

Agenda item 11**Report of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics**

A/26/11

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**Executive summary**

The **World Committee on Tourism Ethics** is an independent and impartial body established in 2003 by the UN Tourism General Assembly through resolution [A/RES/607\(XIX\)](#). It serves as a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly. The Committee's role is promoting, interpreting, and monitoring the implementation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism. The Committee's Chair, 8 full members and 3 alternate members are elected in their personal capacity, not as representatives of any government or organization, ensuring its objectivity and integrity.

Since its last report of 2023, the Committee held three meetings to address various ethical challenges in the tourism sector. During these meetings, members have revised their priority areas under the leadership of the interim Chair, Ms. Daniela Otero. The new priority areas included *Tourism Education for Sustainable Development*, *Decent Work and Inclusive Growth*, and *Technology and Digital Platforms*. Three Working Groups were formed to implement said priorities. *Working Group 1* emphasized the importance of the integration of sustainability into tourism training and different curricula. *Working Group 2* focused on occupational health and safety, as well as gender-based violence and highlighted ILO guidelines to support sustainable and responsible employment practices. Whereas *Working Group 3* issued ethical recommendations on the use of digital technologies in tourism. One of the Committee's major initiatives is overseeing the Private Sector Commitment to the Code, launched in 2011. This initiative encourages tourism companies and associations to adopt ethical business practices by signing a public declaration of support for the Code's principles. Signatories are expected to submit self-assessment questionnaires to report on their activities. Importantly, this is not a certification scheme. As of 28 May 2025, there are 462 signatories from 70 countries, including two regional and two international organizations.

The Global Code of Ethics for Tourism was originally adopted on 1 October 1999 by the World Tourism Organization (now UN Tourism) General Assembly through resolution [A/RES/406\(XIII\)](#). It was later acknowledged by the United Nations General Assembly in 2001 via resolution [A/RES/56/212](#). The Code serves as a comprehensive framework to guide responsible and sustainable tourism development. It outlines core principles intended to ensure that tourism contributes positively to economic, environmental, cultural, and social well-being. The Code addresses a wide array of stakeholders—governments, tourism businesses, host communities, tourists, and more—seeking to maximize tourism's benefits while minimizing potential negative impacts.

In order to reinforce the Code's influence, the Committee proposed the creation of a legally binding international instrument inspired by its principles. This led to the adoption of the Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics in 2019, the first international convention dedicated to tourism, formalized by the UN Tourism General Assembly through resolution [A/RES/722\(XXIII\)](#). To further promote adherence to the Convention and its Optional Protocol, the Committee organized a regional webinar addressed to the Americas where its different articles were presented and the adherence process was explained. Up to the date of this document, five countries had acceded to the Convention. Once the Convention enters into force, both the Convention and the Code will co-exist.

DRAFT RESOLUTION¹

Agenda item 11

Report of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics
(document A/26/11)

The General Assembly,

Having examined the report of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics,

1. *Expresses* its appreciation to the interim Chair and the members of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics for the efforts deployed in streamlining the promotion and the implementation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism;
2. *Takes note* of the updated version of the Committee's Rules of Procedure as presented in Annex I of document A/26/11;
3. *Approves* the amendments to the Protocol of Implementation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism – Part I as presented in Annex II of document A/26/11;
4. *Encourages* Member States to consider ratifying, accepting, and/or acceding to the Convention and its Optional Protocol adopted at the twenty-third General Assembly and to place it as a matter of significance so as to guide the sustainable development of tourism;
5. *Welcomes* the development and promotion of the Tourism Education for Sustainable Development (TESD) approach as an effective means of integrating sustainability principles into tourism education, training, and capacity building;
6. *Recognizes* the urgent need to address decent work deficits in the tourism sector, especially concerning occupational safety and health (OSH) and gender-based violence and harassment;
7. *Takes note of* the Committee's recommendations to guide the tourism sector towards more responsible use of new technologies in tourism;
8. *Congratulates* the 462 companies and trade associations from 70 countries, which have adhered to the Code as of June 2025 and thanks the World Committee on Tourism Ethics for the report summarizing the implementation efforts of the adhered signatories to the Private Sector Commitment to the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism.

