Concept Note

22 November 2018

3rd UNWTO/UNESCO World Conference on
Tourism and Culture: for the Benefit of All

Istanbul, Turkey, 3-5 December 2018

Background and objectives

Cultural tourism is on the increase worldwide. It is seen as an important driver for supporting heritage conservation, safeguarding cultural expressions and economic development. According to UNWTO research[1], around 40% of travellers now identify themselves as 'cultural travellers'. This growing demand and interest in cultural tourism presents many opportunities and challenges for policy makers and practitioners.

The impact of mismanaged tourism is well known. Monuments can be damaged under the pressure of mass tourism, intangible heritage is at risk if not properly safeguarded, and social cohesion of communities can be jeopardized if their voices are not considered. Sustainable cultural tourism can only be truly achieved through effective collaboration between both culture and tourism stakeholders. This 3rd World Conference on Tourism and Culture will be an important forum for supporting this mission.

This year's edition will concentrate on technology, visitor management models and the approaches that bring the widest possible range of benefits to both visitors and locals, while safeguarding cultural values and heritage in line with responsible tourism principles and the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism.

Cultural tourism can make an important contribution to the United Nations' 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Conference will highlight how this can be implemented in terms of poverty reduction, fighting inequality, and promoting inclusive growth.

The 2018 World Conference will build on the Declarations of the two previous editions: the 2015 Siem Reap Declaration, which recommended closer and targeted partnerships between stakeholders of culture and of tourism; and the 2017 Muscat Declaration, which

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[1] World Tourism Organization 2018, *Tourism and Culture Synergies,* UNWTO, Madrid

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committed its endorsees to enhancing the contribution of tourism and culture in national SDG strategies. Both declarations make clear that we must embrace the idea of not just creating tourism and culture partnerships, but also harness their potential to positively impact communities, and improve the overall visitor experience.

The theme of the 2018 World Conference, 'For the Benefit of All', puts forward two priorities: 1) creating more inclusive partnerships between tourism and culture stakeholders that contribute to SDG implementation; and, 2) promoting tourism development that encourages cultural interaction and ensures the benefits are shared by all communities involved.

Programme

The Conference will run for 1.5 days and consist of a ministerial segment and three interactive sessions.

The Conference will address different approaches of creative and sustainable cities in supporting cultural tourism, building capacity of culture and tourism stakeholders to preserve cultural diversity, engaging host communities, promoting social inclusion and accessibility in tourism development, as well as the technological innovation in managing increasing visitor numbers.

Cultural tourism can contribute to all of the SDGs and the Conference will focus specifically on the following goals:

Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries

Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive growth

The Conference programme will be accompanied by technical visits to cultural heritage sites.

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Proposed sessions

Ministerial Segment - Strengthening collaboration between tourism and culture stakeholders

While progress has been made in increasing collaboration between tourism and culture stakeholders, there is still significant work to be done, particularly with regards to tourism's contribution to the SDGs. The Ministerial Segment will bring together ministers of tourism and culture to share good practice examples on how policies can be aligned to accelerate the shift towards sustainable development. It will demonstrate how countries around the world are supporting public-private partnerships and investment approaches that address sustainable development challenges.

This segment will also discuss ways of strengthening tripartite collaboration between tourism, culture and community. It will demonstrate how dialogue and cooperation between the public and private sectors and civil society are fundamental elements for policy that integrates planning for tourism and heritage management. What actions are tourism ministers taking to achieve a healthy balance between tourism development and conservation interests? How can destinations ensure the needs of their communities are represented in tourism planning and management?

Session 1 – Cultural tourism for sustainable and creative cities

Today, cities are not only home to more than half the world's population and three quarters of its economic activity, but also the destination for hundreds of millions of tourists per year worldwide. Many UNESCO World Heritage sites are located within or in the vicinity of cities. As cultural hubs, cities are crucial for building sustainable development through a sustainable pattern of tourism built on culture with all its dimensions included.

By stimulating cultural and creative industries, supporting innovation and creators, promoting citizen and community participation, stimulating interaction between different stakeholders, cities are at the frontline to push forward sustainable urban development.

