

## PROGRESS IN RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

*WTM London, United Kingdom, 9 November 2011*

### SPEECH

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*How much progress have we made in encouraging individuals and companies to take responsibility for making tourism sustainable?*

#### Introduction

- At UNWTO we are committed to working with our Member States and Affiliate Members, from the industry, civil society, academia and destinations, to develop tourism in a way that is fully consistent with the principles of sustainability and that contributes to the wellbeing of countries and communities worldwide.
- This year alone, UNWTO organized two international seminars on Tourism Ethics: in Bali in June, and in Madrid in September. The discussions therein demonstrated unequivocally that responsible tourism is considered a cause worthy of debate, and above all, **a cause worthy of action**.
- And I am glad to say that **action is being taken** the world over. Our experiences over the past decade have demonstrated that real progress is being made, both by the public and private sectors.

#### Global Code of Ethics for Tourism

- As you may know, the activities of our Organization are consistently guided by our core policy document, the *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism*. The Code comprises a comprehensive set of principles that act as a roadmap for stakeholders in the development of responsible and sustainable tourism, championing the fundamental values of human rights to help maximize tourism's benefits and minimize its negative effects.

#### Progress made in encouraging States

- We provide guidance to our Member States to put the principles of the Code into practice within their respective territories. By monitoring and reporting on this issue to the General Assemblies of both UNWTO and the United Nations, **States who uphold ethical principles are given greater visibility**, and all the **more incentive** to fulfil their responsibilities towards fostering sustainable tourism.
- To date, some 116 states and territories (more than 70 per cent of UNWTO's constituency) have implemented the Code and reported to UNWTO on significant advances in tourism policy-making over the last ten years, and particularly at the institutional and legal level.

#### [Background information]

- *50 countries have incorporated the Code's principles into their legislative texts, or used these as a basis for national laws, policies and master plans, as in the case of Brazil's general tourism law of 2008. Law 269 in Italy enables the prosecution of tourists who sexually abuse minors, even when offenses are committed abroad, and binds Tour Operators to inform clients about this situation.*
- *Many have adopted parliamentary or ministerial resolutions in line with the Code's principles, as in Argentina, and included its provisions in regulatory instruments, as in Venezuela and France.*

- *Others have embarked on the **preparation of national or sectoral codes or prompted the private sector to develop specific codes of conduct**, as has occurred in Germany.*
- *The Code's principles have also been given effect **through institutional or governmental bodies** in several countries, for instance the National Congress in Honduras or the Council of Ministers in Spain.*
- *46 countries and territories have **translated** the Code to facilitate its distribution at the local and destination level.*

### Progress made in encouraging the Tourism Industry

- Our Affiliate Members and other partners from the tourism industry regularly participate in UNWTO events on ethical and sustainable tourism, creating networks with other actors in the industry and reporting on their good practices.
- The *1st International Congress on Ethics and Tourism* (Madrid, 15-16 September 2011) and the *Seminar on Tourism Ethics for Asia and the Pacific* (Bali, Indonesia, 11 June 2011) both benefitted from solid industry participation, as have the meetings of the *Task Force for the Protection of Children in Tourism* over the past decade.
- This September, at the Madrid Congress on Ethics, several<sup>1</sup> of Spain's most prominent tourism companies signed the **first private sector Commitment** to the Global Code of Ethics, as well as to ECPAT's *Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism*, a document which has enjoyed the steadfast support of UNWTO since its inception.
- In fact, the initiative was made possible by the efforts of a private sector enterprise: Melia Hotels International, one of the world's leading hotel chains.

