



Phnom Penh Declaration on the UNWTO International Code for the Protection of Tourists

The Ministers of Tourism and Delegations of the Member States of Asia and the Pacific of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), meeting on the occasion of UNWTO Conference on the International Code for the Protection of Tourists, held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, on 15th June 2023, under the high patronage of H.E. Dr. Thong Khon, Minister of Tourism of the Kingdom of Cambodia and of Mr. Zurab Pololikashvili, Secretary-General of the UNWTO hereby:

REASSERT the aims set out in Article 3 of the Statutes of the World Tourism Organization, aware of the “decisive and central” role of this Organization, as recognized by the General Assembly of the United Nations, in promoting and developing tourism with a view to contributing to economic development, international understanding, peace, solidarity, prosperity and universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion;

MAKE REFERENCE to the Global Code on Ethics for Tourism, adopted by Resolution 406 (XIII) of the General Assembly of UNWTO, as well as to the Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics, adopted by the Resolution 722 (XXIII) of the General Assembly of UNWTO, which underline the role of this activity as a factor of economic and social development, but also as a vehicle for peace, solidarity, understanding, cultural enrichment, environmental preservation and dialogue among peoples;

RECOGNIZE that the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the insufficiency of an international legal framework to assist tourists in emergency situations, as well as the fragmentation of consumer protection standards at the international level and the existing disparities regarding the consumer rights of tourists from country to country;

World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) - A Specialized Agency of the United Nations

Poeta Joan Maragall 42, 28020 Madrid, Spain. Tel: (34) 91 567 81 00 – info@unwto.org / unwto.org

ALSO RECOGNIZE that the pandemic has made clear the importance of trust for tourism and that uncertainty and lack of confidence in international travel are among the biggest challenges that the tourism sector is facing in the post COVID-19 world;

UNDERSCORE the necessity to “rethink tourism” and explore challenges and opportunities to accelerate tourism recovery and restore trust and confidence in travel after the crisis;

RECALL that, at its twenty- fourth session held on 29 November to 3 December 2021 in Madrid (Spain), the General Assembly of UNWTO adopted by consensus the International Code for the Protection of Tourists through resolution 732 (XXIV) and called upon the Member States of both the UNWTO and the United Nations to adhere to the Code through a written notification to the Secretary General of UNWTO;

RECALL the remarkable response of the Kingdom of Cambodia, to the plight of the Holland America’s MS Westerdam cruise ship welcomed with open arms by H.E. Dr. Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, and allowed to dock at the port of Sihanoukville after being stranded at sea during the COVID-19 outbreak;

EMPHASIZE the importance of harmonization of minimum international standards for the protection of tourists at the international level, the above parties:

1. REAFFIRM their commitment to strengthen cooperation and partnerships to improve the assistance available to international tourists in emergency situations, including but not limited to pandemics, in order to help people, feel safer and more confident in international travel and to provide sufficient guarantees to tourists in the post COVID-19 era;
2. UNDERLINE the need to strengthen and promote closer linkages between governments, tourism service providers and other tourism stakeholders to better clarify rights and obligations of all actors involved, including tourists themselves, in order to improve the contractual relationship between providers and recipients of the various tourism services;

3. RECOGNIZE the importance of establishing clearer, more transparent and efficient frameworks for the greater protection of tourists as consumers and a better and more balanced allocation of responsibility among all actors involved in order to harmonize minimum consumer protection standards for tourists at the national, regional and international levels;
4. RECOMMEND that full support be given to the dissemination and implementation of the UNWTO International Code for the Protection of Tourists as a fundamental frame of reference for the development and harmonization of minimum international standards the protection of tourists in emergency situations and consumer rights of tourists in the post COVID-19 era;
5. ENCOURAGE all Member States of both UNWTO and the United Nations to adhere to the International Code for the Protection of Tourists, uphold its principles and apply its non-binding recommendations within their country, as deemed appropriate and in accordance with each country's institutional framework;

And EXPRESS their sincere appreciation and gratitude to H.E. Dr. Thong Khon, Minister of Tourism of the Kingdom of Cambodia, who kindly provided an unforgettable opportunity to experience the rich cultural heritage of the country, as well as the Royal Government of Cambodia for their warm hospitality, the excellent arrangements for the 35th Joint Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific and the UNWTO Commission for South Asia, the 59th Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for South Asia (CSA) and the 55th Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific (CAP) and their fundamental contribution to restoring trust and confidence in international travel, placing the wellbeing and protection of the tourists at its core.