

FOR DECISION

Agenda item 11
**Report of the World Committee on
Tourism Ethics**

A/23/11
Madrid, 7 August 2019
Original: English

Executive summary

This report gives an account on the work that the World Committee on Tourism Ethics, a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, has carried out since the twenty-second session of the General Assembly and recalls the importance of the adoption by the 23rd session of the General Assembly of the official language versions of the text of the Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics which was approved at the 22nd session in Chengdu.

After illustrating the Programme of Work for the current mandate of the Committee, an update is given on the Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics and the role that the Committee has played in its development and prospective adoption.

The Committee further proposes a set of Recommendations on Sustainable Development of Indigenous Tourism for the endorsement of the General Assembly (see Annex I), in the same line as those on the Responsible Use of Ratings and Reviews on Digital Platforms, which were approved at the last session of the General Assembly.

The report also includes a special reminder of the 20th Anniversary of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (GCET) (1999-2019). Finally, the Private Sector Commitment to the GCET is explained with an overview of the implementation of the Code's signatories over the last two years.

Action by the General Assembly

DRAFT RESOLUTION¹

The General Assembly,

Having examined the report of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics,

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to Mr. Pascal Lamy, the Chair of the Committee, and to its members for their excellent work in the promotion of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism and their efforts in streamlining the process of the development of the UNWTO Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics;
2. *Fully endorses* the Recommendations on Sustainable Development of Indigenous Tourism as proposed by the Committee, and encourages the Committee to stimulate their dissemination among all relevant tourism stakeholders;
3. *Acknowledges* the follow-up activities on the Recommendations on the Responsible Use of Ratings and Reviews on Digital Platforms, and invites the Committee to continue monitoring the developments in this field;

¹ This is a draft resolution. For the final resolution adopted by the Assembly, please refer to the Resolutions document issued at the end of the session.

4. *Appreciates* the promotional booklet for the celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism; and thanks the Committee Members and the Secretariat for their valuable input;
5. *Pays tribute* to the UNWTO Ethics Award laureates for the editions of 2018 and 2019, namely Europa Mundo Vacaciones (Spain) and Serviço Social do Comércio (Brazil), respectively;
6. *Congratulates* the 442 companies and trade associations from 72 countries, which have adhered to the Private Sector Commitment to the Code and have reported on their implementation as of June 2019, and takes note of the 130 suspended entities; and
7. *Encourages* tourism stakeholders around the world to implement more responsible business operations; and invites new companies and trade associations to join the Private Sector Commitment to the Code of Ethics.

I. Introduction

1. Through its resolution 607(XIX) of 2011, the General Assembly approved the reform of its subsidiary body, the World Committee on Tourism Ethics (WCTE), and defined the new functions of the Committee which are as follows:
 - (a) monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the implementation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (GCET);
 - (b) the research and issuance of reports, recommendations and observations on ethical matters related to tourism; and
 - (c) the proposal and approval of texts of conventions and other legal instruments on specific issues related to the Code of Ethics provisions.
2. The Committee is an independent and impartial body composed of a Chairperson and eight members who are appointed in their personal capacity by the General Assembly.

II. Activities of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics

3. In addition to the three main functions of the Committee, as mentioned in paragraph 1 and detailed in the subsequent sections, the Committee identifies main priority areas on which to concentrate its attention in terms of possible ethical impacts of the tourism sector. At every new mandate of the Chairperson, a Programme of Work (PoW) of the Committee is established for a period of four years.
4. Under the Chairmanship of Mr. Pascal Lamy, the Committee has adopted its PoW for the period of 2017-2021 around the following four priority areas, which are closely linked to the areas of work of UNWTO:
 - (a) Technology and digital platforms in tourism
 - (b) Over-tourism and its impact on host communities
 - (c) Decent work and inclusive growth
 - (d) Gender equality and socio-economic empowerment
5. It is understood that the task of the WCTE is to study these four areas of work with a view to highlighting their ethical dimension and raising awareness on the possible impacts on society and the planet.
6. As part of priority area (a) above, the Chair of the Committee has addressed a letter to the CEO of Airbnb, a flagship company in the ambit of technology and digital platforms, proposing to engage in a conversation concerning the implementation of the principles of the Global Code of Ethics in Tourism, in particular by digital platforms directly involved in the tourism sector. The Committee is looking forward to initiating a dialogue with the company's representatives.

III. Proposal and approval of texts of conventions and other legal instruments on specific issues related to the Code of Ethics provisions

7. One of the most important proposals advanced by the Committee is the conversion of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism into the Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics. A first draft of such a convention was presented by the Committee to the General Assembly in 2015 under the conviction that the Code of Ethics would be significantly more effective if its articles were enshrined in a legally-binding treaty for UNWTO Member States. Subsequently, a working group of Member States was established with the task to examine the base line of the possible treaty in further detail and to propose a text of the

Convention to the following General Assembly. The Committee, through its Chairman, has been directly involved in the discussions of the working group throughout the whole process.

