



## Executive Council

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### **Recommendations of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics on the proposal of the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan: “Prevention of Promotion of Conflict Zones as Tourism Destinations and Using Tourism for Illegal Purposes” (EC decision 1(XCIX)) and the proposed draft resolution of the Government of Azerbaijan**

#### **I. Transmission of the recommendations of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics to the Executive Council**

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1. The Executive Council, through decision 1(XCIX) adopted during its 99th session in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, decided to refer the proposal of the Government of Azerbaijan entitled “Prevention of Promotion of Conflict Zones as Tourism Destinations and Using Tourism for Illegal Purposes” to the World Committee on Tourism Ethics and requested the Committee to make recommendations to the Council on the proposal from the point of view of ethics in tourism.
2. The Secretary-General hereby transmits as an annex to this document the recommendations to the Executive Council relating to the above-mentioned topic adopted by the World Committee on Tourism Ethics at its 14th meeting held in Rome, Italy, on 17 and 18 November 2014.

#### **II. Proposed draft resolution of the Government of Azerbaijan**

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3. On 6 March 2015, the UNWTO Secretary-General received a letter, dated 5 March 2015, from Mr. Abulfas Garayev, Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan, submitting the proposal of his country for a draft resolution and an aide-memoire on the above matter (see Annexes).



**Annex I. Recommendations by the World Committee on Tourism Ethics (WCTE) on CE/DEC/1(XCIX)**



Recommendations by the  
World Committee on Tourism Ethics (WCTE) on CE/DEC/1(XCIX)

Following decision CE/DEC/1(XCIX) of the 99<sup>th</sup> Session of the Executive Council on the proposal of the Government of Azerbaijan entitled "Prevention of Promotion of Conflict Zones as Tourism Destinations and Using Tourism for Illegal Purposes", the WCTE,

1. *Recalling its mandate,*

- "the evaluation of the implementation" of the Code (Protocol on Implementation of the Code, para. (g), Part I, as annexed to A/RES/438(XIV)),

*and its functions,*

- "The Committee shall perform the functions of promoting the principles of the Code, of evaluating and monitoring the implementation of the Code, of issuing reports, recommendations and observations on ethical matters related to tourism and to propose and approve texts of conventions and other legal instruments on specific issues related to the Code of Ethics provisions. To this end, it shall collect information relative to such implementation and shall draw up an inventory of the efforts made by the different stakeholders in tourism to promote and apply the Code, and of the problems encountered in doing so." (Rules of Procedure of the Committee adopted on 26 February 2014, rule 10 (1); and

2. *Also recalling that its competences are limited to ethical matters related to tourism.*

3. *Taking into consideration:*

- The proposal of the Government of Azerbaijan included in the document CE/99/8,
- The UNWTO Statutes, notably its fundamental aim stated in article 3: "(...) *the promotion and development of tourism with a view to contributing to economic development, international understanding, peace, prosperity (...)*"
- The UN coordinating role and responsibilities in maintaining peace and security under the Charter of the United Nations and as recognized in the Agreement between UNWTO and the UN (23 December 2003)
- UNWTO resolution A/RES/456(XV), and
- The Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, notably its preamble:

*"(...) Reasserting the aims set out in Article 3 of the Statutes of the World Tourism Organization, and aware of the "decisive and central" role of this Organization, as*

*recognized by the General Assembly of the United Nations, in promoting and developing tourism with a view to contributing to economic development, international understanding, peace, prosperity and universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion"*

**4. Recalls** that tourism contributes "to the alleviation of international conflicts and confrontations between States, and to the realization of world peace" (UNWTO resolution A/RES/456(XV)).

**5. Recommends to the Executive Council** to urge governments, as well as public and private stakeholders in the tourism sector, to observe and respect the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism as well as all ethical principles embodied in the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, in all circumstances, including during armed conflicts.

**Annex II. Letter from the Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan**

## AZƏRBAYCAN RESPUBLİKASININ MƏDƏNİYYƏT VƏ TURİZM NAZİRLİYİ

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№ 82/08-1

“05” 03 2015 il

**Mr. Taleb Rifai**  
**Secretary General**  
**UNWTO**

**Dear Secretary General,**

As you are kindly aware, at the 99<sup>th</sup> session of the UNWTO Executive Council, held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan in October 2014, the Republic of Azerbaijan proposed for consideration the draft resolution to be included into the agenda of the next session of the UNWTO General Assembly to be held later this year in Colombia. The Executive Council decided to seek recommendations of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics on this matter, before proceeding further.

