

## **Messages of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics on Accessible Tourism**

*Accessible Tourism for All: promoting universal accessibility in tourism*

There are 1 billion people in the world (15% of the world population) with some form of disability. With the rapid population ageing, by 2050 there will be 2 billion people aged over 60 (more than 20% of the population). The number of people with specific access requirements is continuously on the rise and the tourism sector needs to respond to that.

### **I. MESSAGES FOR GENERAL ADVOCACY**

- Accessible tourism is both a human right and a business opportunity.
- 'Accessible Tourism for All' means that any tourism product should be designed irrespective of age, gender and ability and with no additional costs for customers with disabilities and specific access requirements.
- Accessible Tourism for All requires a joined up approach across the tourism supply chain (i.e. transport, accommodation, leisure activities, hospitality, destinations) to ensure a positive tourism experience.
- Information on accessible tourism offer is key, and businesses need to state clearly and accurately what facilities are available and how to book these.

## **II. SECTOR-SPECIFIC MESSAGES**

### **a) Governments and national administrations should:**

- Develop accessible tourism policies and regulations.
- Promote the application of accessibility standards and technical guidelines to make 'Accessible Tourism for All' a reality.
- Enable investments and benchmark achievement by stakeholders.
- Provide information and training for service providers on how to enhance the travel experience for people with disabilities.
- Promote jobs and entrepreneurship opportunities for people with disabilities.
- Consult Disabled People's Organizations in tourism planning and development.
- Incentivize and award good practices.

### **b) Local authorities and destinations should:**

- Ensure that all tourism facilities, public spaces and services are designed in order to meet everybody's needs irrespective of age or abilities
- Include accessibility as a priority into the policies and strategies of Destination Management Organizations.
- Develop the capacities of destination managers in designing accessible tourism plans and actions.

### **c) Tourism and travel companies should:**

- Become more customer-centered by catering for the growing accessible tourism market.
- Improve services by investing in staff awareness, staff capacity building and customer service skills.
- Be prepared to attend to clients with disabilities and access requirements and have a clear accessibility policy stated on company's website.
- Learn more how to improve their services by contacting their national Disabled People's Organization and national trade association.
- Employ people with disabilities.

### III. RECOMMENDATIONS TO FOSTER ADVOCACY ON ACCESSIBLE TOURISM AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

#### The World Committee on Tourism Ethics invites:

**All stakeholders** to consult and implement the Recommendations of the World Tourism Organization on Accessible Tourism for All and make use of the technical Manuals published by UNWTO. These materials can be downloaded at <http://ethics.unwto.org/en/content/accessible-tourism>.

**UNWTO Member States** to put accessible tourism principles into reality either through laws and standards or concrete practices, to facilitate and support targeted communication and promotion in their campaigns, through all means of communication. To establish an active partnership with National/Regional Tourism Associations and Disabled People's Organizations and to urge universities and training institutes to include appropriate schemes in their programs.

**UNWTO Affiliate Members, tourism and travel associations** to refuse any form of discrimination, to urge their own members to promote actively accessible tourism, to be open to employment of people with disabilities and to improve their own practices and services.

**WCTE Committee members** to continue assisting the Secretariat on the promotion of accessibility principles, to bring to knowledge of the Secretariat good practices and positive case studies in different destinations to be promoted on the website, and to advocate themselves accessible tourism through their contacts and interventions.

**UNWTO** to continue having accessible tourism on its agenda, to urge Member States to act effectively, to communicate and promote – particularly through the website, to award success stories and to disseminate examples of good practices.