8. In 2017, the General Assembly approved the English version of the Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics and its Optional Protocol (A/RES/707(XXII)), and requested the Secretariat to take the necessary steps for the adoption of the Framework Convention in all the official languages of the Organization during the twenty-third session of the General Assembly (see also A/23/9).

IV. Research and issuance of reports, recommendations and observations on ethical matters related to tourism

9. A valuable set of guidelines advocated by the Ethics Committee is the Recommendations on Sustainable Development of Indigenous Tourism (see Annex I). The recommendations, originally prepared by the Secretariat after several rounds of multi-stakeholder consultations, have been enhanced and validated by the Committee and are now submitted to the twenty-third session of the UNWTO General Assembly for endorsement and adoption.
10. The rationale for these recommendations rests on the harmonizing role that tourism has proven to play within indigenous communities, providing in many cases decent job opportunities, alleviating poverty and empowering young people and women.
11. Indigenous cultural heritage comprises one of the richest and most unique cultural expressions of humankind; but it is also one of the most fragile and vulnerable ones. In view of the spectacular growth of tourists motivated by the interest to experience indigenous cultures and traditional lifestyles, it is crucial that this type of tourism takes place in a sustainable, responsible and ethical manner.
12. This set of Recommendations contains both general considerations on key aspects in indigenous tourism that concern all stakeholders, as well as specific recommendations addressing four main groups of stakeholders directly involved in tourism operations on the ground, i.e. tour operators and travel agencies, tour guides, indigenous communities themselves, and tourists.
13. Likewise, the Committee has been occupied with ensuring the follow-up of the Recommendations on the Responsible Use of Ratings and Reviews on Digital Platforms, which were approved by the previous UNWTO General Assembly in 2017. More particularly, Committee Members participate on a regular basis in international debates concerning the topic with a twofold purpose: (a) to promote the recommendations at national and international levels, and (b) to verify whether the scope of the recommendations is still adequate, and to propose modifications where necessary.

V. Monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the implementation of the Code of Ethics

20th Anniversary of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (GCET)

14. Since the Global Code of Ethics in Tourism was adopted by the UNWTO General Assembly in 1999 (A/RES/406(XIII)), the present year is marked by the 20th Anniversary of the Code. As the World Committee on Tourism Ethics plays a fundamental role in promoting and safeguarding the GCET's principles, the Chair decided to celebrate this milestone by showcasing a collection of good practices in tourism.
15. In order to achieve this initiative, the Secretariat has prepared an online promotional booklet with excellent examples from the tourism sector, each of them being linked to an article or sub-article of the GCET. These illustrations stem from good practices collected from those companies and associations that have subscribed to the Private Sector Commitment to the UNWTO Code of Ethics or have submitted applications for the UNWTO Awards and/or Ethics Awards. These have been complemented by input from

Committee Members. The anniversary booklet will be published on the UNWTO Ethics webpage: <http://ethics.unwto.org/>.

UNWTO Ethics Award

16. The World Committee on Tourism Ethics functions as a jury for the UNWTO Ethics Award, which was launched in 2016 and is annually granted to one of the signatories of the GCET.
17. In 2018, the selected winner was Europa Mundo Vacaciones, a Spanish Tour Operator that has supported more than 100 sustainable tourism projects in a myriad of countries. In 2019, the UNWTO Ethics Award was issued to the Brazilian company Serviço Social do Comércio (Sesc), which is renowned for its wide range of recreational, educational and health programmes. More information on the nominees can be found on the UNWTO Ethics webpage: <http://ethics.unwto.org/content/unwto-ethics-award>.

Private sector commitment to the GCET

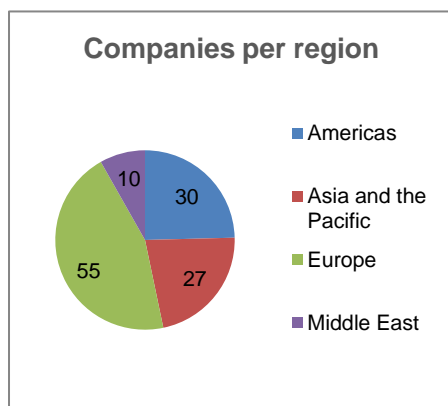
18. The Private Sector Commitment initiative was launched by UNWTO in 2011 as a means to promote the implementation of the GCET by private tourism companies and trade associations. Its overall objective is to stimulate transparency, responsibility and sustainability in the tourism sector on a global scale, and have companies reflect on their actions in the field of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).
19. The monitoring of implementation of companies and associations is carried out by a self-evaluating questionnaire, which is to be submitted every two years to the Ethics Committee.
20. The questions are subdivided in five thematic areas, namely (a) corporate governance and business ethics, (b) employment quality, (c) social equity and Human Rights, (d) community well-being, and (e) environmental sustainability. Respondents are expected to elaborate on current CSR programmes, policies and good practices.
21. The reporting on a regular basis is a one of the few requirements for companies and associations to continue on the list of Code signatories that is featured on the [UNWTO Ethics webpage](http://ethics.unwto.org/). When no response is received by the Committee within reasonable timeframe, the entity in question is considered for suspension.
22. As an impartial and autonomous body, the World Committee on Tourism Ethics monitors the Private Sector Commitment to the GCET and interprets the information obtained from the surveys of the respective companies and associations. In that respect, the Committee plays a crucial role in acknowledging fruitful actions in terms of CSR that are already in effect and, at the same time, determining important gaps that need increased attention.
23. Bearing in mind the suspensions as well as the recent adherents, on 1 July 2019 the total number of private sector signatories to the GCET amounted to 442 from 72 countries. See the table below:

Total number of signatories (since the beginning of the campaign in 2011)	572
Total number of signatories (after suspension)	442
Number of responses between 01/07/2017 and 30/06/2019	181
- Responses from companies	122
- Responses from associations	59

24. In the context of this report, the data collection covers a two-year time frame ranging from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2019 during which 181 questionnaires from 53 countries were received and reviewed by the Secretariat.

Reporting on the implementation of the Code of Ethics by companies

25. From 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2019, the UNWTO Secretariat had received completed questionnaires from 122 companies that have signed the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism. The majority of these companies are to be found in Europe, followed by the Americas, Asia and the Middle East. The Secretariat did not receive questionnaires from Africa.



26. The surveyed companies are situated across 34 countries and territories, namely Armenia, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, China, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, the Dominican Republic, France, Georgia, Germany, Haiti, Honduras, Hong Kong (China), Indonesia, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Maldives, Malta, Montenegro, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Turkey, the United Kingdom and Uruguay. In comparison to the data collection in 2017, in which the companies were based in 21 different countries, the geographical spread has now considerably widened.

27. In the survey the companies were asked to elaborate on their specific implementations of CSR according to the five categories mentioned above (paragraph 11). Generally speaking, most good practices were found in the areas of community well-being and environmental sustainability, whereas fewer examples were reported on employment quality, corporate governance, and social equity.
28. Regarding community well-being, several companies alleged to have supported local populations in a myriad of ways, ranging from humanitarian assistance for tsunami victims (e.g. Theme Resorts & Spas, Sri Lanka) to organizing giveaways of clothing and other supplies to local schools (e.g. Mövenpick Hotel Doha, Qatar), amongst others. Another notable example was reported by the Rajah Travel Corporation (Philippines), which coordinates the annual commemoration of Filipino and American World War II veterans in order to shed light on lost histories. This initiative is also included in their touristic circuit.
29. A further trend that appeared in the surveys is that, when it comes to community support, a number of companies have set a clear focus on education and professional training. As such, each hotel of Jetwing (Sri Lanka) has adopted two foster schools in the surrounding region, where educational and environmental programmes are carried out on a regular basis. The company also offers an incentive to school leavers from disadvantaged families so that they can be taught a professional skill. To a similar extent, the Bali Tourism Development Corporation (Indonesia) organizes workshops on sustainable fishing for the local beach community in their coastal conservation area.
30. With respect to environmental sustainability, examples were also plentiful. First of all, some companies undertake serious attempts to reduce their volume of waste. The Spanish hiking operator Itinerantur, for instance, provides its travellers with extensive recommendations on waste minimization and encourages them to keep the hiking routes as clean as possible. In a different manner, the Philippine tour operator Tradewings has enforced a strict prohibition of plastic and equips its tourists and personnel with reusable utensils, tote bags and the like.
31. Other companies try to reduce their carbon footprint by tackling their energy supply. The Marriott hotels in Jordan, for example, were the forerunners to switch entirely to solar energy for their electricity provision. Another company that is interesting to mention is the Spanish ferry operator Balearia, which is gradually shifting to biofuel for its navigations by

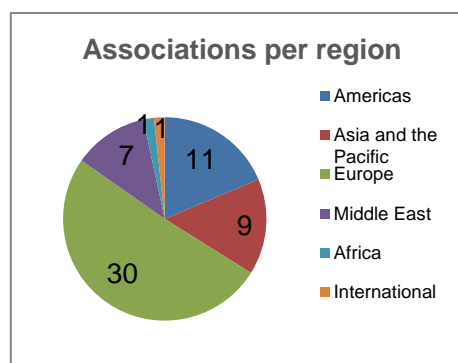
producing and using natural liquid gas on the one hand, and by recycling and managing bilge water on the other hand.