¹ This is a draft resolution. For the final decision adopted by the Assembly, please refer to the Resolutions document issued at the end of the session.

I. Introduction

1. The World Committee on Tourism Ethics (hereinafter referred to as the “Ethics Committee” or “the Committee”) was established in 2003 by resolution [A/RES/469\(XV\)](#), as an impartial body and a subsidiary organ of the UN Tourism General Assembly. The Committee is tasked with promoting, interpreting, and evaluating the principles of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (hereinafter referred to as the “Code of Ethics” or “the Code”). Once the UN Tourism Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics enters into force, the Committee will also oversee its implementation and receive reports from States Parties. The Committee reports directly to the General Assembly through its Chair. It is composed of 1 Chair, 8 members, and 3 alternate members, serving in their personal capacities, independent of any government or private affiliation.
2. Through its resolution 607(XIX) of 2011, the General Assembly approved the reform of its subsidiary body, the Committee, and defined its new functions as the following: (a) Monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the implementation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (GCET); (b) Researching and issuing reports, recommendations and observations on ethical matters related to tourism; and (c) Proposing and approving texts of conventions and other legal instruments on specific issues related to the GCET provisions.
3. Furthermore, once the UN Tourism Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics (hereinafter referred to as “the Convention”) enters into force, the Committee will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of its provisions and for receiving corresponding reports from the States Parties.

II. Activities of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics

A. Priorities of the Committee

4. Since the last [report](#) of the Committee to the UN Tourism General Assembly in October 2023, the Ethics Committee has convened three times (31st meeting, virtual, 4 June 2024; 32nd meeting, virtual, 4 December 2024, and 33rd meeting, 1 April 2025, Basque Country). During these sessions the Committee addressed a broad range of ethical challenges facing the tourism sector.
5. During the Chairpersonship of Dr. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka (2021–2023), who resigned on 3 October 2023, the Ethics Committee defined four key priority areas aligned with UN Tourism’s core activities. The key priorities are: (a) *Decent Work, Inclusive Growth, and Community Empowerment*; (b) *Technology and Digital Platforms*; (c) *Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability*; and (d) *Social Sustainability and Intercultural Dialogue*. Under the current interim chairpersonship, Ms. Daniela Otero (WCTE Full Member, 2024–2025), the Committee has revised its focus, identifying the following priorities: (f) *Tourism Education for Sustainable Development*; (g) *Decent Work, Inclusive Growth, and Community Empowerment*; (h) *Technology and Digital Platforms*; and (i) *Social Sustainability and Intercultural Dialogue*. Due to the reduced number of Committee members—stemming from Ms. Otero serving as both interim Chair and full member, and the passing of full member Mr. Gemunu Goonewardene—the Committee has opted to discontinue priority area (i) bearing in mind that elements of *social sustainability* will instead be integrated into priority area (g).
6. To advance its priority areas, the Ethics Committee has established dedicated working groups composed of its members. These working groups are responsible for developing thematic inputs, recommendations, and initiatives aligned with the Committee’s strategic focus. Each group leads efforts within its assigned priority area, collaborating to ensure that the Committee’s objectives are effectively translated into practical outcomes.

B. Working Group Outcomes

The following outlines the key activities and progress of each working group to the date of this document.