The World Committee on Tourism Ethics, having considered the Executive Council's decision in November 2014, has essentially concurred with the proposal of Azerbaijan and recommended to the Executive Council to urge the Governments of Member States, as well as public and private stakeholders in the tourism sector, to observe and respect the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism as well as all ethical principles embodied in the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, in all circumstances, including during armed conflicts.

I am attaching herewith the Aide Memoire, containing additional information on this initiative and the revised draft resolution of Azerbaijan, which takes into consideration the recommendations by the World Committee on Tourism Ethics, as well as positions of the members of the Executive Council, and respectfully ask You to include this issue into the agenda of the 100<sup>th</sup> session of the Executive Council, to be held in Rovinj, Croatia in May 2015.

Attachment: 9 pages.

Sincerely yours,

**Minister**

**Abulfas Garayev**

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**Annex III. Proposed draft resolution of the Government of Azerbaijan**

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Draft/Rev.1

## **Upholding the ethical principles in all tourism-related activities**

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions A/RES/406(XIII) of 1 October 1999 and A/RES/438(XIV) of 29 September 2001,

Recalling also the United Nations General Assembly resolutions 56/212 of 21 December 2001, 60/190 of 22 December 2005 and 65/148 of 20 December 2010,

Taking into consideration the UNWTO Executive Council decision CE/DEC/1(XCIX) and the recommendations of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics, adopted in this regard at the Committee's 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting, held in Rome, Italy on 17-18 November 2014,

Recalling the reports of the World Tourism Organization on the implementation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism,<sup>1</sup>

Recalling also the report of the World Tourism Organization on the World Committee on Tourism Ethics,<sup>2</sup>

Reaffirming that UNWTO and its Member States are guided in their activities by the Charter of the United Nations and the generally accepted norms and principles of international law,

Reaffirming also the fundamental aim of UNWTO to promote and develop tourism with a view to contributing to economic development, international understanding, peace, prosperity and universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion,

Reaffirming the commitment of the Member States to respect, observe and disseminate the principles, values, standards and policies of UNWTO,

Acknowledging that tourism is one of the fastest growing economic sectors and that it can make significant contribution to sustainable development as emphasized in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want",<sup>3</sup>

Noting the important linkage between sustainable tourism and the safeguarding of the natural and cultural heritage and welcoming in this regard the Memorandum of Understanding between UNWTO and UNESCO, signed in 2013, in which both Organizations pledged to join efforts to address these issues,

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<sup>1</sup> See A/60/167 and A/65/275.

<sup>2</sup> See A/19/14(II).

<sup>3</sup> See A/RES/66/288, Annex.

Emphasizing also the need to minimize the negative impact of tourism on environment, cultural heritage and societies across the globe while maximizing the benefits of tourism in promoting sustainable development and understanding among nations as emphasized by the United Nations General Assembly,<sup>4</sup>

Reaffirming the importance of promotion of inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace,<sup>5</sup> and underscoring the role of tourism as a vehicle for inter-cultural dialogue and cross-cultural understanding as mentioned in the International Cultural Tourism Charter adopted by ICOMOS General Assembly in 1999,

Underlining that armed conflicts have destructive effects on tourism and that peace and security are essential preconditions for travel and tourism as stipulated in the Manila Declaration on World Tourism of 10 October 1980<sup>6</sup> and the Amman Declaration on Peace through Tourism of 11 November 2000,<sup>7</sup> and in this regard, underscoring the need for the resolution of the existing armed conflicts worldwide in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the generally accepted norms and principles of international law that, inter alia, will contribute to revival of peaceful destinations,

Emphasizing, in particular, tourism's role in fostering international cooperation and, in this regard, recalling that all tourism-related activities should be conducted in full respect for the laws, practices and customs of the host countries as stipulated in the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism<sup>8</sup> and in conformity with the generally accepted norms and principles of international law,