32. Perhaps one of the most comprehensive initiatives for environmental purposes can be found in the Philippine company El Nido Resorts, having hosted the 'Usapang Turismo' Sustainable Tourism Summit in 2017. During the event, more than one hundred participants from various societal sectors congregated to bring forward sustainable solutions to environmental and socio-cultural threats in the Palawan area. All in all, the summit is alleged to have been very effective, as it has triggered a closer cooperation between El Nido and the local governments of the surrounding municipalities.
33. In terms of employment quality, a considerable number of companies tend to improve standard labour arrangements, such as increasing annual leave, closing the gender pay gap and offering more fixed-term contracts. Apart from these considerations, however, only a few companies have gone beyond these efforts. An excellent example is Terme Olimia in Slovenia, where employees can benefit from daily anti-stress rituals, mindfulness, movement exercises, free swimming and fitness. Another reference to safeguarding the mental well-being of personnel in the questionnaire answers is made by the Japanese firm KNT-CT Holdings.
34. When it comes to disease prevention for employees, two Spanish companies stand out in their responses. Railway operator Renfe, to begin with, carries out several health promotion campaigns by offering its personnel influenza vaccines, gynaecological consults, cancer detection and anti-addiction plans, amongst others. Similar incentives are provided by Viajes Corte Inglés, which also focuses on the prevention of cardiovascular diseases, blood donation, as well as healthy nutrition campaigns. It is also noteworthy to mention that Viajes Corte Inglés collaborates with several universities and professional institutes, encouraging a group of its employees to enrol in tertiary education.
35. As far as corporate governance is concerned, only a few companies reported innovative practices. One of them is the Brazilian corporation Serviço Social do Comércio, which coordinates a monthly debate cycle for its partners on ethics in tourism, addressing issues such as gender equality and post-conflict environments. Another example stems from the Spanish digital platform Minube, which shares information to its stakeholders throughout their proper Minube School platform, concerning Human Rights, accessibility and social inclusion, to name a few topics. Finally, the Philippine tour operator Tradewings not only urges its stakeholders but also its clients in a direct way to act responsibly when engaging in tourism.
36. Within the fifth category, social equity, three interesting examples come from Latin America. While the National Tourism Chamber of Honduras has developed its own code against child labour (in collaboration with UNICEF), Destinos Representaciones Internacionales from Costa Rica assists homeless people and sex workers towards self-determination through its foundation, and the Chilean hotel chain Andina Del Sud supports local indigenous communities and their conservation in several ways through durable partnerships. A great sense of respect for local practices is also reported by Bali Tourism Development Corporation (Indonesia), which has a religious area preserved for locals to perform rituals without any restrictions.

1. Reporting on the implementation of the Code of Ethics by associations

37. From 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2019, the UNWTO Secretariat had acknowledged completed surveys from 59 associations that have signed the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism. Half of the replies originate from European countries, followed by the Americas, Asia and the Middle East, whereas only one example from the African region could be recorded. Furthermore, the UNWTO Secretariat acknowledged one questionnaire from a European organization, as well as one from an international organization.

38. The surveyed associations are distributed across the following 34 countries: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Chile, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Georgia, Greece, Guatemala, Iceland, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lebanon, North Macedonia, Mexico, Morocco, the Netherlands, Paraguay, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Spain, Sweden and Turkey. The geographical distribution has remained more or less equal to that of the 2017 data collection.



39. As with the companies' survey, the questionnaire that was sent out to the associations also focussed on concrete CSR practices in the same five areas of interest (paragraph 11). However, fewer measures of good practice were identified within the associations' responses and most examples here belonged to the field of community well-being and social equity. Concrete instances regarding employment quality, environmental sustainability and corporate governance were less present.
40. When it comes to community well-being, some of the associations have put considerable effort into creating job opportunities, for instance in the Middle East. While the Lebanese Syndicate of Owners of Restaurants, Cafes, Night Clubs and Pastries organizes workshops around the year to tackle local unemployment, the Egyptian Tourism Federation has created training and skills programmes for leather handicrafts, carpets, brass and embroidery, with a specific focus on local women. A further initiative is found in Sweden, where the employer organization Visita collaborates with the government in order to solidify the skills of refugees and offer them jobs in the tourism sector.
41. Other organizations targeted community development in a different way. The Portuguese Hotel Association, for example, arranges an annual congress involving the tourism community, politicians and the media, where broader subjects such as gentrification and mass tourism are addressed. Another relevant project is carried out by the Japan Hotel Association, which has made several calls for donations in the context of earthquakes in the country, contributing substantially to the relief of sufferers.
42. The second category that is addressed quite broadly is **social equity**, for which two concrete measures are noteworthy to mention. First, the European hospitality organization HOTREC is one of the key participants of the AppTourYou project, aimed at small businesses in order to improve their accessibility. It is very innovative in the sense that it is a digital tool that can be used by any stakeholder in a low-threshold manner. Second, the Israel Association of Travel Agencies and Consultants cooperates with both the Israeli Parliament and a local academic institution, trying to expose human trafficking and gender inequalities which may be covered by tourism.
43. Concerning employment quality, the Japan Hotel Association underlines gender equality among its employees, having coordinated the so-called Hotel Women's Forum. In light of this event, a special workshop had been created where female specialists working in management positions were invited to comment on their views. Furthermore, the Argentinian association AOCA, which organizes expositions and congresses, amongst others, closely collaborates with the Teatro Ciego. This company specializes in blind theatrical experiences and, therefore, more than 40 per cent of its personnel have blindness or any other visual impairment.
44. With respect to environmental sustainability, some of the associations enshrine their concrete measures in guidelines for their associates. The Portuguese association for nature tourism Rota Vicentina, for instance, specifically targets intensive farming as well as oil exploration and prospection by sending out manifestos to the central government. Another example is the Swedish hospitality organization Visita, which has published a handbook for its associates on how to manage tourism in a sustainable way. In a different manner, the Dutch association of travel agents and tour operators ANVR strongly commits to biodiversity and endangered species protection and has been internationally recognized for those efforts.

