those proposed by the WTTC. The transition point from regional into international tourism covers elements such as the lifting of long-haul country air travel bans, the institution of globally accepted health protocols and practices.

Permitting day trips, overnight and local air travel are envisaged as quick and big wins to recover domestic tourism. Self-driving and regional/continental air travel will facilitate recovery of regional tourism, while the resumption of international carriers including flights and cruises will signal progress towards full recovery. However, given that COVID-19 lockdown relaxations are going to be gradual and varied, rather than a once-off worldwide announcement, global tourism recovery

| Table 16.1 UNWTO COVID-19 recovery package and impact on SDGs |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| **COVID-19 recovery pillar** | **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) impact** |
| Economic recovery | SDG 1: No poverty  
SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth  
SDG 10: Reduced inequalities  
SDG 12: Responsible consumption and production  
SDG 17: Partnership for the Goals |
| Marketing and promotion | SDG 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure  
SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities  
SDG 10: Reduced inequalities  
SDG 17: Partnership for the Goals |
| Institutional strengthening and building resilience | SDG 1: No poverty  
SDG 4: Quality education  
SDG 5: Gender equality  
SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth  
SDG 9: Industry innovation and infrastructure  
SDG 10: Reduced inequalities  
SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities  
SDG 12: Responsible consumption and production  
SDG 17: Partnership for the Goals |

Source: Authors, based on UNWTO (2020b: 6–26)
will take longer. Apart from promoting domestic and regional tourism, the industry needs to be on the lookout as to when positive global travel sentiments will start emerging. There will also be a need to cleverly identify countries that were not badly hit by COVID-19 in order to market these as early start-up locations and/or sources of travellers.

Although the entire tourism industry was battered by COVID-19, some other players and sectors will not manage to recover without large cash injections and other forms of support. The SMMEs, in particular, remain at the coalface of struggling operations with many facing permanent closures, hostile takeovers, forced mergers and/or significant scaling down. Given the critical role of SMMEs in employment creation, there is a need for governments to continue systematically bailing this sector out through incentives that include tax deferments, loan guarantees and other such appropriate low risk measures. This should be done quickly as the sector was already in severe stress. Many government economic stimulus packages had been rolled out and were being utilised by SMMEs, but these were proving to be insufficient, particularly in developing economies.

The hotel and restaurant industries remain causalities of the COVID-19-induced fear (real or perceived). To this end, measures focused on bringing back the trust from patrons should be designed, including drawing back local patrons. Rebuilding
trust and confidence in the hospitality industry could involve measures such as enhanced communication (with clear and consistent messaging) with customers regarding new health and hygiene protocols (WTTC 2020b). The front offices should play a central role in responding to guest queries on COVID-19 and other possible likely disasters. There will also be a need for hotels, B&Bs and other accommodation establishments to erect clear signage informing guests on revamped cleaning protocols and social distancing measures. Additional guidelines may include the need to wear face masks, as well as regular handwashing and maintaining sneezing and coughing etiquette, which is also applicable to outdoor shopping and other industries in the sector (WTTC 2020c).

Some customers are likely to feel uneasy and fearful touching menu boards and making physical contact with automated payment machines. The alternatives could include using electronic display screens and QR codes to limit physical contact with the material. Perceptions of the possibility of getting infected in a restaurant or hotel were likely to persist. Other innovations could include riding on and scaling up the already existing use of drones and robots in the restaurant space. Drones could be used for home deliveries, while sit-in customers could be enticed with reduced costs and other promotional materials and deals. However, there remains a catch-22 situation. This massive technology roll-out may result in technology-induced joblessness. Nonetheless and drawing from the WTTC Safe Travel Global Protocols on hospitality and outdoor retail industries, a sample on how to ensure a safe experience for staff and guests is summarised in Table 16.2.