#### [Background information]

- *The agreement encompasses a commitment to uphold and promote the values espoused by the Code, and to report thereon to the World Committee on Tourism Ethics. I believe this will give rise to ever more ethical practices in the tourism sector.*
- In general, in terms of the private sector's obligations to ensuring the sustainability of tourism, UNWTO calls on companies to adopt Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policies that go beyond the traditional idea of philanthropy or business strategies focused on "doing-no-harm". These have been replaced by the concept of "**doing good by doing well**".
- At enterprise level, this translates into responsible business practices which are not only in compliance with national regulations and voluntary norms, but which also **result in community investment, entrepreneurship, employment, human capital development, and the observance of human rights**. We have consistently observed their commitment to such responsible initiatives, for instance:

#### [Background information]

- *In Pakistan, the leading tourism company Travel Walji's, has partnered with civil society organizations in the Hunza Valley to ensure that the local population is not only minimally affected by the tourism footprint, but also maximally benefits from the fruits that tourism brings.<sup>2</sup>*
- *The Sustainability Committee of the German Travel Association (DRV) has built schools in states like Sri Lanka, to help ensure the distribution of tourism's benefits throughout destination countries.*

<sup>1</sup> 14 in total (11 for the Code of Ethics and 3 more for ECPAT Code of Conduct)

<sup>2</sup> They have helped to preserve handicrafts and traditions, provide employment opportunities for the marginalized, particularly women and persons with disabilities, establish a locally-run management society to protect the environment, and have facilitated training and soft loans for locals to establish guide services, transportation and accommodation establishments

- *The Banesto Foundation, which belongs to the prominent Spanish Banesto bank, has a Sustainable and Solidarity Tourism Programme, which seeks to promote economic and social development in Africa and Latin America by supporting entrepreneurial initiatives by women in the tourism sector.*
  - *The Youth Career Initiative is a six-month education programme of the Prince of Wales International Business Leaders Forum, whereby top hotels around the world<sup>3</sup> provide the human, financial and operational resources to teach disadvantaged young people life and vocational skills, enabling them to become employable and change their long-term social and economic prospects through training and education.*
  - *The Surabaya Plaza Hotel in Indonesia has used tourism ethics as a competitive advantage strategy, for instance, implementing a “No Mark-up Bill Policy”.*
- The ***Tour Operators Initiative for Sustainable Development***<sup>4</sup> coordinated by UNWTO, a forum for research, capacity building, technical support and communication, has optimized the capacity of tour operators to influence responsible management strategies at destinations and encourage responsible travel choices and behaviour in consumers. It has prompted concrete improvement of destinations' infrastructures.

[Background information]

- *In Side, Turkey, recycling increased to 90% in 2007 from 25% in 2002. Between 2006 and 2007 the wastewater treatment plant was upgraded and its daily capacity boosted, enough to meet demand for the next 20 years.*
  - *In the Riviera and Costa Maya, Mexico, the TOI, in partnership with WWF and the Mesoamerican Reef Tourism Initiative, prompted the adoption of good environmental practices by TOI hotel suppliers – enabling reductions in potable water consumption, and in the generation of waste water and solid waste generation. Sustainable design and construction practices were also initiated to avoid the continuation of unchecked tourism development.*
  - *Projects and activities have been successfully implemented in destinations with the involvement of local stakeholders to ensure that tourism's socio-economic benefits are equally shared by host communities*
  - *Sustainability has been incorporated into the supply chain, poverty reduction strategies have been implemented, and climate protection measures have been integrated into CSR strategies.*
- A number of key industry players have also reported the incorporation of the Code's provisions into their contractual instruments, CSR policies, codes of conduct and professional rules.

[Background information]

- *Marriott Hotels now officially require adherence to their Ethical Conduct policy, and as of 2006 agreed to distribute an Internet link to the UNWTO's brochure, “The Responsible Tourist and Traveller”, with its confirmed bookings. This text synthesizes the values enshrined in the Code of Ethics to encourage responsible behaviour in tourists.*
- *ECTAA, FIYTO, HOTREC, IFTO and IFWTO, which have been operational partners of UNWTO's child protection campaigns, all adopted new policy documents or codes of conduct to fight the exploitation of children in tourism, particularly sexual exploitation.*

<sup>3</sup> The initiative operates in Jordan, Egypt, Ethiopia, Romania, Poland, Mexico, Costa Rica, Brazil, Viet Nam, Thailand and Australia

<sup>4</sup> Established in 2000 with the backing of UNWTO, UNEP and UNESCO; UNWTO currently hosts the TOI's Secretariat.