Working Group 1: Tourism Education for Sustainable Development

7. The Ethics Committee, through Working Group 1, is advocating Tourism Education for Sustainable Development (TESD). It identified the TSED approach as the one that best integrates sustainability principles into tourism education, training and capacity building, which the tourism sector currently needs.
8. Tourism is a rapidly growing industry, impacting significantly the environment, the global, national and local economies, the social structures and cultural exchange. However, while its growth has the potential to contribute to destinations' prosperity, it also poses considerable challenges for the environment and the social fabric of communities, if not adequately planned and managed. These issues underscore the importance of adopting sustainable practices within the sector. Fostering a better business environment and enabling better labour conditions through effective education, training and capacity building are key for a people-centred tourism sector.
9. TSED can be defined as any educational and training approach that is aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) and is aimed at promoting a holistic understanding of tourism impacts. It plays a pivotal role in equipping individuals with the right knowledge, skills, mindsets and attitudes needed to balance the positive and negative economic, environmental, and social impact of tourism, and serves as a catalyst for creating a more responsible and sustainable industry.
10. Incorporating sustainability principles into tourism curricula is undoubtedly one of the most urgent interventions needed to inspire a shift in the next generation of tourism professionals' mindsets towards more ethical and responsible business practices that balance economic growth, environmental preservation, social inclusion and equity. By fostering a holistic understanding of sustainability in and through tourism, learners should be enabled to minimize the negative impacts and enhance the positive effects of tourism on local communities and ecosystems, but most importantly foster innovation, resilience, and responsible leadership within the industry.
11. TSED encourages an interdisciplinary and multi-stakeholder collaborative approach aimed at strengthening the collaboration between industry players—i.e. academia, governments, businesses, NGOs and local communities, as well as tourists themselves. It aims at promoting long-term thinking and strategies that safeguard vulnerable natural resources and cultural assets for future generations, ensuring that tourism remains a force for good in the global community.
12. However, a better coordinated approach in embedding TSED within the Technical Vocational and Educational Training and Higher Education curricula as well as informal training and capacity building programmes is needed, as there is still a scattered and inconsistent implementation approach across programmes globally. Its potential impact in shaping future generations of tourism professionals is behind this Working Group's plan to create a TSED Toolkit meant to guide key stakeholders entrusted with the design of tourism curricula and training programmes on competencies required for the implementation of sustainability criteria.

Working Group 2: Decent Work, Inclusive Growth, and Community Empowerment

13. Working Group 2 (WG2) on decent work, inclusive growth, and community empowerment agreed to focus, during the period under review, on decent work since travel and tourism are significant sources of employment.
14. According to the [International Labour Organisation \(ILO\)](#) estimates, 270 million workers are employed in the tourism sector. This represents about approximately 8.2 per cent of the global workforce. However, WG2 recognized that the sector faces substantial work deficits. These challenges make it hard to achieving the tourism-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In 2025, the WG decided to focus on two decent work areas: occupational health and safety and gender-based violence. The group also agreed to identify tools that members states could use to help address these decent work deficits.
15. In 2022, the ILO recognized [occupational safety and health](#) (OSH) as a fundamental right at work. This means that all members states must respect, promote, and apply its principles, even if they have not ratified the relevant Conventions. Common OSH issues in tourism and hospitality sector include slips and falls, injuries from manual handling, exposure to hazardous chemicals, cuts and burns and mental health issues like stress and burnout. In 2024, the UN Secretary General identified [extreme heat](#) as a workplace issue that must be urgently addressed. The ILO [report](#), *Heat at work: Implications for safety and health* outline measures to address it. The WG is

currently identifying tools to help member states, employers and trade unions to work effectively together to improve OSH in tourism.

16. Sexual harassment and gender-based violence are endemic in the hospitality sector. A 2021 UK trade union study² found that 47% of hospitality workers had experienced sexual harassment, and 69% had witnessed it. Unlike many sectors where sexual harassment occurs between employees, often with managers harassing workers, sexual harassment in hospitality often involves third parties such as guests and customers. This adds an extra layer of complexity. However, the need to prevent sexual harassment is now widely recognized and some countries have legal requirements to protect workers from sexual harassment. In 2019, the ILO adopted [Convention 190](#) on eliminating violence and harassment in the world of work. It is the first international treaty to recognize the right to workplaces free from violence and harassment, including gender-based violence and harassment. It is also the fastest ratified ILO convention of the past decade. There are tools based on Convention 190 to encourage cooperation between member states, employers and trade unions to eliminate sexual harassment and gender-based violence in tourism. The WG2 will review these tools and make recommendations for their application.
17. Finally, to ensure policy coherence and to avoid duplication of efforts, the WG2 will look more broadly at the decent work deficits in tourism. The WG2 has noted the *ILO guidelines on decent work and socially responsible tourism*. These guidelines help tourism stakeholders design and carry out actions that promote decent work and full productive employment. The goal is to make the sector more sustainable and support progress towards SDGs. They are intended for use by everyone engaged in promoting decent work and full employment in the tourism. This includes governments, policymakers, employees, and workers' organizations, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and others working at international, national, regional, local, and enterprise level. The WG2 will give recommendations on how these Guidelines could be more widely used.

