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Report of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics

I. Introduction

1. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution A/RES/607(XIX) of 2011, the World Committee on Tourism Ethics underwent a restructuring of its functions and composition in line with the revised Protocol of Implementation (Part I) of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism adopted on the occasion. Two years later, the Chairman and Members of the reformed Committee were appointed by the General Assembly (August 2013).
2. Under its present configuration, the Committee has met three times: February 2014 in Madrid, Spain; November 2014 in Rome, Italy; and May 2015 in Rovinj, Croatia. The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled to take place in November 2015.
3. At its meeting in February 2014, the Committee identified the six priority areas of work for the duration of its four-year term; namely the fight against the exploitation of children in all its forms; trafficking; poaching and the illegal trading of wildlife; the promotion of accessible tourism for all; fair models of all-inclusive holidays; and restraining unfounded ratings on travel portals which may impact the reputation of companies and destinations.
4. The activities carried out by the Committee during the first 18 months of its term included (a) the adoption of the Rules of Procedure of the Committee; (b) the revision of the status of the implementation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism by public and private sector stakeholders based on the results of the Implementation Survey of 2014/15; (c) the proposal of converting the Code into a Convention and the study of the text of the draft UNWTO Convention on Tourism Ethics; and (d) the review and approval of the draft UNWTO Recommendations on Accessible Information in Tourism.
5. Due to the substance and the distinctive nature of the subjects covered under this agenda item, the present document will consist of a main body (which will include an Annex with the Rules of Procedure of the Committee) and three separate addenda: Addendum 1 - Implementation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism; Addendum 2 - Draft UNWTO Convention on Tourism Ethics; and Addendum 3 - Draft UNWTO Recommendations on Accessible Information in Tourism.

II. Rules of Procedure of the Committee

6. One of the first tasks of the newly established Committee was to fix its operating procedures. The



Committee therefore reviewed and approved the Rules of Procedure which regulate its internal functioning and the running of its meetings. The text of the new Rules of Procedure, annexed to this document, is submitted to the present General Assembly for information. The working language of the Committee being English, the Rules of Procedure are available only in this language.

Actions to be taken by the General Assembly:

7. The General Assembly is invited:

(a) To acknowledge the six priority areas of work of the Committee, namely, the fight against all forms of child exploitation; trafficking; poaching and the illegal trading of wildlife; the promotion of accessible tourism for all; fair models of all inclusive holidays; and restraining unfounded ratings on travel portals; and

(b) To take note of the Rules of Procedure adopted by the World Committee on Tourism Ethics in 2014.

III. Implementation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (Addendum 1)

8. The Committee reviewed the status of implementation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism by tourism stakeholders, both from the public and private sectors. For this purpose, it examined the outcome of the Implementation Survey carried out between 2014 and 2015 among UNWTO Member States, the fourth survey of this kind since 2000.

9. In the field of corporate social responsibility, the Committee revised the results of the responses received to the Reporting Questionnaire submitted by the signatories of the Private Sector Commitment to the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism. This constitutes the first-ever exercise to capture the level and extent of implementation of the ethical principles of the Code by tourism enterprises and their trade associations. The information gathered through this channel is based on the self-assessment of each responding entity and does not by any means imply a certification from the part of the Committee or UNWTO.

10. An overall Report on the Implementation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism is available under Addendum 1 of the present document (A/21/10.Add. 1). It should also be noted that a similar, slightly adjusted report will be submitted by the UNWTO Secretary-General to the General Assembly of the United Nations, on the occasion of its seventieth session (September 2015).

Actions to be taken by the General Assembly:

11. The General Assembly is invited:

(a) To commend the sixty-one national tourism administrations which have responded to the 2014/15 Survey on the Implementation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism for the significant efforts undertaken at the national and local levels for the implementation of the Code;

(b) To remind all UNWTO Member States to inform the UNWTO Secretariat on a regular basis about the measures they have taken to implement the principles of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism;

(c) To congratulate the 417 companies and trade associations from 57 countries which have adhered to the Private Sector Commitment to the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism as

of June 2015, and to request all signatories to report to the World Committee on Tourism Ethics on how they have applied the ethical principles and standards of the Code to their business operations; and

(d) To encourage all tourism enterprises around the world to adopt more responsible business practices and invite those that have not yet done so to join the Private Sector Commitment to the Code.