45. For the fifth area of interest, corporate governance, good practices were scarce. Two good illustrations stem from the Japan Hotel Association and the European hospitality organization HOTREC, two associations that also score well in the other fields. While the former has published and spread guidelines on a number of issues (e.g. pandemic influenza, information protection, drunk driving...), the latter reports to take part in several supranational initiatives, such as the Hotelstars Union, the European Hospitality QualityScheme and the European Alcohol and Health Forum.

Annex I: Recommendations of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics on Sustainable Development of Indigenous Tourism

Recommendations of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics on Sustainable Development of Indigenous Tourism

Introduction

1. Indigenous peoples are characterized by some of the richest, most unique and diverse cultural expressions of humankind which have developed over thousands of years across our planet and are spiritually linked to indigenous traditional lands. These expressions represent a clear pull factor for potential tourists who wish to experience indigenous natural and cultural heritage in physical, intellectual and emotional terms.

2. As one of the most thriving economic activities of the 21st century, tourism is well placed to contribute to indigenous people in improving their livelihoods. If managed responsibly and sustainably, indigenous tourism spurs cultural interaction and revival, bolsters employment, alleviates poverty, curbs rural flight migration, empowers local communities, especially women and youth, encourages tourism product diversification, allows people to retain their relationship with the land and nurtures a sense of pride.

3. However, this type of tourism also raises some ethical, socio-economic and human rights-related concerns that need to be addressed by all relevant stakeholders. Throughout the centuries, indigenous people have faced different forms of discrimination, displacement from their ancestral territories, cultural assimilation and more recently a severe depletion of the natural resources they depend on. It is against this backdrop that the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007 (UNDRIP)². Ten years after the adoption of the Declaration, the majority of governments have endorsed the UNDRIP to varying degrees and are focused on enabling specific legislation, policies and programmes for its implementation.

4. The tourism sector was one of the first corporate sectors to recognize the importance of the UNDRIP when the Larrakia Declaration was adopted by the World Indigenous Tourism Alliance (WINTA) in 2012 in Darwin, Australia. Since then, UNWTO has referred to the Larrakia Declaration as a document for the empowerment of indigenous peoples through tourism and as such it has also served as a basis in the drafting process of the present Recommendations. The Larrakia Declaration calls for more equitable partnerships between the tourism sector and indigenous people in order to improve not only the well-being of communities, but also enable the enhancement of individual livelihoods.

5. The Larrakia Declaration follows the principles of UNWTO's core policy document, the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, adopted by the General Assembly of UNWTO in 1999 and acknowledged by that of the United Nations in 2001. While serving as a guide for sustainable and responsible development of tourism, the Code makes a reference to the role of tourism stakeholders in protecting and respecting the cultures of indigenous people, their rights and their ancestral traditions.

6. It has become evident that the development of indigenous tourism cannot be undertaken without sound partnerships among indigenous communities, governments, tourism destinations, the private sector and the civil society. Moreover, academic institutions need to partner with these stakeholders in order to be able to produce solid research and data to be used in the course of the tourism development. Only multi-stakeholder partnerships can really assure that indigenous people can reap direct benefits from tourism and keep their core values intact.

² *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (2007), available at http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf

7. After having observed the need for more systematic guidance to foster the sustainable, responsible and ethical development of tourism involving indigenous communities, the UNWTO Ethics, Culture and Social Responsibility Department prepared this set of Recommendations. The drafting process included a thorough multi-stakeholder consultation which was extended to major associations of indigenous people engaged in tourism, as well as individual tourism enterprises and experts from different regions.

8. The World Committee on Tourism Ethics, the independent and impartial body of the UNWTO responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, examined and endorsed this initiative coinciding with the 2017 International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development.

9. The aim of these Recommendations is to encourage tourism enterprises to develop their operations in a responsible and sustainable manner, while enabling those indigenous communities that wish to open up to tourism to take full grasp of opportunities that come along, following a thorough consultation process. The Recommendations also target tourists that visit indigenous communities, and whose numbers are steadily increasing given the growth of tourism motivated by the interest to experience indigenous cultures and traditional lifestyles.

10. The Recommendations are divided into two sections; the first one summarizing general considerations on key aspects in indigenous tourism that concern all stakeholders (governments, indigenous communities, destinations management organizations, tourism companies, civil society, etc.), followed by a section featuring specific recommendations addressing four main groups of stakeholders directly involved in tourism operations on the ground, namely:

- (a) tour operators and travel agencies;
- (b) tour guides;
- (c) indigenous communities; and
- (d) tourists.

Recommendations by the World Committee on Tourism Ethics

I. General considerations on key issues in indigenous tourism

1. The *Recommendations on Sustainable Development of Indigenous Tourism* are referring first and foremost to tourism development within those indigenous communities that wish to open up to tourism or to improve the management of the existing indigenous tourism products and experiences within their communities.

