Asia and Pacific Unite in Support of the International Code for the Protection of Tourists

Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 16 June 2023 – Cambodia, the Maldives and Indonesia have become the newest signatories to UNWTO’s International Code for the Protection of Tourists. At the same time, UNWTO’s Member States across the Asia and Pacific region have adopted the Phnom Penh Declaration on the Code, promoting its dissemination and implementation across the region as a fundamental tool to ensure clear, transparent and efficient frameworks to protect tourists as consumers to foster confidence in travel.

A landmark for tourists’ protection

The International Code for the Protection of Tourists is the first ever legal instrument designed to create internationally recognized standards for the protection of tourists at the international level.

- The Code was created by UNWTO with the active participation of more than 100 countries, international organizations, tourism experts and private sector stakeholders.

- It was formally adopted at the 24th UNWTO General Assembly (December 2021). Member States were invited to apply it at the national level.

- The Code provides greater legal clarity to States through a common and harmonized framework on how to assist tourists in emergency situations and help them develop laws, regulations and policies for the protection of tourists as consumers.

New Signatories

Member States of both UNWTO and the United Nations are encouraged to adhere to the Code:

- Cambodia, the Maldives and Indonesia are the latest national-level signatories. They join Ecuador, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Moldova, Myanmar, Paraguay, Portugal and Uruguay.

“People want to feel safe and protected when they travel and UNWTO has led the way in creating the first legal tool that will help restore trust in travel,” said UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili. “The number of countries joining this initiative to incorporate it into national legislations keeps growing and we are proud to welcome Cambodia, the Maldives and Indonesia as the newest signatories.”
Sharing Best Practices

Within the framework of the 35th Joint Meeting of the Regional Commission for East Asia and the Pacific and the Commission for South Asia (Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 15-17 June), a conference on the International Code provided a platform for regional tourism leaders to share insights, best practices and lessons learnt on how this legal tool supports tourism recovery and trust after the severe crisis caused by the pandemic.

The Conference

- Counted on unprecedented high-level participation of delegations from Asia and the Pacific countries, including the Deputy Prime Minister of Cambodia, Ministers of Tourism from Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Maldives and the Philippines and Vice Ministers of Tourism of China and Iran
- Benefitted from the participation of Uruguay as “Champion of the Code” and a leader in the assistance to tourists in emergency situations.
- Offered expert insights on how the Code closes existing gaps in legal frameworks and contributes to greater international harmonization.
- Underscored the need to promote closer public-private links to better coordinate responsibilities when assisting tourists and protecting consumer rights.

Phnom Penh Declaration

The “Phnom Penh Declaration on the International Code for the Protection of Tourists” was adopted by the Member States of the Asia and the Pacific region before the conference and officially launched under the high patronage of the Ministry of Tourism of Cambodia. The Declaration:

- Reaffirms the commitment of the Asia and the Pacific region to strengthen cooperation to improve the assistance available to international tourists in emergency situations.
- Underlines the need to promote closer linkages between governments, tourism service providers and other tourism stakeholders for a better protection of tourists as consumers.

The Declaration reflects Cambodia’s commitment to assist tourists in emergency situations, as shown in February 2020 when rescuing more than 1,000 passengers stranded at sea on the MS Westerdam cruise ship.
Related links:

International Code for the Protection of Tourists

Phnom Penh Declaration on the Code


Regional Department for Asia and the Pacific