IV. Draft UNWTO Convention on Tourism Ethics (Addendum 2)

12. Taking into account the voluntary, thus non-binding, nature of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism adopted by the General Assembly in 1999, the World Committee on Tourism Ethics, at its last meeting held in Rovinj, Croatia, on 26-27 May 2015, has reached the conclusion that converting the Code into a legally binding instrument would reinforce its authority and effectiveness in terms of the implementation of the ethical principles.

13. To this end, the Committee submits to the General Assembly, for consideration, a proposal for a future UNWTO Convention on Tourism Ethics. The text of the draft Convention is featured in Addendum 2 of the present document (A/21/10.Add. 2) and is accompanied by Explanatory Notes prepared by the Legal Adviser of the UNWTO.

Actions to be taken by the General Assembly:

14. The General Assembly is invited:

(a) To consider the following recommendation of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics concerning the draft UNWTO Convention on Tourism Ethics:

“The World Committee of Tourism Ethics,

Conscious of the influence exercised by the Global Code of Ethics adopted by Resolution A/RES/406(XIII) of the General Assembly of the UNWTO of 1st October 1999 and of the respect it receives from all categories of stakeholders in tourism,

Eager to preserve this valuable asset while strengthening the authority of the Code and to offer an opportunity for States to take additional commitments and concrete steps in view of the implementation of the Code,

Having considered the Explanatory Note prepared by the Legal Adviser of the UNWTO concerning the conversion of the Global Code of Ethics into a UNWTO Convention on Ethics in Tourism,

1. Fully endorses the principle of converting the Global Code of Ethics into a treaty and the general principles inspiring the draft Convention annexed to the above mentioned Explanatory Note;

2. Welcomes the text of the draft Convention and of the Optional Protocol concerning a Conciliation mechanism for the settlement of disputes;

3. Requests the Secretary-General of the UNWTO to submit the draft Convention to the General Assembly during its next session to be held in Medellin, Colombia in September this year;

4. Firmly urges the UNWTO General Assembly to adopt the draft Convention and to open it to signatures of States as mentioned in Article 16 of the draft Convention.”

- (b) To subscribe to the principle of converting the Global Code of Ethics into a legally binding treaty in order to reinforce its effectiveness at international level;
- (c) To endorse the general principles inspiring the draft UNWTO Convention on Tourism Ethics, including the proposed structure of the draft Convention consisting in a main instrument and a separate Optional Protocol concerning the conciliation mechanism for the settlement of disputes;
- (d) To adopt the draft UNWTO Convention on Tourism Ethics;
- (e) To open the UNWTO Convention on Tourism Ethics for signature by Member States of the UNWTO and all Member States of the United Nations;
- (f) To invite the Member States of the Organization and other Members of the United Nations to start the internal process leading to the signature and subsequent ratification of the UNWTO Convention on Tourism Ethics; and
- (g) To remind all tourism stakeholders that the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism will co-exist with the UNWTO Convention on Tourism Ethics and thus continue to remain applicable as a non-binding instrument to guide sustainable, responsible and equitable tourism development.

V. Draft UNWTO Recommendation on Accessible Information in Tourism (Addendum 3)

15. In order to complement the UNWTO Recommendations on Accessible Tourism for All adopted by the General Assembly in 2013, the Committee has reviewed and validated a set of more specific recommendations, which exclusively focus on the accessibility of tourism information. The Committee has therefore requested the Secretariat to submit the draft Recommendation on Accessible Information in Tourism to the General Assembly, for consideration and adoption.

16. The full text of the proposed draft UNWTO Recommendations on Accessible Information in Tourism is featured under Addendum 3 of the present document (A/21/10.Add. 3).

