



THE MADEIRA MESSAGE (on the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism)

The Members of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics, meeting in Madeira in 2007, came to a unanimous conclusion that the application of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism is of fundamental importance for the development and success of the tourism industry, and that it can make a valuable contribution to the sustainable growth of societies.

The world community is going through a period of rapid and widespread change and, at the same time, is facing enormous challenges. The present is characterized by political instability in many countries as well as challenges to safety and security. This situation has fuelled a sense of uncertainty. There are clear signals that our present lifestyles and consumption patterns are causing harm to the fragile ecosystems that support life on Earth. The consequences are evident in global warming, loss of biodiversity, desertification and the increasingly difficult struggle for sustainability. And, overriding it all, the vast and worsening divide between haves and have-nots, with all its problems of disease, crime and social collapse, constitutes a real threat to long term peace, stability and freedom.

It was against this background that the heads of State and Government of the United Nations unanimously agreed to the Millennium Declaration in 2000. In the Declaration they accepted collective responsibility to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity. They confirmed that certain fundamental values are essential to a more peaceful, prosperous and just world. These include: freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature and shared responsibility. The Millennium Declaration represented the international community's response to the development and security challenges of a rapidly changing global environment. They recognised that, even as the World has accumulated great wealth, many people still suffer in poverty and deprivation.

The Global Code of Ethics for Tourism provides a framework for international cooperation to use the strength of tourism more effectively in dealing with these issues. The values to which the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism is anchored are in essence the same values on which the Millennium Declaration is based. It is, thus, the conviction of the World Committee that the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism is the corner stone of sustainable tourism development and the guiding principle to safeguard its future.

The Global Code of Ethics for Tourism links up with the Millennium Declaration and Goals. Tourism has grown into a major global business and a core sector of the world economy. The wide ranging impact of tourism on society has turned it into a significant international player. A few points illustrate the magnitude and power of the industry:

- Tourism has been the fastest growing economic activity over a period of more than half a century;
- It is expected to double in size over the next 12 to 14 years;
- It has become the biggest export industry;
- It is highly labour intensive and one of the biggest employers – especially for women and young people;
- It consists of more small-, micro- and medium-sized businesses than any other economic sector;
- It impacts strongly on local farming, fishing, trading (to include handicrafts), and services and the construction industry;
- It is a key strategy towards poverty-reduction;
- It plays a critical role in conservation and sustainable development; and
- It builds bridges of mutual understanding and tolerance between peoples and nations and promotes world peace.

The impact of tourism goes well beyond its economic value. It is therefore critical that we vigorously promote those values that form the foundation of sound, responsible and sustainable tourism and that we avoid the damage that opportunistic and unguided forms of tourism could inflict on the environment, society and the economy.

Madeira, Portugal, 16 June 2007