Recalling, in this regard, the recommendations by UNWTO and the UN General Assembly to incorporate the contents and provisions of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism into national legislation, regulations, professional practices and codes of conduct,<sup>9</sup> and, in this regard, recognizing with appreciation the efforts made and measures already undertaken to this end by some States;

Expressing concern that despite considerable progress in raising awareness about the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, the principles embodied in this Code are not yet fully observed by all States, tourism industry practitioners, tourists and the general public, and the process of incorporation of these principles into national legislation, regulations and professional codes of conduct is slow,

Expressing deep concern with instances of politicization of tourism and using international tourism fairs and other tourist events for the purposes that contravene to the fundamental aims of tourism as defined by the Statute of the UNWTO and the principles of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism,

Expressing, in this regard, deep concern with the instances of promotion of armed conflict zones and other hazardous areas as tourist destinations, and expressing firm belief that organisation of tours to these territories in violation of international law and the national laws

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<sup>4</sup> See A/RES/56/212

<sup>5</sup> See A/RES/65/138.

<sup>6</sup> See A/36/236, annex, appendix I.

<sup>7</sup> See A/55/640, annex.

<sup>8</sup> See A/RES/406(XII).

<sup>9</sup> See A/65/275 and A/RES/65/148.

of the host countries contradicts the principles of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, endangers safety, security and health of the tourists and is the negation of tourism,

Recalling, in this regard, Articles 1 and 8 of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, in accordance with which tourists and visitors should not commit any criminal act or any act considered criminal by laws of the country visited and should benefit from the liberty to move within their countries and from one State to another in compliance with international law and the national legislation of the States concerned,

Reminding the Governments of their obligation to inform their nationals of the difficult circumstances that they may encounter during their travel abroad to specific destinations due to ongoing crisis, conflict or any other emergency and, in this regard, recalling Article 6 of the Code of Ethics and the Declaration on the Facilitation of Tourist Travel,<sup>10</sup> in accordance with which Member States should take measures to restrict tourist travel, if this is indispensable to maintain security, safety, health and public order,

1. Reaffirms the obligation of Member States to faithfully observe the generally accepted norms and principles of international law by taking bold actions that would prevent any tourist stakeholder, operating on their territories, to engage in activities that violate these norms, in particular those related to respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other Member States;
2. Urges the Member States, tourism companies, travel agencies and tour operators to take decisive measures so that their facilities and networks are not used for the purposes incompatible with the fundamental aims of tourism;
3. Urges, to that end, the governments of Member States, as well as public and private stakeholders in the tourism sector, to observe and respect the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism as well as all ethical principles embodied in the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, in all circumstances, including during armed conflicts, as recommended by the World Committee on Tourism Ethics;
4. Encourages the World Tourism Organization, through its World Committee on Tourism Ethics and the permanent secretariat of the Committee, to continue to promote and disseminate the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism and to monitor the implementation of the ethical principles related to tourism by both the public and private sectors;
5. Calls upon the Governments of both Members and non-Members of UNWTO and all other stakeholders in the tourism sector to accelerate introduction of the contents and principles of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism in relevant laws, regulations and professional practices, towards the realization of responsible tourism;
6. Encourages tourism companies, associations and other private tourism enterprises, which have not yet done so, to sign the Private Sector Commitment to the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, formulated by UNWTO in 2011,

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<sup>10</sup> A/RES/578(XVIII).

7. Reaffirms the full validity of the guiding principles for official travel advisories<sup>11</sup> and further urges tourism companies, travel agencies, tour operators and their umbrella organizations to widely disseminate accurate, up-to-date and honest information among potential tourists of the characteristics of the countries they wish to visit, including about the health and security risks associated with the given destination as well as of the actions that are considered criminal by laws of the country visited;
8. Requests, in this regard, the Secretary-General to distribute any notification received from a concerned Member-State regarding any emergency situation in any part of its territory among all Member-States, which should accordingly give guidance to their tourist companies and other stakeholders regarding this particular tourist destination.
9. Encourages the Member States to hold specific events on tourism ethics, as recommended by the World Committee on Tourism Ethics, with the view to discussing practical implementation of the Global Code for Tourism Ethics and requests the Committee to adopt specific measures with a view to guiding tourism to avoid the use of tourism in contravention to the ethical principles;
10. Invites the Member States to submit the cases of potential misuse of tourism and/or the matters concerning the general application of ethical principles in tourism to the World Committee on Tourism Ethics in conformity with the Procedures for Consultation and Conciliation for the Settlement of Disputes concerning the Application of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism as well as the Guidelines for the Consideration of Disputes;<sup>12</sup>
11. Invites the Member States to disseminate this resolution among all tourism and other related stakeholders using all possible means of communication.
12. Decides to remain seized of the matter.