Actions to be taken by the General Assembly:

- 17. The General Assembly is invited:
 - (a) To recognize the pressing challenges, and possible solutions, in the provision of accessible information regarding tourism infrastructures, products and services;
 - (b) To endorse and adopt the UNWTO Recommendations on Accessible Information in Tourism, and encourage their dissemination among all tourism stakeholders; and
 - (c) To encourage Member States, and Associate and Affiliate Members to disseminate the Recommendations among all tourism stakeholders.

WORLD COMMITTEE ON TOURISM ETHICS

Rules of Procedure

(As approved by the World Committee on Tourism Ethics at its 13th meeting held in Madrid, on 26 February 2014 and amended at its 14th meeting held in Rome, Italy, on 17-18 November 2014)

Preamble

1. These Rules of Procedure are adopted pursuant to paragraph 3 of resolution A/RES/406/XIII whereby the General Assembly adopted the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism and entrusted the World Committee on Tourism Ethics with preparing the guidelines for application with a view to specifying how the principles set forth in the Code are to be implemented, and provision (d) of the annex to resolution A/RES/438(XIV) stipulating that the World Committee on Tourism Ethics shall establish its own Rules of Procedure.
2. These Rules are subordinate to the Statutes of the World Tourism Organization. In cases where its stipulations are deficient or unclear, such stipulations shall be interpreted in the light of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly and those of the Executive Council of the Organization.
3. For the purposes of these Rules, the terms "UNWTO", "Assembly", "Council", "Committee" and "Protocol" shall mean, respectively, the World Tourism Organization, the General Assembly and Executive Council of the UNWTO, the World Committee on Tourism Ethics, and the Protocol of Implementation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism annexed to resolution A/RES/438(XIV) as modified by resolutions A/RES/469(XV) and A/RES/607(XIX).

Composition of the Committee

Rule 1

1. The Committee shall consist of a chairperson and eight members and three alternates.
2. The members of the Committee and the alternates shall be appointed in their personal capacity in accordance with the stipulations of provisions (a) and (b) of the Protocol. If a member resigns or is unable to continue serving on the Committee, the substitute of the outgoing member will be designated by drawing a lot among the alternate members.
3. A member of the Committee who fails to attend a total of two sessions of the Committee shall be considered to have resigned from the Committee, except if the Committee accepts that these absences were justified by *force majeure* circumstances.
4. The members of the Committee shall serve the Committee with independence and impartiality and shall not report to and shall not seek nor receive any orders or instructions from any authority other than the World Committee on Tourism Ethics or the General Assembly of UNWTO.
5. The members and alternate members of the Committee shall make the following written declaration witnessed by the Secretary-General or an authorized representative:

"I solemnly declare and promise to exercise in all loyalty, discretion and conscience the functions entrusted to me by the UNWTO, to discharge these functions and regulate my conduct with the interests of the World Committee of Tourism Ethics only in view, and not to seek or accept instructions in regard to the performance of my duties from any Government or other source."

Rule 2

1. The presence of six members of the Committee's members shall be necessary to constitute a quorum at its meetings. The alternate members may participate in the meetings of the Committee without a right to vote.
2. In case of fortuitous impediment of the Chairperson of the Committee for a particular meeting, the meeting will be chaired by the oldest member of the Committee.

Rule 3

1. If an observer is designated by the Executive Council he or she may participate in the meetings of the Committee in an advisory capacity.
2. The Secretary-General shall attend *ex officio* or may arrange to be represented at the meetings of the Committee. The Secretary-General may address the Committee orally or in writing on any point he/she deems appropriate.
3. The Legal Adviser of UNWTO shall participate, in the Committee meetings in an advisory capacity and may address the Committee on any point of law he/she deems appropriate.
4. A representative of the Centre for the Promotion of the Global Code of Ethics will participate in the meetings of the Committee in an advisory capacity.

Meetings of the Committee

Rule 4

1. The Committee shall meet once a year, and for as long as its agenda requires.
2. A second meeting during the same year or, if circumstances so warrant, an extraordinary meeting, may be convened if the Committee so decides, and after consultation with the Secretary-General.

