



The Atlantic Initiative for Tourism 2015 Conference Rabat, 11-13 March 2015

Rabat Declaration

**Tourism as a vehicle for closer relations between the peoples and civilizations
on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean**



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“Tourism as a vehicle for closer relations between the peoples and civilizations on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean”

We, Ministers and Representatives of National Administrations of Tourism of both sides of the Atlantic, participating in the international tourism conference “The Atlantic Initiative for Tourism”, held in Rabat from 11 to 13 March 2015,

- Desirous of making this Conference a space for joint reflection, consensus building, the proposal of actions, and open and mutually fruitful discussion,
- Bearing in mind the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism and the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on International Travel and Tourism, held in Rome in 1963,
- Building on the general principles and recommendations of various agreements, initiatives and conventions as well as numerous studies and the work carried out on tourism development on both sides of the Atlantic, including, among others, resolutions A/RES/65/173, A/RES/67/223 and A/69/472 on “the promotion of sustainable tourism” presented at the initiative of Morocco to the United Nations General Assembly in 2010, 2012 and 2014, respectively, and the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development,



- Convinced that tourism is an engine of economic and social development and a factor of closer relations, understanding and tolerance among peoples,
- Determined to promote cooperation and solidarity between the two sides of the Atlantic for a partnership in the different areas linked to tourism,
- Concerned about the deterioration and the risks affecting the Atlantic environment,
- Deeply convinced that respect for the principles of sustainable development is essential for the economic viability of the development of tourism activities,
- Assured of the shared values between tourism and cultural heritage, and of the importance of taking them into consideration in national development strategies,
- Convinced of the need to strengthen air and sea transport between the two sides of the Atlantic,
- Taking into consideration the UNWTO General Assembly's resolution of 4 October 1991, relating in particular to travel facilitation as well as tourist safety, adopted at its ninth session (Buenos Aires),

Declare:

- Our desire to confirm the role of tourism as a factor of closer relations and understanding between peoples and as a vehicle of socioeconomic and cultural development;
- Our determination to cooperate with all the relevant national, regional, subregional and international institutions that have the mission of assisting the development of tourism in our space, in particular, the International Civil Aviation Organization, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization;



- Our commitment to working jointly towards a concerted policy for environmental conservation and sustainable tourism development, the strengthening of air and sea transport and the promotion of the cultural heritage of the region through different means including:

- The identification and sharing of concrete measures to promote ecotourism and cultural tourism projects based on the principles of sustainability via the active participation of the private sector, local communities, respect for the environment and cultural heritage, and the use of local products,
- The improvement of appropriate evidence-based information to assess the resources used and the advantages generated by the tourism sector,
- The establishment of observatories and the dissemination of transparent and simple information,
- Highlighting the importance of undertaking environmental impact assessment in the context of sustainable tourism development with due regard to national legislation,
- Inviting and encouraging relevant stakeholders to provide, upon request and as appropriate, technical assistance to develop capacity in the region, including for the marketing and positioning of tourism products,
- The tourism development of the intangible heritage and the civilizations on both sides of the Atlantic,
- The identification and tourism development of cultural resources, with a focus on creative industries,



- The inclusion, in hotel and tourism training programmes, of awareness-raising courses regarding the roles of culture and environmental issues, aimed particularly at young people,
- The mobilization of funding for the promotion of tourism destinations, particularly in developing countries,
- Encouraging the subregional approach for designing, developing and implementing tourism projects in accordance with local specificities,
- Strengthening the capacities of tourism operators of the countries bordering the Atlantic Ocean, with a view to developing air connections in this region,
- Encouraging the reinforcement of air and sea transport between the two sides of the Atlantic to support the emergence and development of new tourism products,
- The utilization of the development of marine and cruise tourism as an important “gateway” to the countries on the Atlantic coast,
- Taking safety and security issues into consideration in the development of marine tourism in order to not only better protect human lives, but also prevent the risk of pollution on both shores of the Atlantic Ocean,
- Sharing experiences, know-how and cooperation with regard to penetrating markets where it is possible to develop air and maritime transport services in the tourism sector of the region,



- The promotion of the right to tourism and the freedom of tourist movements,

For the implementation of these decisions, it has been decided:

- To issue a letter announcing the adoption of the Rabat Declaration to all the countries bordering the Atlantic Ocean, and inviting them to contribute to its implementation,
- To establish a follow-up committee to be composed of a representative of the UNWTO and focal points designated by the Atlantic coast countries. This committee will meet once every 2 years. Morocco and the UNWTO will hold the chairmanship of the committee until its next meeting.

All the delegations express their deep gratitude to the Kingdom of Morocco for the excellent organization of the Conference and for the quality of the welcome accorded to them.

Done in Rabat, on 11 March 2015.