

The Yerevan Declaration

The Government of the Republic of Armenia, the tourism ministers and other high-level officials from UNWTO member states, the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, the Spiritual Center of the Armenian Apostolic Church, the representatives of international organizations, tourism industry associations and businesses, non-governmental organizations and international and regional experts, as well as the Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), met in Yerevan, Armenia, on 19 October 2012, on the occasion of the International Conference on “*Universal Values and Cultural Diversity in the 21st century: How can tourism make a difference?*”.

Bearing in mind that the fundamental aim of the UNWTO is “the promotion and development of tourism with a view to contributing to economic development, international understanding, peace, prosperity, and universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms”, as set out in the Statutes of the Organization;

Inspired by the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, adopted by the UNWTO General Assembly in 1999, and endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution of 21 December 2001;

Recalling the Aswan Recommendations of 27 September 2011 on “Maximizing Tourism's Role in Linking Cultures” of the UNWTO;

Having also considered the UNESCO Convention of 2005 on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions; the UNESCO Convention of 17 October 2003 for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage; the UNESCO Universal Declaration of 2 November 2001 on Cultural Diversity; and the UNESCO Convention of 16 November 1972 concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage,

Recognizing the necessity of the preservation of historical-cultural heritage through the participation of all stakeholders,

THE PARTICIPANTS

Convinced that tourism can play a leading role in international and national agendas when searching for new strategies and tools for fostering sustainable development and contributing to better cultural understanding and to peace building efforts around the world;

Emphasizing that the cultural interaction spurred by tourism prompts dialogue and builds understanding and can, therefore, serve as a stepping-stone towards tolerance, open-mindedness and human enrichment, through fostering the common values of humanity such as solidarity and the respect for cultural and religious diversity, while celebrating creativity and enhancing community empowerment;

Also recognizing that travel and tourism activities have a significant positive impact on socio-economic growth and job creation;

Considering the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism as a cornerstone instrument to guide the development of equitable, responsible and sustainable tourism worldwide;

Further acknowledging that tourism growth also carries with it serious responsibilities to minimize any potentially negative effects on local populations and host communities, on the uniqueness of their cultures and identities, as well as on their intangible cultural heritage,

THEREFORE UNANIMOUSLY AGREE (COMMIT) TO UNDERTAKE ALL THEIR EFFORTS IN ORDER TO:

1. *Highlight* intercultural dialogue through tourism as an opportunity to contribute to, and benefit from, a diverse and dynamic society, both at the regional and global level;
2. *Promote* respect for, and commitment to, ethical values in all aspects of tourism development in order to ensure that tourism contributes to better intercultural understanding and consequently to the strengthening of mutual respect;
3. *Disseminate and implement* the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism as a priority for all stakeholders in the field of tourism;
4. *Raise awareness* among tourism stakeholders and *educate and train* tourism staff concerning the necessity to involve local communities in the process of protecting and safeguarding cultural heritage, while promoting the responsible use of these assets in connection with tourism development;
5. *Contribute to exploring* new approaches to intercultural dialogue involving cooperation between a wide range of stakeholders from different sectors and *encourage* community-based tourism projects in this field;
6. *Invite* the private tourism sector to contribute to enhancing cultural diversity by means of genuine partnerships with local governments and communities, with a view towards maintaining the authenticity of local cultural heritage and avoiding its over-commodification.

Adopted in Yerevan, Republic of Armenia, on 19 October 2012