Rule 5

1. The provisional agenda of each meeting shall be drawn up by the Chairperson with the assistance of the UNWTO. It shall include any item the inclusion of which has been requested by the Assembly, by the Council or, if agreed by the Chairperson of the Committee, by the UNWTO Regional Commissions or by the Committee of Affiliate Members. Full Members of the Organization may bring to the Committee's attention matters or situations that they deem worthy of consideration.
2. The representative of the Centre for the Promotion of the Global Code of Ethics will be given to present a report on the activities of the Centre at any ordinary meeting of the Committee.
3. The provisional agenda of each ordinary meeting, together with the supporting documents, shall be transmitted by the Secretary-General to the members of the Committee and to the observers at least thirty days before the start of the meeting. In the event that an extraordinary meeting is convened, the provisional agenda,

together with the supporting documents, shall be transmitted to the members of the Committee as soon as possible and using the most expeditious means.

2. The Committee shall adopt its agenda. If the circumstances so warrant, the Committee may place on its agenda supplementary items proposed by the Executive Council, by the Secretary-General, or by one of its members.

Rule 6

1. The meetings of the Committee shall be open only to the members of the Committee and the observers mentioned in Rule 3 unless the Committee decides otherwise. The Committee may invite persons whose presence it deems useful to follow its discussions as observers. Members of the UNWTO staff whose presence is necessary for its proceedings may attend the meetings.

2. The Committee may invite experts or external institutions to contribute to its proceedings.

3. The Committee shall decide on the publicity to be given to its deliberations, whose results it shall communicate to the appropriate recipients.

Rule 7

No one may address the Committee without having previously obtained the permission of the Chairperson.

Rule 8

1. The Committee's working language shall be English. Nevertheless, a second working language may be adopted by the Committee in cases where it is deemed useful for the smooth proceeding of the deliberations of a session of the Committee, within the limits of the available funds.

Rule 9

1. The Committee shall adopt its biennial report, the various decisions it takes (except for those concerning persons), and the recommendations it formulates, preferably by consensus.

2. In the event that all the necessary efforts do not result in a consensus, the decision or recommendation shall be adopted by majority of the members present, with abstentions not being counted in the tally of votes.

3. Voting on decisions concerning persons shall be carried out by secret ballot. In all other cases, the Committee shall vote by a show of hands. In the event of a tie in the voting, the Chairperson shall have the casting vote.

Functions of the Committee

Rule 10

1. The Committee shall perform the functions of promoting the principles of the Code, of evaluating and monitoring the implementation of the Code, of issuing reports, recommendations and observations on ethical matters related to tourism and to propose and approve texts of conventions and other legal instruments on specific issues related to the Code of Ethics provisions. To this end, it shall collect information relative to such

implementation and shall draw up an inventory of the efforts made by the different stakeholders in tourism to promote and apply the Code, and of the problems encountered in doing so.

2. The Secretary-General shall transmit to the Committee the pertinent information in his/her possession with the support of the Committee of Affiliate Members.

3. The Secretary-General shall place at the Committee's disposal the personnel necessary for the performance of its functions.

Rule 11

1. The Committee shall summarize the information collected and shall include in its biennial report the conclusions drawn from the analysis of such information. Should the need arise, it shall draw up proposals to amend or supplement the Code and to enhance its dissemination and implementation. Separately from its biennial report, the Committee may draw up any recommendations it deems useful.

2. The Secretary-General shall transmit the report and recommendations of the Committee to the Council and to the Regional Commissions, together with his/her observations, for consideration. The Secretary-General shall transmit to the Assembly the recommendations of the Committee together with his/her own observations and, as the case may be, any comments called for by such documents on the part of the Council and the Regional Commissions.

Final provisions

Rule 12

1. These Rules of Procedure shall enter into force on the date of their adoption by the Committee. Its text shall be transmitted to the Council and to the Assembly for their information.

2. It may be amended by the Committee as necessary. Amendments may be proposed by the Assembly, the Council, or the Secretary-General, or by any member of the Committee. The text of proposals for amendments shall be transmitted to the members of the Committee by the Secretary-General at least thirty days before the Committee meeting at which they are to be considered.