### Child Protection

- Over the past decade, the *Task Force for the Protection of Children in Tourism* has featured multi-stakeholder participation, whereby a range of actors report on their actions, present awareness-raising materials and capacity building tools, and promote the adoption of professional codes of conduct or other responsible practices to prevent the exploitation of children.
- At the Task Force's annual meetings at ITB Berlin, and formerly also at WTM London, the tourism industry has demonstrated time and again that they are pursuing initiatives that protect and improve children's lives the world over. Ex:

#### [Background information]

- *Accor Hotels has reported on their sustainable development programme, which features child protection as one of its eight key concerns. The group has signed a Child Protection Code in 33 countries and is developing a Manual for the Implementation of Reporting Procedures with ECPAT and French police to combat child sex tourism.*
- *The UNWTO Protect Children campaign launched in 2008 had the support of such major industry players as IH&RA, IATA, HOTREC, PATA, ITFA, UFTAA, to combat child exploitation. During the past decade, international airlines<sup>5</sup> have produced or shown in-flight videos on long-haul flights warning travellers against the practice of child sex tourism.*

### Gender Equality

- In terms of gender equality, too, we had taken note of trends towards greater responsibility in the Industry. While challenges remain, the *Global Report on Women in Tourism 2010*, jointly produced by UNWTO and UN Women, highlights initiatives, such as the funding of health and education facilities by resorts in Kenya<sup>6</sup> or the backing of ventures by local women entrepreneurs by cruise companies in Ecuador<sup>7</sup>.
- The concrete findings of the report were discussed earlier today at WTM, at UNWTO's event on *Gender and Sustainable Tourism*, which featured the presentation of inspiring success stories on women's empowerment in tourism, including from the private sector perspective.

### Energy Efficiency

- Hotels and other industry players are recognizing the importance of reducing tourism's greenhouse gas emissions, providing for its long-term transformation to a green economy, enhancing environmental integrity, and increasing the protection of ecologically sensitive areas and natural heritage.
- Our multi-partner and European Commission co-funded project *Hotel Energy Solutions* provides hoteliers with a toolkit assessing their current energy use. It recommends appropriate energy efficiency technologies to reduce operational costs while ensuring sustainable growth, improved branding and enhanced competitiveness.
- 100 hotels in four types of destinations have tested the toolkit<sup>8</sup>, and many are investing in energy efficiency management.

#### [Background information]

- *In Haute Savoie, France, 26 hotels participated in HES testing, in partnership with the Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie (CCI) of Haute Savoie and the Banque de Savoie, developing a personalized action plan for each hotel.*

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<sup>5</sup> Iberia, Air France, Lufthansa, Air France, Corse Air, Alitalia, Sabena, Air Europe, LTU, Olympic Airways, Australian ANSETT, Austrian Airlines

<sup>6</sup> Sun and Sand Beach Resort in Kenya

<sup>7</sup> ASOGAL, the Association of Cruise Operator Companies in Galapagos, Ecuador, wanted to increase the corporate social responsibility activities of their members by expanding their local supply chain. Thus they helped a group of women entrepreneurs start a bakery, to supply cruise ships visiting the Galapagos Islands

<sup>8</sup> Palma de Mallorca, Spain – coastal; Strandja, Bulgaria – rural; Haute-Savoie, France – mountain; and Bonn, Germany – urban

- *One of the hotels has made it a policy to inform clients on energy efficiency measures in welcome brochures, and has reported that their clients are greatly appreciative of these initiatives.*
- *The toolkit helped another hotel identify high performance energy solutions to meet their needs, ex: accumulative radiators, which switch off when windows are open, which have concretely reduced energy consumption.*
- *The partner bank offers hotels loans in accordance with its Benefits of Eco Energy Programme with 2.90% interest over a period of 15 years, to support their energy saving policies.*