2. In this endeavour, the indigenous people need the support of governments, which should create an enabling environment for sustainable development of tourism, along with that of other economic sectors. According to the *UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues* and other UN bodies representing indigenous people, the role of the States is crucial in adopting the relevant legislation and regulation, and in putting in place concrete instruments to ensure non-discrimination, the protection of indigenous rights, territories and resources, and the socio-economic inclusion and political participation of indigenous people. It is equally important that public authorities recognize indigenous peoples' own governance models and obtain their free and informed consent on any process affecting their lives.

3. In order for indigenous tourism to develop and prosper in a respectful and equitable manner, all stakeholders need to take into consideration the following key socio-economic and human rights aspects directly related to indigenous communities:

- **Respect:** Respect cultural values and the cultural capital of indigenous groups, their physical, spiritual and cultural relationship with their traditional lands and customary laws, in order to be able to understand their expected benefits from tourism and the role they wish to play in it. Respect the management models that the indigenous communities wish to apply in tourism development.
- **Consultation:** Engage in a thorough, transparent and permanent consultation process on the planning, design and management of tourism projects, products and services.

This process includes a dialogue between indigenous and non-indigenous stakeholders (governments, destinations, tourism companies and others), as well as among indigenous community members whose consent to any tourism development is absolutely necessary.

- **Empowerment:** Help facilitate skills development and empowerment of indigenous communities through organizational structures and governance models, including self-governance, that enable efficient decision-making with regards to tourism.
- **Equitable Partnerships:** Support equitable indigenous enterprises and sustainable business practices which not only ensure an enhanced economic benefit, but also contribute to protecting cultural and natural resources, intellectual property, fostering community development and improving individual livelihoods.
- **Protection:** Ensure that outcomes of tourism development are positive, and that adverse impacts on natural resources, cultural heritage and the way of life of the communities are timely identified and prevented or eliminated. Participate in the protection of natural and cultural assets of indigenous communities, as well as of their traditional lands.
- **II Specific Recommendations**

a) Recommendations for tour operators and travel agencies

Tour operators represent a key component in the value chain of indigenous tourism given their role in developing indigenous tourism products and commercializing the offering through their network of retail distributors, namely travel agencies. While indigenous tourism creates a great platform for both non-indigenous and indigenous operators to work together, the tourism sector stakeholders should take into account the following recommendations:

Design of indigenous tourism products

- Design indigenous tourism products and services in a participatory manner with the communities, led by the commitment to build mutual confidence and protect indigenous culture, environment and community well-being above all other interests.
- Work with indigenous communities in the design of new products and in all management phases, using mutually agreed consultation processes, to ensure cultural authenticity and to enrich tourist experience. Develop codes of conduct in order to avoid the commodification of indigenous culture.
- Engage indigenous communities in developing equitable business collaboration models. Listen to different voices within the communities as different individuals may bring different ideas.
- Work with communities to ensure prior assessment of carrying capacity and appropriate visitation volume. Manage tourism growth to help sustain traditional economies where this is desired by indigenous communities.
- Develop indigenous tourism products, services and experiences in a way that tourism-related benefits revert to as many individuals of the indigenous communities as possible, whether engaged directly or indirectly in tourism activity. This will create greater acceptance of tourism by the indigenous communities and more sources of revenue.
- Understand traditional indigenous land use and support the creation of outdoor experiences and tourism trails that respect and interpret the use of the land, engage more indigenous communities in a wider area, and ultimately enrich tourist experience.
- Understand the history and social reality of the indigenous groups. Analyze how these elements influence local receptivity to tourism as a key component to forging lasting partnerships built on trust and respect.

- Ensure that indigenous interpretation programmes facilitate and encourage a high level of public awareness and support, which are necessary for the long-term survival of natural and cultural heritage of the indigenous communities.
- Make sure that the marketing of indigenous tourism experiences is led or controlled by the indigenous peoples themselves. Pictures illustrating individuals or specific spaces and the use of certain words may need permission.

Distribution of benefits to the indigenous communities

- Determine the benefits that indigenous communities expect from opening up to tourism and any disadvantages that may be foreseen. Projects with sound and long-term social benefits should be prioritized by the indigenous communities, instead of short-term and profit-seeking initiatives.
- Assist indigenous communities in setting up their priority support facilities, including healthcare, sanitation and education infrastructure. These resources will help them stay on their ancestral land and improve their overall well-being.
- Support the establishment of cultural indigenous interpretation centers if communities decide to create them to present their heritage and sell their products and tourism experiences.
- Assist indigenous people in protecting their natural and cultural environment which is crucial for their well-being, and can also provide assets for tourism experiences.
- Refrain from giving gifts or donations to indigenous communities that may not comply with local customs, induce dependency or influence their decisions on opening up to tourism.
- Work with local authorities, indigenous community organizations and leaders in order to establish a transparent and accountable mechanism of distribution of revenue generated through tourism.
- Get acquainted with gender relations and roles within indigenous communities and contribute to distributing the tourism-generated revenue between men and women.
- Ensure that tourism operations do not prompt any form of exploitation of human beings, notably of children, youth and women.
- Encourage the transfer of skills and knowledge to increase the capacity of indigenous people to participate in the delivery and management of tourism activities.
- Support communities seeking to participate in local/regional/national tourism planning processes which can have an impact on their livelihoods.