### Table 16.2 Ensuring safe experience in hospitality and outdoor shopping industries

| Hospitality industry | Outdoor shopping destinations/retail establishments |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Implement processes focused on enhanced sanitation, disinfection and deep cleaning practices as well as increase cleaning/disinfection frequency | Enhance sanitation, deep cleaning practices and reinforce mitigation measures, including revisiting guidance for cleaning staff relating to washrooms and baby-changing facilities and private client spaces. |
| Implement customer processes, including guest information and social distancing | Within the scope of sanitation and hygiene, provide hand sanitiser dispensers with 70% alcohol content in washrooms, near entrances and exits and at regular intervals throughout. |
| Enhance food safety and hygiene at restaurants | Introduce guest wellbeing procedures, such as thermal scanning, social distancing as well as queue management. |
| Implement processes focused on enhanced cleaning, disinfection and social distancing for meetings and events | Minimise touch contact by digitising guest services such as digital maps, digital queue management, e-menus, virtual personal shopping and roving concierges and promote contactless payment wherever possible. Provide complimentary WIFI to encourage the use of digital services. |
| | Suspend services that cannot support social distancing and health and safety requirements, such as playgrounds, drinking fountains and ATMs, as well as items that may have been previously lent to guests, which may include umbrellas and pushchairs. |

Source: Authors, based on WTTC (2020b: 3, c: 4)

One of the focus areas of recovery should be destination attractions such as national parks, waterfalls, mountains and rivers. While there was evidence of these attractions becoming less polluted and the wild animals emerging from their usual
hideouts in conservation areas (which is a plus), the state of these natural resorts could have been degraded due to limited maintenance during the lockdown periods. This is so given that many are under the care of governments through parastatals. There was also a real chance that many developing countries would redirect development and maintenance budgets for these resorts to the health sector and other COVID-related pressing needs. The recommendation, therefore, is that governments should still prioritise tourism as one of the quick and big wins in terms of recovery, creating jobs and incomes to communities as well as revenue for the state.

For future travel, the airline industry has been placed in the spotlight in terms of the models of aircraft needed and immediate future seating arrangements. While the 70% capacity ratio is being used as an indicative figure, more innovation will be needed in this regard. For travellers (business or leisure), it is going to take courage for one to be back in a plane with all the headaches of social distancing, food handling and other stringent COVID-19 screening measures at both ports of departure and entry. Anticipated long delays at airports will add to the equation. Furthermore, the unintended consequence of possible reductions in air travel for business is due to the newly discovered working-from-home scenario that may disrupt the business travel sector. In South Africa, for example, government officials, parliamentarians and ministers regularly shuttle between Pretoria and Cape Town, as well as other main cities. This practice stopped completely during lockdowns and with budgetary constraints, so there are likely to review that may negatively impact business travel. Working from home (the new normal) is also widespread across sectors globally, and similar negative impacts on air travel demand are likely to be witnessed in short to medium term. One must not rule out the possibility of this new normal becoming permanent in certain organisations.

As air travel resumes, governments may also wish to discount jet fuel (although this should be done with further assessments on oil price). At the time of completing the book, crude oil prices had at some point in April 2020 plummeted to below $17 per barrel due to COVID-19 and ongoing oil price war between Saudi Arabia and Russia. As of 12 May 2020, crude oil was trading at exactly $30 per barrel (21:54 CAT). The airlines will need to offer incentives to excite travel again. This had already started with Qatar Airways offering 100,000 free tickets to medical staff as a measure to say “thank you” for their work on fighting the COVID-19 pandemic (Bitmez and Kosak 2020).

On 13 May 2020, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and the Airports Council International Europe (ACI Europe) released the Safely Restarting Aviation guide. The safe restart of the industry meant ensuring that aviation “is not a meaningful vector for the spread of COVID-19” (IATA and ACI Europe 2020: 2). Restarting the industry also meant that there had to be significant changes throughout the end-to-end passenger journey map. Governments were encouraged to disrupt current port practices of managing the risk of communicable diseases by investing in advanced technologies. Passengers were also encouraged to take control of their travel safety considerations, including assessing personal levels of health risks prior to travel. The details concerning some of the proposed new normal measures for aviation are presented in Table 16.3.
The car rental as well as the ride and share service companies need to ensure the comfort and safety of customers. Ensuring the cleanliness and sanitisation of vehicles will be the focus of many tourists. Education and training of drivers is crucial, and the development of safety protocols will be needed to protect the travellers and the drivers alike. Training the drivers on how to clean vehicles religiously and use of certified chemicals in fumigating and cleaning the vehicles should be obligatory.