Culture is rooted at the center of tourism. To some extent, the latter could be seen as an aggregate of cultural experiences. From this perspective, the conceptualization, development, implementation, improvement and innovation of these cultural experiences are crucial for tourism of all sorts. Using creativity to enrich these experiences, with the help of various cultural and technical means ranging from story-telling to site-specific activities, from augmented virtual reality to AI-powered tour guiding, has been revolutionizing our understanding of tourism, which, in turn, has much to offer back.

Tourism's contribution is not limited to generating economic opportunities, such as jobs and revenue creation, but has also been recognized as an integral part of many other dimensions of development. Cultural tourism can be a perfect communication tool to raise

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awareness for a more sustainable development pattern; it can be a medium to converge all cultural and creative sectors – design, music, gastronomy, literature, media arts, crafts and folk art, film, and many others; it can improve cities' infrastructure, cultural facilities and public services; it can strengthen community identity and local cultural pride, and thus the transmission and regeneration of both tangible and intangible cultural expressions; it can also help building new social tissues and broadening collaboration between different stakeholders and actors. Without any doubt, cultural-centered tourism can be a catalyst for sustainable development, particularly in cities, where cultural activities and actors are concentrated and vibrant.

Cultural tourism is able to unleash the potential of cultural and creative sectors, making culture's contribution to sustainable development more perceivable and apprehensible.

This session examines how cities around the world, in particular those from the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, are taking innovative approaches and using cultural and creative sectors to achieve sustainable, inclusive and balanced development through cultural tourism. How to harness creativity so as to strengthen and innovate cultural tourism, and create synergy between them? How can creativity help safeguard the cultural heritage in cities, both tangible and intangible, while also constantly reinventing them? How can all stakeholders, including both tourists and local host communities and regions, benefit from cultural tourism in a sustainable way? New ideas and approaches are needed to transform these challenges into opportunities for economic development but also for social progress, and most importantly for building better cities for better life.

Session 2 - Responsible tourism as an ally for safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage

Cultural heritage not only includes monuments and objects, but also the living culture inherited from our ancestors, such as oral traditions, music and arts, traditional craftsmanship, events and knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe. Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) is an important factor in maintaining cultural diversity in the face of growing globalization and it can help to promote mutual respect and intercultural dialogue. This interaction can be truly transformative for both travelers and locals within tourism destinations. However, it can also question certain ethical principles that responsible tourism advocates for, especially the right of decision-making of the local communities and indigenous peoples with regards to tourism development.

This session will examine how through safeguarding, communities can recreate ICH through the process of intergenerational transmission so that their practices continue to respond to their environment and provide them with a sense of identity and continuity. It will further look at the contribution sustainable tourism can make to supporting the transmission of ICH to future generations, while creating products, services and experiences for visitors. The session will discuss how tourism and culture stakeholders can work together to build

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capacity and preserve cultural diversity. How can tourism, culture and local community stakeholders work together to ensure the dynamic and living nature ICH is respected and adequately interpreted? How can we ensure that increased tourism around an element of ICH does not lead to its decontextualisation? How can we ensure a positive role of tourism in this process?

Session 3 - Ensuring cultural tourism for all through digital transformation

Digital and technological tools have played a pivotal role in linking culture with sustainable tourism development, particularly with regards to the management, promotion and preservation of cultural heritage. 3D laser scanning methods like photogrammetry can enable heritage sites to be recorded and reprocessed in high resolution to ensure that our shared cultural history can be preserved for future generations. Technology has become crucial for modernising interpretation at cultural sites and providing innovative and educational ways to enhance the visitor experience. Innovations such as wearable technologies, virtual reality, apps and devices are creating more immersive experiences and improving visitation to cultural sites and museums. These technologies are also enabling World Heritage sites to address congestion issues by increasing length of stay and dispersal of visitors.

This session will discuss the latest technology trends and advances in cultural tourism. It will also showcase examples of universal accessibility in this field, so enabling that culture and tourism can be equally enjoyed by all visitors, including those with disabilities and specific access requirements. How can technology help address the challenges that cultural tourism stakeholders face? Which approaches are the most effective? And how do we ensure that the technology adequately represents the cultural heritage, without trivialising it?

Participants

The conference is designed for all tourism and culture practitioners, stakeholders and representatives from related sectors: ministries of tourism and ministries of culture, national tourism organizations, destination management organizations, cultural heritage managers, tourism and culture associations, private sector, culture and conservation experts and practitioners, local communities and businesses, NGOs and media.

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