Contribution to indigenous communities' empowerment

- Offer mentoring and training to indigenous communities if they wish to start new businesses or improve their supply chain. Access to markets, business skills training and hospitality standards are important for the success of indigenous tourism enterprises.
- Support indigenous people to engage in community-based tourism ventures and train human resources to develop their own management capacities.
- Assist youth and women in prospering through tourism as successes can stimulate them to acquire more independence, better education and concrete business skills for their personal endeavors.

b) Recommendations for tour guides

The role of non-indigenous tour guides working with indigenous communities is important not only for correctly interpreting the culture of indigenous groups or their linkages with the nature, but also in serving as a principal cultural mediator between the indigenous communities, local governments, tourists and tourism companies. As this privileged position also entails a series of responsibilities and requires a high extent of sensitivity both towards indigenous cultures and tourists' expectations, tour guides should take into account the following recommendations:

- Work side-by-side with indigenous community leaders in order to avoid the promotion of non-authentic cultural performances and handicrafts or an inaccurate interpretation of indigenous culture.
- Study and comply with the codes of conduct of the communities or those agreed with the tour operators, so as to respect the indigenous culture and socio-economic characteristics.
- Partner with local indigenous guides and cultural custodians and engage them in co-guided tours to ensure benefits to indigenous communities, authenticity, and enrichment of tourist experience.
- Transfer knowledge and skills on tourism guiding to community members so that they feel more empowered to become guides themselves.
- Inform tourists of local traditions, beliefs and protocols before arriving into an indigenous community.
- Participate in cultural awareness training when offered by community leaders. Practice full immersion into the communities as part of the tour guide training, if invited by indigenous hosts.
- Appreciate that some features of the indigenous culture may be of spiritual nature and need to be experienced first-hand, if allowed, in order to be well understood.
- Make sure that sites that are "off limits" and the restricted access to certain cultural practices and ceremonies are clearly understood and respected by both the guides and the tourists, whether for spiritual reasons, privacy or safety issues.
- Tour guides that have been contracted by a tour operator should ensure, together with their employer, that retail travel agencies offering indigenous experiences convey the necessary information to their clients on the communities to be visited. Failing to do so may create erroneous conceptions and even misunderstandings during cultural interaction.
- In case of local indigenous tour guides, the best ambassadors of their own culture, some training on interpretative skills may help to convey the cultural content efficiently.

c) Recommendations for indigenous communities

Indigenous communities should be the ultimate decision-makers and beneficiaries of tourism development which concerns their cultures and the territories they inhabit. In that capacity, they have the leading role in the consultation process for setting up indigenous tourism operations which, at times, may even result in refraining from tourism development. In order to make tourism partnerships as equitable and sustainable as possible, indigenous groups should take into account the following recommendations:

- Provide representative organizational structures suitable for effective engagement with tourism partners, as well as community self-management mechanisms seeking to make the distribution of benefits more equitable and fair.

- Discuss and agree on consultation and grievance remedial processes with tourism partners.
- Ensure that tourism partners know what cultural information can be shared with visitors.
- Provide tourism partners with information on the cultural specificities of indigenous peoples when they engage and work with the indigenous culture, communities and businesses.
- Provide indigenous cultural awareness training for non-indigenous tour guides.
- Assist with the preparation of clear guidelines or codes of conduct to assist visitors to respect community traditions and protocols.
- Provide information for tourists on acceptable behaviour and etiquette while at a community facility or site.
- Ensure privacy, safety, security and comfort of visitors while respecting the privacy of indigenous community members in tourism development.
- Ensure cultural sites that are “off limits” to visitors are clearly described/delimited.
- Provide information for visitors on what they can expect from their cultural experience.
- Provide respectful opportunity for visitors to interact with indigenous people during the cultural tourism experience.

In addition, indigenous community leaders may also consider to:

- Assess to which extent the natural environment is suitable for tourism development by taking into consideration water consumption needs, waste management and needs to protect species and ecosystems. Assess and avoid any potential threat.
- Engage young people from the community in guided tours in order to enable their own cultural learning, motivate them to become tour guides themselves and facilitate mentoring of future entrepreneurs.
- Support and encourage the creation and development of community-based tourism enterprises associated to the territorial organization.
- Supervise the influx of visitors, which can quickly exceed manageable numbers and put high pressure on local infrastructure, community members and their resources.
- Preserve local culture without adopting practices or models of other indigenous groups just because they are popular with visitors and “sell” well.
- Observe sound environmental practices while providing dining services to tourists, particularly in terms of sustainability of resources, food waste, water consumption and waste management.

d) Recommendations for tourists

Tourists visiting indigenous communities are becoming increasingly sensitized about cultural traditions of different ethnic groups and the need to behave responsibly when travelling. However, soaring tourist numbers may convert visits to some indigenous communities into a fashionable trend, which may raise the issues of carrying capacity, cultural misunderstandings or expectations that may not be met. Besides the duty of tourism companies and guides to brief their clients on indigenous tourism experiences, tourists should take into account the following recommendations:

Before the trip

- Research and gather information of the indigenous community prior to the visit. Understanding the history, culture, codes of conduct and linkages with nature of the indigenous groups will also help in appreciating their customs.
- Choose tourism operators that are managed by indigenous entrepreneurs or have direct business relations with local indigenous providers. In case of the latter, consider giving preference to shared or partial ownership models benefitting the indigenous communities.