Table 16.3 Proposed new normal measures on end-to-end passenger journeys

| Stage in the travel journey | Proposed new normal measures |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Preflight                  | Passenger contact tracing (COVID-19 status information in electronic format and provided in advance prior to airport arrival, including through e-visa and electronic travel authorisation) |
| Airport terminal           | Continue with revamped entry/exit temperature screening measures |
|                            | Social/physical distancing |
|                            | Use of PPE as guided by local authorities |
|                            | Cleaning and disinfection |
|                            | Application of reliable and fast COVID-19 testing |
|                            | COVID-19 immunity passports for recovered patients |
|                            | Self-check-ins prior to airport arrival, although this requires governments to institute new regulations |
|                            | Airlines to promote self-bag drops where such facilities exist and look for ways to enhance them across airports |
|                            | Boarding reforms will be necessary, including redesigns of boarding areas by the relevant authorities as well as use of automation (self-scanning and biometrics) |
| Inflight                   | Although COVID-19 transmission from passenger to passenger has been assessed to be low, physical distancing will be necessary, and passengers can use face coverings |
|                            | Physical distancing from blocked seats may also be necessary, depending on aircraft |
|                            | Cabin crew is encouraged to use comprehensive guidelines already in place that include the management of suspected COVID-19 cases and simplified service and pre-packaged catering |
|                            | Sanitisation wipes could also be provided to clean spaces around them |
|                            | Limiting movement inflight is also advised |
|                            | Revised aircraft cleaning guidelines have been issued |
| Arrival airport            | Revised border and customs control is necessary, including considerations for electronic options (mobile and QR codes), use of green/red lanes for self-declarations, contactless passport reading and redesigning of immigration halls |
|                            | Efficiencies in baggage collection will be needed to avoid passengers unnecessarily waiting for long. Social/physical distancing should also be encouraged and other regulatory measures in the jurisdiction like face mask-wearing need to be observed if in place |
|                            | Security and health screening for transferring passengers should take maximum advantage of “one-stop security arrangements” – Relying on mutual recognition of screening measures at the originating airport and eliminates re-screening in the transfer process |
|                            | In the event that health and safety transfer screening is required, this should follow appropriate sanitary requirements outlined earlier |

Source: Authors, based on IATA and ACI Europe (2020: 3–6)
to ensure passenger safety. Some companies had already instituted measures to instil a sense of customer safety. For example, from its 2020 first-quarter report, Hertz indicated that it had started implementing stringent measures in line with the US CDC guidelines to safeguard personnel and customers. In addition to following social distancing best practices at its locations, every vehicle was sealed and certified “Hertz Gold Standard Clean” after undergoing a 15-point cleaning and sanitisation process. This process follows US CDC guidelines and uses Environmental Protection Agency-approved products.

Regarding the sports sector, recovery measures started popping up in May 2020, with some major football leagues, rugby and cricket tests scheduled to start between the end of May and July 2020. The New Zealand rugby, German Bundesliga and English Premier League were among the early pacesetters to getting back to the fields, mainly to play in empty stadiums. The dilemma from the leagues was to find an agreed method to conclude the leagues’ and award titles to deserving teams. The French Football League 1 points-per-game (PPG) system was applied to conclude the league (Howard 2020). However, there was still no consensus across the football leagues on the best way to conclude the leagues, although this work supports the PPG to be used to conclude the leagues without endangering the players from COVID-19 infections. Given the scenario, vulnerable sports personalities and administrators should be covered by off-field disaster insurance, and if this is not available currently, this should be planned for the future. Match and/or sports insurance is common in cricket as some matches are insured against bad weather. A disaster relief fund could also be established, ready for disbursement using applicable evaluation criteria when disasters such as COVID-19 strike. The fate of sports personalities and administrators was similar to those in the arts sector.