Working Group 3: Technology and Digital Platforms

18. Making ethical recommendations for the use of new technologies and digital platforms is crucial to ensure a responsible and sustainable development of innovative solutions, so as to protect individual rights and to build trust in the digital landscape. The following recommendations proposed by the members of the Working Group 3 on Technology and Digital Platforms help prevent unintended consequences, such as algorithmic discrimination or privacy violations, and ensure that technology is used for the benefit of the individual and the society.
19. The Code of Ethics is recognized as essential for promoting and disseminating ethical values, being a comprehensive set of principles for tourism stakeholders, including government bodies, local communities, NGOs, the tourism workforce, and tourists. To ensure responsible and sustainable development in the innovation context, the Code of Ethics must be effectively applied in the development and use of emerging technologies. As stated in Article 2 of the Code, "Tourism is a vehicle for individual and collective fulfilment". In this context, technology and digital platforms should serve as supportive tools rather than disruptive forces that could compromise sustainability goals.
20. The following ten recommendations are proposed to guide the tourism sector towards more responsible development and use of new technologies:
 - (a) Ensure Transparency on Digital Platforms: Establish clear standards for providing information on pricing, cancellation policies, and consumer rights.
 - (b) Strengthen Personal Data Protection: Mandate compliance with privacy regulations and ensure informed consent for data collection and use.
 - (c) Develop Online Dispute Resolution Mechanisms: Implement standardized and accessible systems for resolving conflicts between tourists and service providers.
 - (d) Regulate Artificial Intelligence in Tourism: Promote ethical and transparent development of algorithms used in tourism services.
 - (e) Educate Consumers: Launch awareness campaigns to inform tourists about digital risks, privacy, and their rights.

² Unite the Union, (2021) Not on the Menu II – Preliminary report of survey results, Unite Hospitality Sector.

- (f) Encourage State Intervention: Advocate for national and international regulatory frameworks that protect both tourists and businesses.
- (g) Define Platform Responsibility: Clarify the legal liability of platforms in cases of service failures or damages.
- (h) Foster Ethical Innovation: Support the creation of responsible technologies that balance innovation with human rights.
- (i) Promote International Collaboration: Advocate for global treaties and standards to harmonize regulations and ensure fairness.
- (j) Advance the Global Code of Ethics in Tourism (GCET): Integrate the GCET principles into digital strategies for the tourism sector.

C. Webinar on the Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics and its Optional Protocol

- 21. Following a decision made during its 32nd meeting in December 2024, the Committee agreed to organize a series of regional webinars targeting UN Tourism Member States to promote adherence to the Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics and its Optional Protocol. The first of five webinars was held for the Member States from the Americas on 18 June 2025, 52 representatives from 11 countries have attended the webinar, along with other representatives from universities, private sector, and international organizations.

D. Revision of the Rules of Procedure of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics

- 22. The Committee revised its Rules of Procedure last acknowledged by UN Tourism GA resolution [A/RES/769\(XXV\)](#) in October 2023. It now submits the revised version (Annex I) to the present session of the General Assembly.
- 23. The revised version is submitted to the GA for information, in accordance with Rule 12 and provision (d) of the Protocol of Implementation of the GCET- Part I (rev). The revision was agreed upon by the Committee during its 33rd meeting held in Vitoria, Spain, in April 2025.