During the visit

- Leave a minimum footprint. Conserve water, fauna and flora and ask your guide for do's and don'ts.
- Reduce waste disposal as much as possible. Indigenous communities may not use a waste management system similar to the one visitors are accustomed to.
- Learn about indigenous handcrafts and art. Buy only those made by local indigenous artisans as many indigenous groups do not have their intellectual property registered.
- Refrain from buying handicrafts made of endangered plants or animals. Irresponsible purchasing can boost a demand that may bring some species to extinction.
- Do not remove any objects from archaeological sites as this may suppose irreversible damage to cultural heritage assets associated to indigenous communities and their beliefs.
- Access only the places open to tourists in areas managed by indigenous communities. Some locations or rituals have spiritual significance and are therefore considered sacred, or may simply be off-limits or unsafe for tourists.
- Always ask permission before taking a photo of indigenous people, significant locations or rituals. In some communities, it is considered inappropriate to be photographed.
- Hire indigenous guides with in-depth knowledge. Indigenous people are the best custodians of their culture and the natural world that surrounds them.
- Ask for the consent of community members and a local guide service if you would like to participate in spiritual ceremonies and private rituals. Hire a local guide if you wish to visit indigenous families and interact with them.
- Be flexible and patient as the concept of time to some indigenous communities may differ from yours.
- Ask lots of questions; ask the tour operator, guide, accommodation establishments and indigenous communities about their environmental practices and commitment to protecting indigenous rights. Asking questions helps to create a demand for environmentalism and responsible tourism throughout the tourism sector.
- Avoid giving money and gifts to children. This will not improve their future as it will make them more dependent on tourists' charity. If you wish to show solidarity, talk to your guide or some community leader on how to contribute.
- Remember that indigenous cultures are evolving and ever changing like any other culture, and be aware that they might not fit your expectations of authenticity. A visit to a community should be seen first and foremost as a learning experience.

After the trip

- Support environmental, healthcare or education projects of indigenous people that improve their well-being and enable them to stay in their territories.
- Make sure your indigenous hosts actually wish to attract more tourists before your positive experiences and images reach thousands of people through social media and digital platforms.
- Send pictures back home but be cautious of how you use them even if you have got permission. Third parties may end up commercializing photos of your travel experience without any benefits to the indigenous communities or their previous consent.

III. Credits (in alphabetical order)

Bhattacharya, Amitava. Founder and Director, *banglanatak.com*, a social enterprise working with youth and women within Indigenous communities in West Bengal, India. Member of UNESCO Global Advisory Group.

Bottrill, Chris. Chair of Human Capital Development Committee, Vice-Chair of Sustainability & Social Responsibility Committee of Pacific-Asia Tourism Association (PATA) and author of the report *Indigenous Tourism & Human Rights in Asia & the Pacific Region*. Dr. Bottrill is also a professor at Capilano University Vancouver, Canada.

Edmonds, Johnny. Director of the World Indigenous Tourism Alliance (WINTA), Managing Director of Irimana Enterprises Ltd (consultancy specialized in Indigenous economic development), and traditional land owner in Aotearoa (New Zealand).

Jennings, Helen. Expert on Indigenous Tourism, Tourism Concern, UK, charity promoting ethical, fair and positive experiences for both travellers and the people and places they visit.

King, John. OAM, Former Chairman, Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC), Board member of the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA), member of the Board of Management of Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park. Holder of the Order of Australia Medal (OAM) in 2011 for his contribution to Australian tourism.

Lo, Chi. Sustainability & Social Responsibility Specialist (PATA) and Member of the Executive Committee of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC).

Poelina, Neville. Director at Uptuyu Aboriginal Adventures, Western Australia, Former Chairman, WINTA Leadership Council, Board Member of Western Australia Tourism Operators Council (WAITOC).

Saravia, Sandro. Expert in sustainable rural development and community tourism. Coordinator, Red TUSOCO, Bolivian Network of Solidarity Tourism.

Sherman, Ben. Chairman, World Indigenous Tourism Alliance (WINTA), President of Medicine Root, Inc, Founding member of the Native Tourism Alliance, Business Enterprises for Sustainable Travel, First Peoples Fund and American Indian/Alaska Native Tourism Association.

Sherpa, Yankila. Managing Director of Snow Leopard Trek Adventure Company, Vice-President of Trans Himalayan Environment and Livelihood Programme, former President of Federation of Woman Entrepreneurs of Nepal (FWEAN), and former President of Trekking Agents Association of Nepal (TAAN).

Tolley, Mary. Marketing Manager for Australia, UK, Europe, South America, FIT & Backpacker at Te Puia, The Centre for New Zealand's Māori Culture and Geothermal Wonders, Rotorua, New Zealand.