Targeted marketing to open up new age cohort-related tourism should be perused. Evidence revealed that the older generation dominated cruises, yet they were also among the highly impacted in terms of COVID-19 deaths both on and off-board the ships. Gear and McGorian (2020) present two scenarios from the cruise ships, The Diamond Princess and The Naval Craft. The Diamond Princess on average had passengers aged 68 years compared to presumably young and healthy passenger demographics on The Naval Craft. The rate of infections between the two cruise ships was 18.9% and 15.1%, respectively, with the population on board also similar at 3711 and 4500 people, respectively. What was intriguing was the mortality rates of 0.32% (12 deaths) for Diamond Princess compared to 0.02% (a single death) on The Naval Craft. Hospitalisation rates were at 20% and 1.03% for the two ships, respectively. Moving to countries, as of 4 May 2020, there were 25,635 deaths in Italy with 95.3% of these being 60 years or older. In the USA, with 34,343 deaths as of 1 of May 2020, 92.05% were 55 years or older (Ibid.). These emerging figures are the reason why the tourism industry should rethink demographics in its marketing strategies as it recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Given that the findings on the impact of COVID-19 on falling share prices on tourism-related firms remain provisional, there is a need to undertake additional work to determine the full impact once the crisis is over. The same applies to many other aspects raised across the tourism industries in this book. Unlike during the SARS outbreak in 2002/2003, the values of the tourism-related shares quickly
recovered after the crisis and did not dent the long-term profitability of affected firms the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to last longer. Therefore, governments need to consider another wave of stimulus packages earmarked for the tourism industry and synchronised with the lifting of restrictions on travelling and mass gatherings. In addition, future share prices for these firms should factor such risks for greater reflection of the true value of the related stocks. This needs new thinking in the stock market share pricing approaches.

Overall, drawing from the BBB concept, recovery in the tourism industry cannot be a one-size-fits-all scenario. Furthermore, all the key stakeholders in the entire global tourism value chain must come on board. For example, an individual dealing with souvenirs at the corner of a street needs tourist to be able to sleep somewhere, be transported, eat and travel within the locality to increase the visibility of his/her products. This is the value chain in which many actors are at play. The Chinese outbound tourism market cannot be ignored. Whatever resentments are emerging regarding the origins and the handling of COVID-19, the world needs China in as much as China needs the world. Hence, China remains a key player in tourism recovery. BBB in the tourism sector cannot be dissociated from drawing up enabling policies. The WTTC (2020b, c) provides samples of how these enabling policies could look like in the hospitality and outdoor shopping industries. Details are presented in Table 16.4.

The new reality (normal) requires that the tourism industry should first re-establish trust with the public after the initial closures meant to control the rapid spread of the disease. Operators needed to show their customers that their facilities were safe to use. Tourism firms need to reimagine their businesses as to safety companies first and hospitality providers second (Klasko et al. 2020). As highlighted in the book, some sectors like restaurants remain closed or are operating at reduced capacity due to restrictions on their operations. In addition, the new normal meant shifting from sit-ins to takeaways and having new strict hygienic standards. In

| Table 16.4 Implementation of enabling policies in hospitality and outdoor shopping industries |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| **Hospitality industry** | **Outdoor shopping destinations/retail establishments** |
| Work collaboratively with industry and other governments as new rules for cross-border travel are developed | Enhance destination promotion to boost demand both domestically and internationally |
| Provide financial relief to the sector through the reduction of taxes, fees and charges to stimulate demand | Provide financial relief to the sector through the reduction of taxes and charges to stimulate demand |
| Create incentives and provide direct support to boost stays in hotels as well as offering tax incentives | Create incentives to promote tourism as well as tax incentives |
| Enhance destination promotion to boost demand both domestically and internationally | Implement visa facilitation measures, making visas more affordable and simpler to obtain |

Source: Authors, based on WTTC (2020b: 5, c: 6)
Lebanon, for example, the previous model of operation was hinged on having more numbers to make profits now they find themselves in a situation where they were initially allowed to work at 30% capacity before gradually scaling up to 50% and a maximum of 70% (Azhari 2020). This phased opening was designed to minimise the risk of a second wave of COVID-19 infections.