E. Revision of the Protocol of Implementation of the GCET – Part I

- 24. The Committee has proposed a revision to Part I of the Protocol of Implementation of the GCET, concerning the World Committee on Tourism Ethics. This Protocol was originally adopted in 2003 and later revised and adopted by the General Assembly in October 2011 through resolution 607(XIX). The latest revision was proposed upon during the Committee's 33rd meeting, held in Vitoria, Spain, in April 2025.

III. WCTE Recommendations and Statements

A. Statement on World Tourism Day

- 25. The Committee issued a [statement](#) in 2024, welcoming the decision of UN Tourism to designate “*Tourism and Peace*” as the theme for World Tourism Day 2024 and emphasized its relevance amid ongoing global conflicts and divisions. In addition, the Committee reaffirmed the role of tourism as a driver of cross-cultural understanding, peace, and sustainable development, and recalled the [words](#) of the UN Secretary-General that “*building peace is a conscious, bold and even radical act*,” and called for strengthened efforts to support peace negotiations in conflict-affected destinations, in line with the principles of the UN Charter and the Code of Ethics.

B. Video Message on International Women's Day

- 26. In a [video message](#) marking the 2024 International Women's Day, the Interim Chair of the Committee, highlighted the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment in and through tourism, emphasizing that “*tourism activities should respect the equality of men and women and promote human rights*,” reaffirming this as a core principle of the Code of Ethics.

IV. Adoption of the UN Tourism Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics

27. The [UN Tourism Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics](#), together with its Optional Protocol, was formally adopted during the twenty-third session of the UN Tourism General Assembly through resolution [A/RES/722\(XXIII\)](#) in September 2019. Following its adoption, the Convention was made available for signature from 16 October 2019 to 15 October 2020, as stipulated in Article 18. Indonesia became the first—and, during that period, the only—Member State to sign the Convention, on 2 October 2020. The Convention remains open for ratification, acceptance, approval, or accession. In accordance with Article 20(1), it will enter into force on the thirtieth day after the deposit of one of these instruments by ten Member States.
28. As of the date of this document, five countries have acceded to the Convention, namely, Albania (16 May 2022), Lebanon (5 July 2022), Nigeria (19 April 2022), Seychelles (18 August 2022), and Ecuador (24 January 2025). In addition, 2 countries have acceded to the Convention's Optional Protocol, namely Albania (16 May 2022) and Seychelles (18 August 2022).
29. The Committee has included in its programme of work different steps to promote the adherence to the Convention and its Optional Protocol. In addition to the regional webinars, Committee members are contacting different Member States and promoting the Convention in different conferences to which they are invited to speak.
30. The [webpage](#) of the depositary includes all the steps needed to be followed should a Member State wish to ratify, accept, approve, or accede to the Convention and its Optional Protocol. The Secretary-General is the depositary of the Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics and its Optional Protocol. The depositary functions are discharged by the UN Tourism Legal Counsel (treatydepositary@untourism.int).

V. Implementation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism by the Sector

A. Private Sector Commitment to the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism

31. The Private Sector Commitment initiative was launched by UN Tourism in 2011 to promote the implementation of the GCET by private tourism companies and trade associations. Its overall objective is to stimulate transparency, responsibility, and sustainability in the tourism sector on a global scale, and have companies reflect on their actions in the field of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).
32. Subdivided into five thematic areas (1. Corporate governance and business ethics, 2. Employment quality, 3. Social equity and Human Rights, 4. Community well-being, and 5. Environmental sustainability), the self-evaluating questionnaire is the monitoring tool being carried out by the private sector signatories to the GCET (hereinafter referred to as “the Signatories”). Signatories commit to submit a regular biennial questionnaire to the Committee. Since 2011, 599 tourism companies and trade associations from 70 countries have adhered to this initiative.
33. Reporting on a regular basis is one of the few requirements for companies and associations to remain on the list of Code Signatories that is featured on the UN Tourism Ethics webpage. When no response is received by the Committee within a reasonable timeframe, the entity in question is considered for suspension. Consequently, following the decision of the 21st WCTE meeting in Istanbul, Turkey, in December 2018, 130 signatories were suspended from their membership.
34. In May 2025, during its 33rd meeting, the Ethics Committee approved the suspension of 7 signatories that have ceased their operations. Additionally, the Committee resolved to issue a final reminder to companies and associations that have not submitted the questionnaire since 2019. Failure to respond by the specified deadline will result in suspension of their membership.
35. Taking into account the suspensions as well as the recent adherents, as of June 2025, the total number of private sector signatories to the GCET amounted to 462 (279 companies and 183 associations) from 70 countries.

