

## Charter for Sustainable Tourism (1995)

**We**, the participants at the World Conference on Sustainable Tourism, meeting in Lanzarote, Canary Islands, Spain, on 27-28 April 1995,

*Mindful* that tourism, as a worldwide phenomenon, touches the highest and deepest aspirations of all people and is also an important element of socioeconomic and political development in many countries.

*Recognizing* that tourism is ambivalent, since it can contribute positively to socio-economic and cultural achievement, while at the same time it can contribute to the degradation of the environment and the loss of local identity, and should therefore be approached with a global methodology.

*Mindful* that the resources on which tourism is based are fragile and that there is a growing demand for improved environmental quality.

*Recognizing* that tourism affords the opportunity to travel and to know other cultures, and that the development of tourism can help promote closer ties and peace among peoples, creating a conscience that is respectful of the diversity of culture and life styles.

*Recalling* the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the General Assembly of United Nations, and the various United Nations declarations and regional conventions on tourism, the environment, the conservation of cultural heritage and on sustainable development.

*Guided* by the principles set forth in the Rio Declaration on the Environment and Development and the recommendations arising from Agenda 21.

*Recalling* previous declarations on tourism, such as the Manila Declaration on World Tourism, the Hague Declaration and the Tourism Bill of Rights and Tourist Code.

*Recognizing* the need to develop a tourism that meets economic expectations and environmental requirements, and respects not only the social and physical structure of destinations, but also the local population.

*Considering* it a priority to protect and reinforce the human dignity of both local communities and tourists.

*Mindful* of the need to establish effective alliances among the principal actors in the field of tourism so as to fulfil the hope of a tourism that is more responsible towards our common heritage.

**APPEAL** to the international community and, in particular, URGE governments, other public authorities, decision makers and professionals in the field of tourism, public and private associations and institutions whose activities are related to tourism, and tourists themselves, to adopt the principles and objectives of the Declaration that follows:

1. Tourism development shall be based on criteria of sustainability, which means that it must be ecologically bearable in the long term, as well as economically viable, and ethically and socially equitable for local communities. Sustainable development is a guided process which envisages global management of resources so as to ensure their viability, thus enabling our natural and

cultural capital, including protected areas, to be preserved. As a powerful instrument of development, tourism can and should participate actively in the sustainable development strategy. A requirement of sound management of tourism is that the sustainability of the resources on which it depends must be guaranteed.

2. Tourism should contribute to sustainable development and be integrated with the natural, cultural and human environment; it must respect the fragile balances that characterize many tourist destinations, in particular small islands and environmentally sensitive areas. Tourism should ensure an acceptable evolution as regards its influence on natural resources, biodiversity and the capacity for assimilation of any impacts and residues produced.

3. Tourism must consider its effects on the cultural heritage and traditional elements, activities and dynamics of each local community. Recognition of these local factors and support for the identity, culture and interests of the local community must at all times play a central role in the formulation of tourism strategies, particularly in developing countries.

4. The active contribution of tourism to sustainable development necessarily presupposes the solidarity, mutual respect and participation of all the actors, both public and private, implicated in the process, and must be based on efficient cooperation mechanisms at all levels: local, national, regional and international.

5. The conservation, protection and appreciation of the worth of the natural and cultural heritage afford a privileged area for cooperation. This approach implies that all those responsible must take upon themselves a true challenge, that of cultural, technological and professional innovation, and must also undertake a major effort to create and implement integrated planning and management instruments.

6. Quality criteria both for the preservation of the tourist destination and for the capacity to satisfy tourists, determined jointly with local communities and informed by the principles of sustainable development, should represent priority objectives in the formulation of tourism strategies and projects.

7. To participate in sustainable development, tourism must be based on the diversity of opportunities offered by the local economy. It should be fully integrated into and contribute positively to local economic development.

8. All options for tourism development must serve effectively to improve the quality of life of all people and must influence the socio-cultural enrichment of each destination.

9. Governments and the competent authorities, with the participation of NGOs and local communities, shall undertake actions aimed at integrating the planning of tourism as a contribution to sustainable development.

10. In recognition of economic and social cohesion among the peoples of the world as a fundamental principle of sustainable development, it is urgent that measures be promoted to permit a more equitable distribution of the benefits and burdens of tourism. This implies a change of consumption patterns and the introduction of pricing methods which allow environmental costs to be internalised. Governments and multilateral organizations should prioritize and strengthen direct and undirected aid to tourism projects which contribute to improving the quality of the environment. Within this context, it is necessary to explore

thoroughly the application of internationally harmonised economic, legal and fiscal instruments to ensure the sustainable use of resources in tourism.

11. Environmentally and culturally vulnerable spaces, both now and in the future, shall be given special priority in the matter of technical cooperation and financial aid for sustainable tourism development. Similarly, special treatment should be given to zones that have been degraded by obsolete and high impact tourism models.

12. The promotion of alternative forms of tourism that are compatible with the principles of sustainable development, together with the encouragement of diversification represent a guarantee of stability in the medium and the long term. In this respect there is a need, for many small islands and environmentally sensitive areas in particular, to actively pursue and strengthen regional cooperation.

13. Governments, industry, authorities, and tourism-related NGOs should promote and participate in the creation of open networks for research, dissemination of information and transfer of appropriate knowledge on tourism and environmentally sustainable tourism technologies.

14. The establishment of a sustainable tourism policy necessarily requires the support and promotion of environmentally-compatible tourism management systems, feasibility studies for the transformation of the sector, as well as the implementation of demonstration projects and the development of international cooperation programmes.

15. The travel industry, together with bodies and NGOs whose activities are related to tourism, shall draw up specific frameworks for positive and preventive actions to secure sustainable tourism development and establish programmes to support the implementation of such practices. They shall monitor achievements, report on results and exchange their experiences.

16. Particular attention should be paid to the role and the environmental repercussions of transport in tourism, and to the development of economic instruments designed to reduce the use of non-renewable energy and to encourage recycling and minimization of residues in resorts.

17. The adoption and implementation of codes of conduct conducive to sustainability by the principal actors involved in tourism, particularly industry, are fundamental if tourism is to be sustainable. Such codes can be effective instruments for the development of responsible tourism activities.

18. All necessary measures should be implemented in order to inform and promote awareness among all parties involved in the tourism industry, at local, national, regional and international level, with regard to the contents and objectives of the Lanzarote Conference.

## FINAL RESOLUTION

The World Conference on Sustainable Tourism considers it vital to make the following public statements:

1. The Conference recommends State and regional governments to draw up urgently plans of action for sustainable development applied to tourism, in consonance with the principles set out in this Charter.

2. The Conference agrees to refer the Charter for Sustainable Tourism to the Secretary- General of the United Nations, so that it may be taken up by the bodies and agencies of the United Nations system, as well as by international organizations which have cooperation agreements with the United Nations, for submission to the General Assembly.