On 13 May 2020, the European Union became the first trading block to provide comprehensive guidelines and recommendations for the safe resumption of travel and consequently the rebooting of its tourism sector. The guidelines and recommendations were to assist member states to gradually lift restrictions and permit tourism business to reopen (European Union 2020). This package was to enable citizens and residents to get some rest, refresh, relax and get fresh air post-COVID-19. The opening coincides with the summer season – a typical travel and holiday time in Europe. As highlighted earlier in this chapter and elsewhere in the book, the implementation of the necessary health and safety measures remained a top priority to resume business. The package that addresses tourists and travellers, as well as business stakeholders, include the following that the reader is free to follow-up for more details:

- An overall strategy towards recovery in 2020 and beyond
- A common approach to restoring free movement and lifting restrictions at EU internal borders in a gradual and coordinated way
- A framework to support the gradual re-establishment of intra-EU transport arrangements while ensuring the safety of passengers and personnel
- A recommendation that aims to make travel vouchers an attractive alternative to a cash reimbursement for consumers
- Criteria for restoring tourism activities safely and gradually and for developing health protocols for hospitality establishments such as hotels (European Union 2020)

The tourism industry must also join hands with governments and other organisations on COVID-19 psychosocial support activities. Mental health must be prioritised at firm level, especially, as there will be individuals transporting passengers in various modes of transport including aeroplanes, cruise ships, motorcycles, trains, cars, buses and others. Mental health matters will also be of concern to the security clusters that have most of their personnel carrying firearms to protect tourists and other global citizens. To this end, mental health services were identified as an essential part of all government responses to the COVID-19 by the United Nations Secretary General (Guterres 2020), as mental health remains central to humanity and economic advancements.

Lastly, should the tourism industry take up the emerging policy recommendations and build back better, then there will still be sustainable tourism in the future. The following take-home messages, therefore, stand out from this chapter for both the tourism industry, governments and all other stakeholders for as long as the COVID-19 treatment and vaccines have not been found:
1. Gradual and science-based lockdown relaxations that are fully negotiated and agreed between governments and their citizens, residents and key stakeholders in the business.
2. Enhancing general health and safety of the tourist, workers in the tourism industry and the general public, particularly through maintaining social/physical distancing.
3. Continued and future handwashing, mask-wearing (surgical, homemade, scarf or bandana) as well as practising and adapting to cough and sneezing etiquette.
4. Continued swift and widespread COVID-19 testing, contact tracing, isolation, quarantine and treatment.
5. Appropriately packaged government messaging and COVID-19 awareness-raising.
6. Continued and future enhancement of epidemic and pandemic preparedness through investments in healthcare systems, including mental health, health insurance and instituting disaster-related frontline staff monetary incentives.
7. Prioritisation of the tourism and hospitality industry in economic and other stimulus packages. This includes the allocation of maintenance budgets to existing natural attractions such as national parks, ocean, pollution reduction (including climate change mitigation), waterfalls, mountains and rivers.
8. The restaurant industry requires some special dispensation as there are many SMMEs that are either on a franchise or standalone operations. Those on franchise business continued feeling the heat as they face the triple challenge of paying franchise fees, rentals and loans from financing institutions.
9. The development, negotiation and application of globally accepted (tourism) recovery protocols cross the tourism industry subsectors.
10. Engage in urgent WHO and its epidemic/pandemic notification protocols reforms and not proxy trade wars that emerged between the USA and China as well as the USA withholding its $400 million contributions to the World Health Organization.
11. Document as many good practice case studies in tourism epidemic, pandemic and/or disaster preparedness, response and recovery.

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