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<sup>11</sup> A/RES/508(XVI).

<sup>12</sup> See A/RES/506(XVI).

## **AIDE MEMOIRE**

### **Upholding the ethical principles in all tourism-related activities**

#### **1. Role of tourism in sustainable development, international understanding, peace and security**

Over the past decades, tourism has become one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world that makes significant contribution to sustainable development. According to the UNWTO data in 2012, international tourism generated \$1.3 trillion in export earnings with international tourist arrivals growing by 5 percent in 2013 to 1.087 billion. Modern tourism has indeed turned into a key driver for socio-economic progress by increasingly becoming an industry with multiplier effects across all segments of national economies ranging from building of physical and social infrastructure, development of human capital, helping expand economic opportunities by generating tax revenues for the Governments and creating jobs and income in the host communities.

Tourism has also proved to be one of the most important mediums for inter-cultural dialogue and cross-cultural understanding, thus playing an important role in the promotion of international peace and security.

#### **2. The rationale behind the draft resolution**

Rapid growth of the tourism sector and its penetration into all segments of the societies requires concerted efforts by the host and sending countries as well as relevant international organizations to make concerted efforts to minimize and eliminate the negative impact that tourism may have on environment, cultural heritage and societies across the globe.

With more people traveling than ever before and increasing role of tourism as one of the world's largest economic sectors, ensuring safety and security of tourists, which is considered as the key criteria to select a particular destination, becomes not only the question of ethics, but also a *sine qua non* condition for maintaining tourism's position as engine for growth and sustainable development.

Despite the international and national measures to address the health and safety issues in tourism as well as to tackle its negative aspects, the growing number of tourist fatalities indicates that there is a need for more efforts in this regard. It is especially troubling that many fatalities are directly linked to visiting

destinations marred with instability and armed conflict. A part of the problem is that tourists don't always get accurate information about the destinations they want to go. Some tour operators in quest for profit abuse the purpose of tourism and in total disregard of the basic safety criteria promote hazardous destinations, including conflict zones, and even do not shy away from featuring explosions and a gun battle in their promos. As a result tourists unaware of the real dangers to their lives associated with a particular destination sometimes fall victims to imprisonment, kidnapping, robbery or other harm.

The Global Code of Ethics for Tourism elaborated by the UNWTO and endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly is unequivocal about the requirement to comply with international law and the national legislation of the host country in all tourism-related activities. It underscores the responsibility of tourists and visitors not to commit any criminal act or any act considered criminal by the laws of the country visited. The Ethics Code contains an obligation for the tourist professionals to provide tourists with objective and honest information on their places of destination.

Despite recommendations by UNWTO and the United Nations General Assembly to incorporate the contents and provisions of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism into national legislation, regulations, professional practices and codes of conduct, the principles embodied in this Code are not yet fully observed by all States, tourism industry practitioners, tourists and the general public, and the process of incorporation of these principles into national legislation, regulations and professional codes of conduct is slow.

There are instances of politicization of tourism and using international tourism fairs and other tourist events for the purposes that contravene the fundamental aims of tourism as defined by the Statute of UNWTO and the principles of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism.

### **3. The need for international response**

Misuse of tourism for the purposes that contravene the fundamental aims of tourism undermines tourism's role in sustainable development and fostering inter-cultural dialogue and endangers the safety and security of tourists.

Over the past years, UNWTO undertook a number of measures to address some of the aspects related to safety and security of tourists, including promotion and dissemination of the principles embodied in the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism.

The growing number of tourist fatalities and instances of misusing of tourism require additional efforts to mobilise the Member States and the tourism community at large to respond more vigorously to the threats and challenges associated with tourism and to better coordinate their efforts to this end.

Being a key international organization responsible for regulating international tourism affairs, promoting responsible and sustainable tourism and guiding the activities of tourist stakeholders, UNWTO is the appropriate platform to discuss the ways to ensure that States and all tourism stakeholders uphold the ethical principles and make appropriate decisions.