B. Implementation of the Private Sector Commitments to the GCET

36. In September 2024, personalized reminder letters were sent to all signatories of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, encouraging the submission of their biennial reporting questionnaires. As of June 2025, 31% of signatories had responded and submitted their reports. These submissions provided insights into the practical implementation of ethical principles across the signatories' business operations and corporate governance. The following points highlight selected case studies and examples drawn from these reports, illustrating responsible actions taken by signatories.
37. The following case studies, outlined below, submitted by signatories of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism via its biennial questionnaire from 2023 to May 2025, highlight practical initiatives in promoting inclusive employment, social equity, and environmental sustainability within the tourism sector. These initiatives demonstrated a commitment to responsible business practices, with particular emphasis on creating equal opportunities for persons with disabilities, advancing gender equality, fostering social inclusion for potentially vulnerable groups, and promoting sustainable development, in general.
38. In corporate governance and business ethics, many associations have reported efforts to support their affiliates on issues such as the need for transparent information and the formalization of companies. The Organization for the Swedish Hospitality Industry (Visita), for example, has a CSR policy included in its document "Ethical rules of Visita" which all its members must follow. The Associação da Hotelaria de Portugal currently is about to adopt its own code of ethics addressing key aspects such as governance, ethical conduct, employment quality, social equity, human rights, citizenship, inclusion, and diversity. Many companies have also developed codes of conduct that include corporate governance rules. For example, Aitken Spence Hotel Managements (Pvt) Ltd, from Sri Lanka, is addressing these issues by implementing anti-corruption and tourism safety measures, offering accurate information, delivering quality services and enforcing a supplier code of conduct to promote responsible behaviour. Additionally, several hotel chains have reported implementing codes of ethics or conduct to systematically address corporate governance and ethics throughout their entire supply chain.
39. On employment quality, the Spanish Renfe Group (National Railway System) invests in employment, quality and stability as 95% of the workers have a permanent job. Also, the company has a collective bargaining agreement to improve gender equality and reduce the gender pay gap, among other issues related to the workers' rights negotiated between employees and the company.
40. Employee-retention policies are also being implemented in entities such as Kuoni Global Travel Services (Switzerland), Contactos, Representaciones y Destinos, S.A. (Panamá) or PortAventura Entertainment, SAU (Spain). Other entities have improved the work-life balance such as Tobu Top Tours Co., Ltd. (Japan), Hotel Taimar (Aqualique, S.L.) and Palladium Hotel Group from Spain or Carrusel Representaciones S. A. C. (Peru).
41. Associations such as the Israel Association of Travel Agencies & Consultants offer information and training to managers and employees (including freelancers) to ensure awareness of employee's rights within the tourism industry. The Syndicate of Owners of Restaurants, Cafes, Night-Clubs and Pastries in Lebanon encourages restaurant owners to uphold high standards in working conditions and welfare. The entity also promotes the implementation of best practices and incentives to help retaining key staff.
42. In the area of social equity and human rights, several companies have reported a preference to hire employees from within the local communities. Other businesses and associations reported to have adopted non-discrimination policies. The German company Studiosus Reisen München GmbH has a specific communication channel for guests and stakeholders, so they can report on any violation of human rights. Then the company investigates any information received and, if necessary, reports it to the authorities.
43. The Association of Croatian Travel Agencies – UHPA has reported on its active role in the drafting of the Act on Tourism, a new law that aims to reform destination management and protect communities from the negative impacts of tourism growth.
44. The Valletta Cruise Port in Malta is currently implementing an Environmental Risk Management System (ERMS). Similarly, the Concorde De Luxe Resort in Türkiye actively supports local wildlife

conservation by planting trees in honour of guests who stay beyond a specified number of nights, regularly maintaining clean beaches and gardens, and protecting the nesting areas of Caretta turtles.

