

THE BUKHARA DECLARATION ON SILK ROAD TOURISM

Fourth International Meeting on the Silk Road

Bukhara, Republic of Uzbekistan

27 October 2002

1. **Recognizing** the value of tourism as a contributor to peaceful coexistence, mutual understanding and respect among people and as an instrument for the dissemination of knowledge about historical, cultural and spiritual values,
2. **Recalling** the principles of the Samarkand Declaration on Silk Road Tourism (1994), of the Khiva Declaration on Tourism and the Preservation of the Cultural Heritage (1999), and the Conclusions and Recommendations of the Second and Third International Meetings on the Silk Road, held respectively in Teheran, Iran (1997) and Tbilisi, Georgia (1998),
3. **Considering** that Silk Road countries possess attractive and diversified tourism products based on their outstanding natural and cultural heritage, which could be made more widely available for domestic and international tourists,
4. **Noting** the economic and social benefits of tourism, in particular, cultural and ecological tourism, for Silk Road destinations and their populations,
5. **Striving** to give fresh impetus to the WTO Silk Road Tourism Project, which over the years has served as a useful and effective tool for launching new destinations and promoting established ones,
6. **Cognizant** of the difficulties faced by tourists in obtaining visas for travel to the Silk Road countries; and recalling the recommendations contained in the WTO Study on Visa Facilitation in the Silk Road countries,
7. **Acknowledging** the need for new efforts in the wake of the crisis that followed the tragic events of September 11th 2001 and that has affected the global tourism industry and produced unjustified perceptions and security concerns regarding some Silk Road destinations
8. **Pledge** to undertake new efforts aimed at strengthening regional cooperation in tourism, both in the framework of the WTO Silk Road Project, and on other multilateral and bilateral bases for the benefit of the participating countries;
9. **Appeal** to the Governments of the Silk Road countries to carefully consider the advantages of facilitating tourist formalities, in particular, visa and customs procedures; such measures, while taking into account legitimate security concerns, would remove unnecessary obstacles to access tourist destinations by bona fide international travellers, thus strengthening their competitive position in the global tourism market;
10. **Encourage** public and private sectors including central and regional Governments, local communities and the travel trade to develop tourism on a sustainable basis, with due

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respect to natural environments and heritage sites, and to actively promote Silk Road destinations in the promising generating markets;

11. **Invite** local and international stakeholders to invest in Silk Road tourism facilities, which would both bring economic benefits and serve as a source of local incomes, jobs and social and economic stability;
12. **Appeal** to all the Governments, in observance of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, to issue balanced advisories to their nationals without prejudicing in an unjustified and exaggerated manner the tourism industry of the Silk Road countries;
13. **Appeal** to all the media to disseminate honest and balanced information on the situation in the Silk Road countries, which could influence the flow of tourists;
14. **Endorse** the generous proposal of the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan to open and operate, in the heritage city of Samarkand, a Silk Road office, which would perform its activities for the benefit of all Silk Road countries; and submit this proposal to the WTO Secretary-General for its implementation;
15. **Note** with satisfaction the wide use of the Silk Road Tourism Project emblem and its effectiveness as a tool for promotion, and request the WTO Secretariat to study ways of maximising and fully exploiting its potential in the future;
16. **Also** note with satisfaction the effectiveness of the Silk Road Brochure published by WTO in 1997 thanks to the generous support of the Government of Japan; and suggest that an updated version be published with support of Silk Road countries;
17. **Accept** with gratitude the kind invitation of Syria to host the next Silk Road Tourism Meeting in 2003; and take note of the kind offers by Azerbaijan and Pakistan to host future Silk Road Meetings;
18. **Express** our sincere gratitude to the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan for providing optimal conditions for holding the Meeting and for the generous hospitality extended to all the participants

The Declaration was adopted on 27 October 2002 in Bukhara by the participants in the 4th International Meeting on the Silk Road, convened by the World Tourism Organization on the generous invitation of the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan.