Executive summary

The World Committee on Tourism Ethics (WCTE), a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, is composed of a chairperson and eight members who are appointed by the General Assembly. Additionally, three alternates are designated as reserves.

This report provides an overview on the activities undertaken by the World Committee on Tourism Ethics since the twenty-fourth session of the UNWTO General Assembly and introduces a revision of the Rules of Procedure for information.

Moreover, after presenting the Programme of Work of the current mandate of the Committee, the report includes an update on the Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics, as well as the actions on ethical and responsible tourism practices and corporate social responsibility implemented by the companies and trade associations (hereinafter referred to as “Signatories”) that have adhered to the Private Sector Commitment to the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism.

With the COVID-19 pandemic reaching an end, the report underlines the Signatories’ post-COVID-19 progress and recovery strategies implemented.

In addition, the report provides updates on the Committee’s renewal status.

With a view to ensuring the continuity of the work of the Committee, and in accordance with resolution 607(XIX) of the General Assembly, the membership of the WCTE is renewed by half every two years for a four-year term. In this regard, four vacant positions are to be filled on the occasion of the 25th session of the General Assembly.

A call was launched on April 2023 by means of a communication of the Secretary-General addressed to Full, Associate and Affiliate Members of the Organization. A total number of 26 nominations have been received at the Secretariat, of which 4 were non-compliant.

The Selection Board established by the General Assembly in accordance with resolution 607(XIX) has the task of selecting and proposing the names of the candidates to the General Assembly for endorsement.

Action by the General Assembly

DRAFT RESOLUTION

The General Assembly,

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

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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.
1. Expresses its appreciation to the Chair and members of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics for the efforts deployed in streamlining the promotion and the implementation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism;

2. Takes note of the updated version of the Committee’s Rules of Procedure as presented in Annex I of document A/25/13;

3. Encourages Member States to consider ratifying, accepting and/or acceding to the Convention and its Optional Protocol adopted at the twenty-third General Assembly and to place it as a matter of significance in their policymaking so as to guide the sustainable development of tourism;

4. Acknowledges the activities undertaken by the Committee, to encourage safe and responsible tourism recovery, inter alia, the promotion of the right to tourism and its contribution to mutual understanding and respect among cultures and societies;

5. Congratulates the 460 companies and trade associations from 69 countries, which have adhered to the Code as of July 2023 and expresses its appreciation to the World Committee on Tourism Ethics for the Report summarizing the implementation efforts of the adhered signatories to the Private Sector Commitment to the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism;

Having considered the proposal of the Selection Board (composed of the President of the General Assembly, the Chair of the Executive Council and the Chair of the Board of the Affiliate Members, the Secretary-General, and the Legal Counsel of the UNWTO) with regard to the four members of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics for the period from the 25th session of the General Assembly in 2023 until the 27th session of the General Assembly in 2027,

6. Takes note that, in accordance with resolution 743(XXIV), the members Mayada BELAL, José Ignacio BESGA ZUAZOLA, Susan LONGLEY, Daniela OTERO, will continue their respective mandates as full members while Gunnur DIKER, Shahid Hamid FIH and Marina NOVELLI will serve as alternate members until the 26th session of the General Assembly in 2025;

7. Endorses the proposal of the Selection Board;

8. Appoints the following individuals as members of the Committee for the period from October 2023 until the 27th session of the General Assembly in 2027:

(a) Ms. Martina BIENENFELD, Chief Executive Officer, Zagreb Tourist Board

(b) Dr. Julio FACAL, Partner, Yelpo & Facal Law Firm and Tourism Law Teacher, Universidad de la República Carrera Abogacía

(c) Mr. Gemunu GOONEWARDENE, Chairman, Win-Store Group, Former Chairman, the Sri Lanka Tourism Hotel Classification Committee and Non-Executive Board Director, Aitken Spence Hotel Holding Limited

(d) Dr. Joseph Ngonde NZOMOI, Dean, School of Business and Economics, the South-Eastern University of Kenya; and

9. Decides that, consequently, the composition of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics is as follows:

Chair: Dr. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka (2021 – 2025)
Former Executive Director of UN WOMEN and former Deputy President of South Africa

Members: (listed in alphabetical order of their SURNAMES)

Ms. Mayada BELAL (2021-2025)
Undersecretary for the Egyptian Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research for Cultural Cooperation
Mr. José Ignacio BESGA ZUAZOLA (2021-2025)
President, Basque Country Ethics Cluster

Ms. Martina BIENENFLED (2023-2027)
Chief Executive Officer
Zagreb Tourist Board

Dr. Julio FACAL (2023-2027)
Partner, Yelpo & Facal Law Firm and Tourism Law Teacher
Universidad de la República Carrera Abogacia

Mr. Gemunu GOONEWARDENE (2023-2027)
Chairman, Win-Store Group
Former Chairman, the Sri Lanka Tourism Hotel Classification Committee
Non-Executive Board Director, Aitken Spence Hotel Holding Limited

Ms. Susan LONGLEY (2021-2025)
General Secretary, International Union of Food, Agriculture, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers Associations (IUF)

Dr. Joseph Ngonde NZOMOI (2023-2027)
Dean, School of Business and Economics
South-Eastern University of Kenya

Ms. Daniela OTERO (2021-2025)
Former Chief Executive Officer, Skal International

Alternate Members:

Ms. Günnur DIKER (2021-2025)
Partner and General Manager, Eurasia Tourism LTD

Mr. Shahid Hamid FIH (2021-2025)
Chairman & Founder,
SH’otel Hospitality Management & Consultancy Ltd

Prof. Marina NOVELLI (2021-2025)
Professor of Tourism and International Development
University of Brighton
I. Introduction

1. The World Committee on Tourism Ethics (hereinafter referred to as “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.

2. Through its resolution 607(XIX) of 2011, the General Assembly approved the reform of its subsidiary body, the Committee, and defined its new functions as the following:
   (a) Monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the implementation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (GCET);
   (b) Researching and issuing reports, recommendations and observations on ethical matters related to tourism; and
   (c) Proposing and approving texts of conventions and other legal instruments on specific issues related to the GCET provisions.

3. Furthermore, once the UNWTO Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics (hereinafter referred to as “the Convention”) enters into force, the Committee will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of its provisions and for receiving corresponding reports from the States Parties.

II. Activities of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics

4. Since September 2021, date of last report of the Committee on the implementation of the GCET to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) General Assembly (GA) (A/24/11), the Committee has met on 4 occasions (Virtual (under the chairpersonship of Mr. Pascal Lamy), October 2021; Virtual, March 2021; Madrid, December 2022; and Madrid, May 2023) during which it examined a wide array of ethical issues raising various challenges to the tourism sector.

   Following the first meeting under the new chair of Dr. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, the Committee has identified the following topics to be the focus of the Programme of Work for the period of 2021 – 2025):

   a. Decent Work, Inclusive Growth and Community Empowerment
   b. Technology and Digital Platforms
   c. Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability
   d. Social Sustainability and Intercultural Dialogue

5. The Committee has established working groups to provide inputs on the aforementioned thematic areas.

6. Additionally, other pertinent topics considered by the Committee include accessible tourism, intangible cultural heritage, rights of workers in tourism, sustainability in tourism, post COVID-19 tourism sector, and the impact of the war in Ukraine on tourism in the region and worldwide.

Revision of the Rules of Procedure of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics

7. The Committee revised its Rules of Procedure that were last acknowledged by the UNWTO GA resolution A/RES/742(XXIV) of 2021 and consequently submits the revised version (Annex I) of the Rules to the present session of the General Assembly. The revised version is submitted to the GA for information, in accordance with its Rule 12 and provision (d) of the Protocol of Implementation of the GCET - Part I (rev) adopted by the GA through resolution 607(XIX) in October 2011 and approved amendments in resolution A/RES/742(XXIV) in December 2021.
III. UNWTO Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics

8. The UNWTO Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics along with its Optional Protocol was officially adopted by the twenty-third session of the UNWTO General Assembly, in its resolution A/RES/722(XXIII) of September 2019. Following the adoption, the Convention was open for signature from 16 October 2019 until 15 October 2020, in accordance with its Article 18. During this period, Indonesia was the first and only Member State signing on 2 October 2020. The Convention is currently open for ratification, acceptance, approval, and accession and shall enter into force on the thirtieth day following the date of deposit of one of these instruments by 10 Member States, in accordance with Article 20(1) of the Framework Convention.

9. As of the date of this document, four countries have acceded to the Convention, namely Albania (16 May 2022), Lebanon (5 July 2022), Nigeria (19 April 2022), and Seychelles (18 August 2022), and 2 countries have acceded to its Optional Protocol, namely Albania (16 May 2022) and Seychelles (18 August 2022).

10. The instrument of accession of Lebanon contained the following reservation:

“(…) Having considered the Convention, we have agreed to it as a whole and in detail in every article and paragraph, with reservation on article 11.”

11. Moreover, the Committee has started to contact different Member States to further promote the adherence to the Convention and its Optional Protocol.

12. The webpage of the depositary includes all the steps needed to be followed should a Member State wish to ratify, accept, approve, and accede to the Convention and its Optional Protocol. The Secretary-General is the depositary of the Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics and its Optional Protocol. The depositary functions are discharged by the Legal Counsel of UNWTO (treatydepositary@unwto.org).

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

War in Ukraine

The Committee issued a statement following their remote meeting of March 2022 referring to Article 1 (Tourism’s contribution to mutual understanding and respect between peoples and societies) and Article 7 (Right to Tourism) of the UNWTO GCET. The Committee called on all efforts to be extended towards peace negotiations in accordance with the fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter and emphasized that the right to tourism is forcibly taken away during conflicts. The Committee reminded the international community of the important role tourism plays as a catalyst of dialogue, peace, tolerance, and sustainable development among countries.

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

Private Sector Commitment to the GCET

13. The Private Sector Commitment initiative was launched by UNWTO in 2011 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).
14. Subdivided by five thematic areas (1. Corporate governance and business ethics, 2. Employment quality, 3. Social equity and Human Rights, 4. Community well-being, and 5. Environmental sustainability), the self-evaluating questionnaire is the monitoring tool being carried out by the private sector signatories to the GCET (hereinafter referred to as “the Signatories”). Signatories commit to submit a regular biennial questionnaire to the Committee. Since 2011, 590 tourism companies and trade associations from 69 countries have adhered to this initiative.

15. Reporting on a regular basis is one of the few requirements for companies and associations to remain on the list of Code Signatories that is featured on the UNWTO Ethics webpage. When no response is received by the Committee within a reasonable timeframe, the entity in question is considered for suspension. Consequently, following the decision of the 21st WCTE meeting in Istanbul, Turkey, in December 2018, 130 Signatories were suspended from their membership.

16. Taking into account the suspensions as well as the recent adherents, as of July 2022, the total number of private sector signatories to the GCET amounted to 460 (268 companies and 183 associations) from 69 countries.

**Implementation by the Private Sector Signatories of the GCET**

17. In September 2022, the WCTE Secretariat sent an email to all the Signatories reminding them to send their reporting questionnaires followed by three reminders. Signatories had a period of 2 months to submit their responses.

18. 100 companies and 57 associations submitted their reports. In addition, one entity, Movenpick Hotel West Bay Doha (Qatar), informed the Secretariat that due to change of management they would like to withdraw from the list and the commitment, and Rios Tropicales (Costa Rica) informed that the entity had ceased operations. Both statuses were updated on the Signatories’ website.

19. Following the questionnaire email sent by the Secretariat to the Signatories, 91 entities (57 companies and 34 associations) were unreachable with the email addresses they provided to the Secretariat. As these email addresses were the only way to communicate with the Signatories, if said Signatories remain unreachable, they will be added to a list that will be presented to the Committee for possible suspension.

20. In the questionnaire, entities were asked to elaborate on their specific implementations of CSR according to the five categories mentioned above (paragraph 15). The following examples were reported by the signatories: most good practices were found in the areas of social equity, environmental sustainability and community well-being, whereas fewer examples were reported on corporate governance and business ethics, and employment quality.

21. Regarding inclusive employment quality, the Spanish entity, Ilunion Hotels, with the objective of promoting the labour inclusion of people with disabilities, reported that eleven of their hotels have a special employment criterion on disability inclusion. 70% of their employees are with disabilities. For its part, the Spanish Renfe Group (National Railway System) launched an accessibility plan in 2020, with a 2028 vision that aims to make the entire travel experience accessible, from access to the station of origin to departure from the destination, with full autonomy of end-users with disabilities. Renfe Group states that by 2023, 70% of their trains and stations with more than 750 passengers per day will be accessible, and they are aiming to reach 100% by 2028.

22. In addition, Renfe Group signed its second Gender Equality Plan that incorporates a dynamic management system to achieve the pledged commitments, through a methodology based on the cycle of continuous improvement, with a system of measurement and evaluation of the corresponding indicators. It has also created a Gender Equality Observatory, composed of representatives of workers, at different levels, including those occupying managerial positions. Said observatory is aimed at detecting and analysing possible situations of inequality and proposing improvements.

23. Furthermore, the Portuguese entity, INATEL Foundation, has developed the programme “INATEL 55+.PT”, a tourism-for-all programme specially dedicated to senior people with
low income. It is a 6-day programme with accommodation and diversified leisure activities. It is an innovative project that focuses on civic behaviour and community participation, healthy eating, social inclusion, and sociocultural integration promotion. In addition, another similar programme, “Portugal in the Heart”, has been addressed to senior immigrants with low income, inviting them to discover Portugal.

24. A similar concept is applied by Costa Rica’s Ecole Travel, where businessmen and professionals from different communities are identified and different training topics are provided for them. The trainings are led by Ecole Travel collaborators. This programme has already contributed to the professional development of 640 people (professionals, local suppliers, women entrepreneurs, etc.).

25. In view of the significance of environmental sustainability within the tourism sector, Ilunion Hotels stated that, since 2019, 100% of the electricity purchased comes from renewable sources. In addition, with regards to the construction of one of their hotels in Bilbao, Spain, Ilunion San Mamés, the Signatory reported that said hotel has completed its construction with almost zero emissions (scope 1+2), adding that the entire domestic hot water production (aerothermal) comes from renewable sources. Ilunion Hotels also claimed that the staff are continuously trained to improve the waste management system and application. Viajes El Corte Inglés, a Signatory from Spain, is co-leading a project called Green & Human that aims at combining the efforts of large and small companies in the tourism sector to building more prosperous and liveable tourism destinations. The project pays special attention to social sustainability by creating opportunities for personal and professional growth and the protection of the cultural heritage of each destination. Likewise, the European Travel Agents’ and Tour Operators’ Associations (ECTAA) provides technical support to more than 625 tour operators to either become Travelife certified or to improve their performance in terms of carbon, plastic, and supply chain management. ECTAA also reported that they are working on updating their CARMACAL tool, a tool to calculate carbon footprint trips (not only of flights).

Outcome of the Progress COVID-19 Special Survey 2022 among UNWTO Signatories of the Private Sector Commitment to the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism

26. Owing to the importance of the private sector entities and their significant social and economic role, the Signatories were invited in April 2020 by the former WCTE Chairperson, Mr. Pascal Lamy, to report on the measures taken to support the fight against the COVID-19 and to mitigate its numerous negative socio-economic impacts.

27. Two years after the pandemic outbreak, in April 2022, a follow-up questionnaire was sent to the Signatories to better understand their progress. The objective of the follow-up questionnaire was to gauge which measures proved useful in fighting the COVID-19 virus. In addition, the questionnaire analysed the progress of the measures introduced in 2020 and the extent of resilience characterizing service providers, businesses and trade associations committed to CSR and sustainability.

28. The questionnaire included items such as volume of operations compared to pre-pandemic levels, measures taken to support workers, communities, and the governmental level, as well as the existence of a COVID-19 recovery plan. 57 questionnaires were submitted by April 2022. 53% of the participants belonged to Tourism Associations / NGOs / Unions, while 28% were from Travel Agencies / Tour Operators, 17% from the Hospitality industry and 2% from the Transportation category.

29. The outcome of the questionnaires showed optimism expressed by the different actors from the Tourism sector. While in the previous outcome of 2020 questionnaires, 60% of the participants reported that they had completely shut down and 35% had been extremely affected by COVID-19, 40% of participants witnessed a lot of improvement while 12% were already back to pre-pandemic volume of work.

30. Many measures are still implemented on the employee, community, and government levels. While some measures remained the same, such as teleworking, and maintaining professional training, the outcome has revealed that different kinds of measures have been implemented, namely:

On the employee level:
COVID-19 quarantine periods were covered by the company;
Percentage of employees on sick leave was being regularly tracked;
Staff retention was being prioritized; and
Vaccination certificates were requested from the employees.

On the community level:

• Supporting decent work conditions, work-life balance, and diversity;
• Charity actions and projects supporting vulnerable communities;
• Environmental protection, water management, recycling, circular economy; and
• Cooperation with medical waste disposal and facilities, patients, associations.

While 58% of the participants indicated that they have received governmental support, 42% commented the opposite. On the government level, some of the measures implemented are the following:

• Receiving a no-return capital injection or aid scheme;
• Offering recovery loan packages with low interest rate or fiscal benefits; and
• Enabling better conditions for furlough and payment of social benefits.

Finally, the outcome of the questionnaires has showed that 72% of the participants indicated at least one measure that they believe was not efficient in mitigating the COVID-19 outbreak risk. Said measures were mainly directly or indirectly linked to the restrictions imposed, the way of dealing with the COVID-19 certificates, and the uncertainty and unawareness when it comes to information on that matter.

VI. Election of the Members of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics by half

31. The World Committee on Tourism Ethics is a subsidiary body of the General Assembly. Pursuant to resolution 607(XIX) of 2011, the Committee is composed of a chair and eight members who are appointed by the General Assembly in their personal capacity for four years and their term of office may be renewed only once. The resolution further states that the members are appointed by half every two years in order to ensure continuity of work.

32. It is recalled that the twenty-fourth session of the General Assembly in 2021 appointed Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka as Chair of the Committee, Mayada Belal, José Ignacio Besga Zuazola, Susan Longley and Daniela Otero as new members of the Committee (A/24/13) and Günnur Diker, Shahid Hamid Fih, Marina Novelli as alternate members. The alternate members are called upon to replace members who resign between two sessions of the General Assembly or who otherwise cease to be available to participate as members of the Committee. The mandates of the Chairperson, these four members as well as the alternate members will end in 2025. For their part, Luis Fernando Jiménez Guzman, Lawal Mohammed Marafa, Hiroaki Matsuura, and Gabriela Tigu continue as full members until 2023.

33. Consequently, the twenty-fifth session of the General Assembly is invited to appoint four new members in replacement of the outgoing members.

Replacement of the outgoing members of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics

34. Resolution 607(XIX) also establishes that a Selection Board, composed of the President of the General Assembly, the Chair of the Executive Council and the Chair of the Board of the Affiliate Members, the Secretary-General and the Legal Counsel of UNWTO, is the body entrusted with submitting recommendations to the General Assembly on the appointment of new members of the Ethics Committee.
35. By virtue of this same resolution, on selecting and appointing the members of the Committee, account shall be taken of the need for a balanced composition of this body from a regional, gender and sectorial perspective, and for a diversification of the qualifications and personal status of its members, from the economic, environmental and social and legal viewpoints.

36. Following the call for nominations that was issued in April 2023, nominations for 26 candidates were received at the UNWTO Secretariat, of which 22 have been considered as eligible and 4 as non-compliant.

37. The Selection Board has met prior to the twenty-fifth session of the General Assembly to examine the 22 eligible nominations received at the Secretariat for the four vacant seats as members of the Committee, and subsequently provided the recommendation to the General Assembly on the appointment of the following candidates:

(a) Ms. Martina BIENENFELD, Chief Executive Officer, Zagreb Tourist Board

(b) Dr. Julio FACAL, Partner, Yelpo & Facal Law Firm and Tourism Law Teacher, Universidad de la República Carrera Abogacia

(c) Mr. Gemunu GOONEWARDENE, Chairman, Win-Store Group, Former Chairman, the Sri Lanka Tourism Hotel Classification Committee and Non-Executive Board Director, Aitken Spence Hotel Holding Limited; and

(d) Dr. Joseph Ngonde NZOMOI, Dean, School of Business and Economics, the South-Eastern University of Kenya.

VII. Conclusion

38. Whereas the COVID-19 outbreak – a pandemic that strongly hit the tourism sector in the past years – is no longer declared as an emergency by the World Health Organization (WHO) in May 2023, the tourism sector is still facing other kind of challenges and threats, such as political unrest, wars, social inequality and climate change, among others.

39. The different players of the tourism sector are always in a position to choose, to plan, and to implement responsible behaviour, whether on a short-term or long-term basis. Adherence to the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism by private tourism entities and associations and ratification of the UNWTO Convention on Tourism Ethics and its Optional Protocol by UN and UNWTO member states, are considered the first of many steps towards a responsible tourism industry and a more sustainable future.

40. Finally, it is important to reiterate that, whereas much work is yet to be done, each article of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism continues to serve as a reference - in times of crisis and in times of recovery - for all the parties involved in the tourism value chain to achieve sustainable tourism development.

41. To this end, with the adoption of the Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics, it is important to note that the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism will co-exist and will always function through the Committee that will continue to report to both the UNWTO and to the UN General Assemblies.

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ANNEX I: Rules of Procedure of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics

RULES OF PROCEDURE

As amended (amendments in underlined bold text) at the 30th WCTE meeting held in Madrid in May 2023.

Version history:

Initial version approved by WCTE at its 13th meeting held in Madrid in February 2014
Amended at its 14th meeting held in Rome in November 2014
Acknowledged by UNWTO General Assembly resolution A/RES/742(XXIV) of December 2021

Preamble

1. These Rules of Procedure are adopted pursuant to paragraph 3 of resolution A/RES/406/XIII whereby the General Assembly adopted the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism and entrusted the World Committee on Tourism Ethics with preparing the guidelines for application with a view to specifying how the principles set forth in the Code are to be implemented, and provision (d) of the annex to resolution A/RES/438(XIV) stipulating that the World Committee on Tourism Ethics shall establish its own Rules of Procedure.

2. These Rules are subordinate to the Statutes of the World Tourism Organization. In cases where its stipulations are deficient or unclear, such stipulations shall be interpreted in the light of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly and those of the Executive Council of the Organization.

3. For the purposes of these Rules, the terms "UNWTO", "Assembly", "Council", "Committee" and "Protocol" shall mean, respectively, the World Tourism Organization, the General Assembly and Executive Council of the UNWTO, the World Committee on Tourism Ethics, and the Protocol of Implementation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism annexed to resolution A/RES/438(XIV) as modified by resolutions A/RES/469(XV) and A/RES/607(XIX).

Composition of the Committee

Rule 1

1. The Committee shall consist of a chairperson and eight members and three alternates.

2. The members of the Committee and the alternates shall be appointed in their personal capacity in accordance with the stipulations of provisions (a) and (b) of the Protocol. If a member resigns or is unable to continue serving on the Committee, the substitute of the outgoing member will be designated by drawing a lot among the alternate members.

3. A member of the Committee who fails to attend a total of two sessions of the Committee shall be considered to have resigned from the Committee, except if the Committee accepts that these absences were justified by force majeure circumstances.

4. The members of the Committee shall serve the Committee with independence and impartiality and shall not report to and shall not seek nor receive any orders or instructions from any authority other than the World Committee on Tourism Ethics or the General Assembly of UNWTO.
5. The members and alternate members of the Committee shall make the following written declaration witnessed by the Secretary-General or an authorized representative:

“I solemnly declare and promise to exercise in all loyalty, discretion and conscience the functions entrusted to me by the UNWTO, to discharge these functions and regulate my conduct with the interests of the World Committee of Tourism Ethics only in view, and not to seek or accept instructions in regard to the performance of my duties from any Government or other source.”

Rule 2

1. The presence of six members of the Committee’s members shall be necessary to constitute a quorum at its meetings. The alternate members may participate in the meetings of the Committee without a right to vote.

2. In case of fortuitous impediment of the Chairperson of the Committee for a particular meeting, the meeting will be chaired by a member designated by the Chairperson. On the occasion that no member was designated by the Chairperson, the oldest member of the Committee will chair the meeting.

Rule 3

1. If an observer is designated by the Executive Council he or she may participate in the meetings of the Committee in an advisory capacity.

2. The Secretary-General shall attend ex officio or may arrange to be represented at the meetings of the Committee. The Secretary-General may address the Committee orally or in writing on any point he/she deems appropriate.

3. The Legal Counsel of UNWTO shall participate, as necessary, in the Committee meetings in an advisory capacity and may address the Committee on any point of law he/she deems appropriate.

Meetings of the Committee

Rule 4

1. The Committee shall meet once a year, and for as long as its agenda requires.

2. A second meeting during the same year or, if circumstances so warrant, an extraordinary meeting, may be convened if the Committee so decides, and after consultation with the Secretary-General.

Rule 5

1. The provisional agenda of each meeting shall be drawn up by the Chairperson with the assistance of the UNWTO. It shall include any item the inclusion of which has been requested by the Assembly, by the Council or, if agreed by the Chairperson of the Committee, by the UNWTO Regional Commissions or by the Committee of Affiliate Members. Full Members of the Organization may bring to the Committee’s attention matters or situations that they deem worthy of consideration.
2. The provisional agenda of each ordinary meeting, together with the supporting documents, shall be transmitted by the Secretary-General to the members of the Committee and to the observers at least thirty days before the start of the meeting. In the event that an extraordinary meeting is convened, the provisional agenda, together with the supporting documents, shall be transmitted to the members of the Committee as soon as possible and using the most expeditious means.

3. The Committee shall adopt its agenda. If the circumstances so warrant, the Committee may place on its agenda supplementary items proposed by the Executive Council, by the Secretary-General, or by one of its members.

Rule 6

1. The meetings of the Committee shall be open only to the members of the Committee and the observers mentioned in Rule 3 unless the Committee decides otherwise. The Committee may invite persons whose presence it deems useful to follow its discussions as observers. Members of the UNWTO staff whose presence is necessary for its proceedings may attend the meetings.

2. The Committee may invite experts or external institutions to contribute to its proceedings.

3. The Committee shall decide on the publicity to be given to its deliberations, whose results it shall communicate to the appropriate recipients.

Rule 7

No one may address the Committee without having previously obtained the permission of the Chairperson.

Rule 8

1. The Committee’s working language shall be English. Nevertheless, a second working language may be adopted by the Committee in cases where it is deemed useful for the smooth proceeding of the deliberations of a session of the Committee, within the limits of the available funds.

Rule 9

1. The Committee shall adopt its biennial report, the various decisions it takes (except for those concerning persons), and the recommendations it formulates, preferably by consensus.

2. In the event that all the necessary efforts do not result in a consensus, the decision or recommendation shall be adopted by majority of the members present, with abstentions not being counted in the tally of votes.

3. Voting on decisions concerning persons shall be carried out by secret ballot. In all other cases, the Committee shall vote by a show of hands. In the event of a tie in the voting, the Chairperson shall have the casting vote.
Functions of the Committee

Rule 10

1. 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.

2. The Secretary-General shall transmit to the Committee the pertinent information in his/her possession with the support of the Committee of Affiliate Members.

3. The Secretary-General shall place at the Committee’s disposal the personnel necessary for the performance of its functions.

Rule 11

1. The Committee shall summarize the information collected and shall include in its biennial report the conclusions drawn from the analysis of such information. Should the need arise; it shall draw up proposals to amend or supplement the Code and to enhance its dissemination and implementation. Separately from its biennial report, the Committee may draw up any recommendations it deems useful.

2. The Secretary-General shall transmit the report and recommendations of the Committee to the Council and to the Regional Commissions, together with his/her observations, for information. The Secretary-General shall transmit to the Assembly the recommendations of the Committee together with his/her own observations and, as the case may be, any comments called for by such documents on the part of the Council and the Regional Commissions.

Final provisions

Rule 12

1. These Rules of Procedure shall enter into force on the date of their adoption by the Committee. Its text shall be transmitted to the Assembly for their information.

2. It may be amended by the Committee as necessary. Amendments may be proposed by the Assembly, the Council, or the Secretary-General, or by any member of the Committee. The text of proposals for amendments shall be transmitted to the members of the Committee by the Secretary-General at least thirty days before the Committee meeting at which they are to be considered.