45. Many hotel chains have communicated their efforts in promoting and implementing energy efficiency, recycling and waste management, reduction of food loss, the use of plastics and reduction of CO₂ emissions.

Annex I: Rules of Procedure of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics

RULES OF PROCEDURE

As amended (amendments in **underlined bold text**) at the 33rd WCTE meeting held in Vitoria, Spain in April 2025.

Version history: Initial version approved by WCTE at its 13th meeting held in Madrid in February 2014
Amended at its 14th meeting held in Rome in November 2014
Acknowledged by UN Tourism General Assembly Resolution A/RES/742(XXIV) of December 2021
Amended at its 30 th meeting held in Madrid in May 2023
Acknowledged by UN Tourism General Assembly Resolution A/RES/769(XXV) of October 2023

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-UN Tourism**", "Assembly", "Council", "Committee" and "Protocol" shall mean, respectively, the World Tourism Organization, the General Assembly and Executive Council of the **UNWTO-UN Tourism**, 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-UN Tourism**.
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-UN Tourism**, to*

discharge these functions and regulate my conduct with the interests of the World Committee on 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 **physical or virtual** 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 a member designated by the Chairperson. On the occasion that no member was designated by the Chairperson, the oldest member of the Committee will chair the meeting.

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 or **their representative** shall attend *ex officio* or may arrange to be represented at the meetings of the Committee. The Secretary-General or their representative may address the Committee orally or in writing on any point he/she deems appropriate.
3. The Legal Counsel of the **UNWTO UN Tourism** shall participate, as necessary, in the Committee meetings in an advisory capacity and may address the Committee on any point of law he/she deems appropriate.

Meetings of the Committee

Rule 4

1. The Committee shall meet once a year, **physically or virtually**, 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 **UNWTO UN Tourism**. 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 **UNWTO UN Tourism** 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. The provisional agenda of each ordinary meeting, together with the supporting documents, shall be transmitted by the Secretary-General **or their representative** 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 their representative**, 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 UN Tourism 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

1. 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 their 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 in their his/her observations, for information. The Secretary-General shall transmit to the Assembly the recommendations of the Committee together with in their 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 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.

Annex II: Protocol of Implementation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism

PROTOCOL OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GLOBAL CODE OF ETHICS FOR TOURISM

Part I (rev.2)

World Committee on Tourism Ethics

Body responsible for interpreting, applying and evaluating the provisions of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism

As amended (amendments in **underlined bold text**) at the 33rd WCTE meeting held in Vitoria, Spain in April 2025.

Initial version was adopted by the UN Tourism General Assembly A/15/RES in 2003
Amendment proposal by UN Tourism Secretary General was adopted by the UN Tourism General Assembly resolution 607(XIX) in October 2011
Amended at its 23 rd WCTE meeting held in Madrid in November 2019
Amended at its 26 th WCTE meeting held virtually in April 2019
Adopted by the UN Tourism General Assembly Resolution A/RES/742(XXIV) in November 2021

