

Third International Congress on Ethics and Tourism

Enhancing the sector's sustainability through shared responsibilities

Krakow, Poland, 27 April 2017, 15:00-15:30

Keynote speech

Pascal Lamy, Chair of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics

Mr. Rifai, Secretary-General of UNWTO,

H.E. Mr. Bańka, Minister of Sport and Tourism of Poland,

Honorable Ministers,

Mr. Majchrowski, Mayor of Krakow,

Distinguished authorities,

Ladies and gentlemen,

- It is a pleasure to be in this historical city for this occasion. The old town of Krakow is a reference for tourism and culture as evidenced by the fact of its inclusion in the first ever list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites, back in 1978.
- It is also an honor to be with you today in this 3rd edition of the International Congress on Ethics and Tourism.
- I would like to congratulate the organizers - the Ministry of Tourism of Poland, the European Commission and UNWTO – for granting the rightful attention to a topic that sometimes tends to be neglected: Ethics in Tourism.
- Indeed in the business world, when we think of tourism the first idea that comes to mind can be the impressive figures: tourism arrivals, hotel occupancy rates, tourism expenditure, leading outbound markets. Certainly, for me as a former Head of the World Trade Organization, this is the case.
- But there is an ethical and social dimension to tourism that encompasses many aspects that coexist in delicate balance. I have come to understand quite deeply the nature of this dimension through my role as Chair of the UNWTO World Committee on Tourism Ethics.

- The delicate balance of ethical and social dimensions in tourism is directly and proportionately related to the capacity of this sector to thrive in the long run.
- As Taleb Rifai often says, tourism is in essence a mind-broadening educational experience. It is based on the simple act of visiting other places and cultures and embracing their diversity as a quality in itself.
- For this exchange to work, the destination needs to be welcoming, open, tolerant and respectful, for *the art of tourism* is a bilateral and even a multilateral experience.
- Tourism is a powerful transformative force that can break down barriers and build bridges between people, communities and nations prompting tolerance and understanding.
- The European Commission initiative *Enhancing the Understanding of European Tourism* that has prompted this event aims to exemplify this.
- The beauty of Europe is precisely the richness of its diversity. What makes Europe a leading example of tourism, accounting for 51% of the world's international tourism arrivals, is the culture, the nature, the people, the traditions but moreover, the responsible management of all the precious pieces of this puzzle.
- Still, even leading destinations need to be wary of defies ahead and the ever evolving changes that societies are facing. All tourism stakeholders; National Tourism Administrations, tourism businesses and tourists alike, need to collaborate in achieving a more responsible and sustainable tourism sector.
- Indeed, in order to ensure that the transformative force of tourism leaves a positive footprint a number of challenges need to be taken into account. Without shared responsibilities by all stakeholders, tourism can also create detrimental impacts for the environment and the biodiversity, for the heritage and cultural values of tourism destinations and for the local population, especially for more disadvantaged groups of this population.
 - How can a tourism destination prosper if it does not take into account its local community, which is the essence of the destination's character and charm?
 - How can a tourism destination be welcoming if it is not accessible for all, both locals and tourists (including families, elderly people, and people with access requirements)?

- How can a destination earn a worldwide reputation if it does not manage its cultural and natural resources in a sustainable way as a legacy to the world?
- How can locals be expected to treat tourists with friendliness and hospitality when their own living and working conditions are not up to minimum standards?
- These ethical and social dimensions of tourism are key for sustainable development as rightly remarked by the UN General Assembly when declaring 2017 the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development.
- In practical terms, how do we ensure Sustainable Tourism for Development? The World Tourism Organization, UNWTO, has a unique instrument to guide policy-makers, tourism companies and tourists alike in a responsible and sustainable development path: The **Global Code of Ethics for Tourism**.
- This instrument that was adopted in 1999 by the UNWTO General Assembly to harness ethical aspects of tourism. The Code of Ethics is the cornerstone of the work of the Organization acting as a roadmap for a sustainable and responsible development of tourism worldwide.
- Comprising a comprehensive set of nine principles covering socio-economic, cultural and environmental dimensions of tourism, the Code of Ethics also provides for an implementation mechanism in its Article 10, in the body of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics.
- The World Committee on Tourism Ethics, which I have the honor to Chair, is entrusted with the monitoring of the practical implementation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism by both the public sector - Governments through their National Tourism Authorities in 156 countries - and the private sector - tourism companies and associations that publicly commit to respecting the principles of the Code.
- For this endeavor, the Members of the Committee are personally engaged in promoting the Code of Ethics at an international level, overseeing the implementation of the Code and identifying ethical concerns linked to tourism development that may arise.
- For the past 4 years, the Committee has prioritized the following issues:

- Combating the exploitation of children in tourism all its forms - in collaboration with the UNWTO World Tourism Network on Child Protection;
 - Combating poaching and the illegal trading of wildlife through a joint campaign with UNESCO and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC);
 - Promoting Accessible tourism for all through the extensive material, manuals and recommendations prepared by the UNWTO team and its partners;
 - Promotion of fair models of all inclusive holidays which is still under development; and
 - Promoting the responsible use of ratings on travel portals which may impact the reputation of companies and destinations. I will refer to this item in further detail tomorrow during the official launch of the new Recommendations of the Committee.
- More recently, the Committee has started preparing another set of Recommendations that will be published later this year, which we deem crucial for the sector: Recommendations on Sustainable Development of Indigenous Tourism.
 - The cultural heritage of these communities is a unique asset for sustainable tourism development that can ultimately benefit local communities. Managed responsibly, tourism can contribute to the process of cultural heritage preservation, while addressing a series of human rights issues that have direct implications on the survival of indigenous communities.
 - As a token of the role of the Committee, we have the chance to have here today with us two active members who are an illustrative example of this work:
 - Jean Marc Mignon, an activist in the field Social Tourism, and President of the International Social Tourism Organization (ISTO), advocates for an inclusive tourism sector. Tourism should be a right for everyone regardless of their economic or social circumstances.

The universal right to tourism appears in Article 7 of the Code Ethics, in Article 24 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in Article 7.d of the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

- We will hear more about this in the course of the following days, as the Congress will feature interesting examples of how Social Tourism can be a laudable activity as well as a profitable one.

- In turn, Carol Bellamy, distinguished Chair of the UNWTO World Tourism Network on Child Protection and former Director General of UNICEF, is raising awareness about the imperative need to protect children and adolescents from any form of abuse in the travel and tourism context.

Article 2 of the Code of Ethics “(...)The exploitation of human beings in any form, particularly sexual, especially when applied to children, conflicts with the fundamental aims of tourism and is the negation of tourism”

- A recent study led by ECPAT International, in collaboration with UNWTO and 67 partners, confirms a terrifying reality: Child abuse is a transversal and global issue which is present also in the travel and tourism industry. It does not distinguish race, sex or age, it is taking place in all continents and the only way to fight it is through a determined international collaboration.
- I encourage Congress participants to use this opportunity to talk to Ms. Bellamy to see how to best contribute to this, our common cause. Again, during the Congress we will have the opportunity to hear an example of how companies can get involved in the safeguarding children's rights in tourism.
- These are just two examples of the amplitude of issues that the World Committee on Tourism Ethics covers through the mandate of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism.
- The origin of this Congress in itself, the International Congress on Ethics and Tourism, was born from the need to promote, explain and showcase the practical application of the principles of the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism.
- It is refreshing to see that, after Madrid (Spain) and Quito (Ecuador), this third edition of the Congress will cover, key issues of responsible tourism development such as:
 - Tourism governance as a driver of the sustainability agenda;
 - Inclusive tourism and universal accessibility;
 - Management of natural and cultural heritage amidst the growing tourist numbers and conservation concerns; and,

- Corporate social responsibility that also contributes to innovation and the overall service quality.
- To conclude, in view of the unique occasion this Congress grants, I would like to reveal one of the latest initiatives of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics.
- The Committee proposed to the 2016 UNWTO General Assembly to convert the Global Code of Ethics, which is a voluntary instrument, into an international convention; a binding legal instrument that can give full flesh to the principles embodied by the Code of Ethics.
- Tourism, being one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world, has experienced continuous growth in the recent decades, doubling the number of tourist arrivals since 1999, the year in which the Global Code of Ethics was adopted.
- In an interconnected world where the business volume of tourism equals or even surpasses that of oil exports, food products or automobiles it is important to set out a more robust and compelling framework to ensure that all players follow the same rules. Allowing this way for tourism growth to be managed responsibly and to be sustained in time.
- The work on the Convention is in progress. A Working Group composed of representatives of UNWTO Member States is advancing in the drafting of the text of the future Convention and I do hope that during the next UNWTO General Assembly which is taking place in Chengdu, China in September, we can proudly unveil the first International Treaty of the World Tourism Organization based on its flagship document, the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism.
- With this perspective in mind, it is my pleasure to kick off the 3rd International Congress on Tourism Ethics.
- Thank you ladies and gentlemen for making this Congress happen.