The World Committee on Tourism Ethics, having considered the UNWTO Executive Council decision CE/DEC/1(XCIX) of October 2014, at its 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting, held in Rome, Italy on 17-18 November 2014, recommended to the Executive Council to urge the Governments of Member States, as well as public and private stakeholders in the tourism sector, to observe and respect the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism as well as all ethical principles embodied in the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, in all circumstances, including during armed conflicts, as recommended by the World Committee on Tourism Ethics.

As a country with rich natural, historical and cultural heritage, the Republic of Azerbaijan attaches great importance to promoting international tourism as a means for sustainable development and a vehicle to foster inter-cultural dialogue. Proceeding from the understanding outlined above, Azerbaijan proposes the draft resolution under the title “Upholding the ethical principles in all tourism-related activities”.

#### **4. Applicable legal documents**

The draft resolution takes stock of the following documents and aims at further improving existing legal framework through practical mechanisms: the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant norms and principles of international law; the Statute of the UNWTO; UNWTO General Assembly resolutions A/RES/406(XIII), A/RES/438(XIV) and A/RES/456(XV) adopted on 1 October 1999, 29 September 2001 and 24 October 2003 respectively; UN General Assembly resolutions 56/212, 60/190 and 65/148 adopted on 21 December 2001, 22 December 2005 and 20 December 2010 respectively; the Memorandum of Understanding between UNWTO and UNESCO signed in 2013; the International Cultural Tourism Charter adopted in 1999; the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism; the Manila Declaration on World Tourism adopted on 10 October 1980 and the Amman Declaration on Peace through Tourism adopted on 11 November 2000; Declaration on the Facilitation of Tourist

Travel; the Outcome document of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development “The future we want”.

### **5. Enhancements put forth by the draft resolution**

The adoption of the draft resolution will reaffirm the fundamental aim of UNWTO to promote and develop tourism with a view to contributing to economic development, international understanding, peace, prosperity and universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion. It will reaffirm the commitment of the Member States to respect, observe and disseminate the principles, values, standards and policies of UNWTO. It will highlight the role of tourism as a vehicle for inter-cultural dialogue and cross-cultural understanding and its contribution to the alleviation of international conflicts and confrontations between States, and to the realization of world peace.

The resolution will reaffirm that all tourism-related activities should be conducted in full respect for the laws, practices and customs of the host countries as stipulated in the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism and in conformity with the generally accepted norms and principles of international law.

The resolution will urge the Governments of Member States, as well as public and private stakeholders in the tourism sector, to observe and respect the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism as well as all ethical principles embodied in the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, in all circumstances, including during armed conflicts, as recommended by the World Committee on Tourism Ethics. To this end, the draft resolution will renew the call by UNWTO and the UN General Assembly to the Governments of both Members and non-Members of UNWTO and all other stakeholders in the tourism sector, to accelerate introduction of the contents and principles of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism in relevant laws, regulations and professional practices, towards the realization of responsible tourism.

The resolution will highlight the growing concern among the tourist community about the negative aspects related to the development of tourism and will provide a framework for tourism companies, travel agencies and organizers of tourism exhibitions/fairs and other related stakeholders to address the issues related to the safety and security of tourists as well as misuse of tourism. The draft resolution is aimed to encourage the Member States, non-Member States and Affiliate Members of UNWTO to take appropriate measures to this end, including through faithfully observing their relevant obligations and

commitments, including those embedded in the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism.

In this context, the resolution, *inter alia*, will urge Governments, tourism companies, travel agencies and tour operators to take decisive measures so that their facilities and networks are not used for the purposes incompatible with the fundamental aims of tourism; to widely disseminate accurate, up-to-date and honest information about tourist destinations; to submit the cases of potential abuse of tourism and/or the matters concerning the general application of ethical principles in tourism to the World Committee on Tourism Ethics; to hold specific events on tourism ethics with the view to discuss practical measures to address these issues.

Thus, the adoption of the draft resolution by the UNWTO General Assembly will provide a new impetus to elaborate on practical mechanisms for ensuring safety and security of tourists and preventing the use of tourism for illegal activities and malicious purposes and hence contribute to the promotion of tourism as a means for fostering international peace and security.