- (a) A World Committee on Tourism Ethics shall be created comprising nine eminent nationals, preferably from the Member States of **UNWTO UN Tourism**, independent from governments and with no contractual relationship with **UNWTO UN Tourism**, who are appointed by the General Assembly in their personal capacity. They 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 UN Tourism**.
- (b) The functions of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics shall be:
- monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the implementation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism;
 - the research and issuance of reports, recommendations and observations on ethical matters related to tourism; and
 - the proposal and approval of texts of conventions and other legal instruments on specific issues related to the Code of Ethics provisions.
- (c) The members of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics shall be appointed as follows:
- Nominations to the Committee may be presented by the Full, Associate and Affiliate Members of **UNWTO UN Tourism**, as well as by the Secretary-General.
 - A selection board shall be established by the General Assembly and composed of the Chair of the General Assembly, the Chair of the Executive Council and the Chair of the Board of the Affiliate Members, the Secretary-General and the Legal Counsel of **UNWTO UN Tourism**. The selection board will examine the proposed nominations in order to recommend to the General Assembly the names of the nine personalities to be appointed by the latter to serve on the Committee as follows:
 - i. eight candidates to serve as members of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics; and
 - ii. one candidate to serve as chairperson.
 - In the same way, the names of candidates will be submitted to the General Assembly to replace members whose terms of office have expired or who have resigned or otherwise ceased to be available.
 - The Executive Council may designate an observer to the Committee.

The **UNWTO UN Tourism** Secretary-General or **his/her their** representative will attend the meetings of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics ex officio. The Legal Counsel of the World Tourism

Organization shall participate, as necessary, in the Committee Meetings in an advisory capacity and may address the Committee on any point of law he/she deems appropriate.

On selecting and appointing the members of the Committee, account shall be taken of the need for a balanced composition of this body from a regional, gender and sectorial perspective, and for a diversification of the qualifications and personal status of its members, from the economic, environmental and social as well as legal viewpoint. The members shall be appointed for four years, and their term of office may be renewed only once.

The members of the Committee are re-appointed by half every two years.

- (d) The World Committee on Tourism Ethics shall establish its own Rules of Procedure and refer them to the General Assembly.
- (e) A majority presence of the Committee members shall be necessary to constitute a quorum at its meetings; in the event that a member is absent, he/she will not be represented by a substitute at meetings; the Committee shall make its best efforts to adopt its decisions by consensus; however, in the event of a tie in the voting, the chairperson shall have the casting vote.
- (f) ~~UNWTO UN Tourism~~ shall undertake to cover the travel expenses and daily subsistence allowances occasioned by the participation in the meetings of the nine members of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics; it being understood that the members of the Committee shall not receive any remuneration; the secretariat of the Committee shall be provided by the services of the ~~UNWTO UN Tourism~~ Secretariat; the operating costs remaining payable by the Organization may, wholly or in part, be charged to a trust fund financed by voluntary contributions.
- (g) The World Committee on Tourism Ethics shall meet at least once a year. These meetings will be held at ~~UNWTO UN Tourism~~ Headquarters, be held in-person or virtually, depending on budget availability and force majeure circumstances unless it is decided otherwise, provided the host country covers the costs and expenses involved in holding the meeting at a different venue.
- (h) The World Committee on Tourism Ethics may invite experts or external institutions to contribute to its proceedings.
- (i) On the basis of periodic reports submitted to them by Full Members, Associate Members and Affiliate Members of ~~UNWTO UN Tourism~~, the ~~UNWTO UN Tourism~~ Regional Commissions shall, every two years, examine the application of the Code in their respective regions; they shall record their findings in a report to the World Committee on Tourism Ethics.
- (j) The World Committee on Tourism Ethics shall exercise a global function as an observatory for the challenges encountered in implementing the Code and for proposed recommendations; it shall summarize the reports drawn up by the Regional Commissions and supplement them with the information it has collected with the assistance of the Secretary-General and the support of the Board of Affiliate Members.
- (k) The Secretary-General shall refer the report of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics to the General Assembly, together with in their ~~his/her~~ own observations. The General Assembly shall decide what follow-up action to take on the report and the recommendations thus submitted to it, which national tourism administrations and other stakeholders in tourism development shall subsequently have the task of implementing.
- (l) The Secretary-General of ~~UNWTO UN Tourism~~ shall submit, on a regular basis, a report on the implementation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for its submission to the UN General Assembly.