

Siem Reap Declaration on Tourism and Culture – Building a New Partnership Model

The Ministers of Tourism and Culture and Heads of Delegation of the UNWTO and UNESCO Member States, the representatives of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, of regional organizations, academia, private sector, cultural and tourism institutions, and non-governmental organizations, meeting, on the occasion of the World Conference on Tourism and Culture – Building a New Partnership, held in Siem Reap, Cambodia, from 4-5 February 2015 under the high patronage of Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo HUN SEN, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, of the Secretary General of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and of the Director General of UNESCO;

His Majesty Preah Bat Samdech Preah Baromneath Norodom Sihamoni, King of Cambodia, has very graciously presided over a Gala Dinner together with art performances in honour of delegates at the Elephant Terrace, the heart of the Angkor World Heritage Site. The Elephant Terrace is a place of historical and cultural significance where the Kings of the Khmer Empire presided over important ceremonies to mark national events.

Recalling that:

- tourism has grown over recent decades to become one of the leading global socio-economic sectors of our times,
- tourism creates immense opportunities for inclusive economic growth and sustainable development through job creation, regeneration of rural and urban areas, and the appreciation and protection of natural and cultural heritage;
- in 2012, for the first time, over one billion international tourists travelled the world, and in 2014, the World Heritage List reached 1000 sites;
- culture, reflected in heritage and traditions as much as in contemporary art, languages, cuisine, music, handicrafts, museums and literature, is of immeasurable value to host communities, shapes community identities and fosters respect and tolerance among people has become a key tourism asset, creating distinctive differences between destinations;
- almost 40% of tourism has a cultural motivation and that cultural or heritage motivated tourists tend to contribute more expenditure to local economies;

Considering that:

- sustainable tourism can be a considerable force in fostering appreciation and safeguarding of tangible and intangible heritage and dependent on encouraging the development of arts, crafts and other creative activities;
- article 4 of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, adopted by the UNWTO General Assembly in 1999 and endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in 2001, underlines that “tourism is a user of the cultural heritage of mankind and contributor to its enhancement”;
- the 2013 United Nations General Assembly Resolution on Culture and Sustainable Development (A/RES/68/223), acknowledges that culture contributes to inclusive economic development;
- the Hangzhou Declaration of May 2013, *Placing Culture at the Heart of Sustainable Development Policies*, reaffirms that culture should be considered as a fundamental enabler of sustainability, being a source of meaning and energy, a well-spring of creativity and innovation and a resource to address challenges and find appropriate solutions;
- the 2014 Florence Declaration on *Culture, Creativity and Sustainable Development, Research, Innovation, Opportunities* calls upon governments, civil society and the private sector to take action in global partnership to promote creative environments, processes and products;
- for many years, UNWTO and UNESCO have been working together to raise awareness and promote the strong interlinks between tourism and culture, while emphasising the need for mutually beneficial partnership models, namely through the UNESCO World Heritage Sustainable Tourism Programme; and
- building new partnership models for collaboration between tourism and culture falls within the emerging international consensus of the fundamental links between culture and heritage, and sustainable post 2015 development policies;

Recognizing that:

- despite the immense synergies between tourism and culture, the two sectors often operate within government and administrative structures that are disconnected or poorly coordinated, resulting in less than optimal outcomes for national and regional development policies, planning and development;
- at a time of unprecedented tourism growth, it is important to emphasise the shared responsibility among culture and tourism stakeholders, especially within government and public administrations at all levels, as well as the immense opportunities for both culture and tourism to develop new partnership models;
- successful outcomes require engaging culture and tourism stakeholders at all levels to address cross cutting responsibilities in areas such as governance, community engagement, innovation and corporate social responsibility;

- for tourism to achieve social, economic, and environmental sustainability, the natural and cultural assets of any nation or community must be valued and protected by all;
- sustainable tourism can be a key driver in the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage, while nurturing a sense of pride and self-esteem within communities and destinations around the world;
- tourism development and activities associated with cultural heritage can achieve sustainability through building responsible governance structures, ensuring protection and conservation, promoting investment, fostering poverty reduction, facilitating linkages between tourism sectors and local suppliers of goods and services, showcasing local cultures and supporting human resource development;
- there is need to reinforce and expand the contribution of living cultures and creative industries, such as music, multimedia, crafts, cuisine, architecture and design, to the achievement of sustainable tourism, because these have an increasing role in creating the distinctive and unique visitor experience of each destination, and tourism investment can bring new consumers, foster innovation and the exchange of experiences that grow the creative industries with expanding markets;
- cultural routes linking such places offer important opportunities for tourism development, regional integration and economic development, while promoting the revitalisation and promotion of cultural and economic links between people and communities;
- the potential for cultural tourism to contribute to the cultural and physical development and rejuvenation of urban areas and historic cities.

Reaffirm their commitment to:

1. build new partnership models between tourism and culture by,

- 1.1. working towards greater integration of culture and tourism into the post 2015 development agenda;
- 1.2. reducing barriers and facilitating effective partnership models and governance structures within government at national, regional and local levels, to develop, coordinate and implement tourism and culture policies and practices in a more integrated manner;
- 1.3. encouraging and facilitating effective partnerships between government, private and community organisations in both tourism and cultural heritage sectors;
- 1.4. developing cultural tourism policies that recognise, protect and promote the authenticity of culture and cultural heritage and forge effective synergies using a range of appropriate technologies and social media platforms whereby all stakeholders exchange more information, experience and best practice in this area;
- 1.5. using tourism and culture as a fundamental tool in development cooperation for developing countries and recovery in areas affected by crisis.

2. *promote and protect cultural heritage by,*

- 2.1. ensuring that tourism activities contribute to increase public awareness and support for the protection and conservation of cultural heritage; in particular, by communicating heritage characteristics and values through the tourism experience chain;
- 2.2. ensuring that the use of the tangible and intangible culture of communities is determined by and managed within the aspirations of the owning communities;
- 2.3. ensuring that sufficient revenues derived from tourism activities go toward the management and conservation of cultural and natural heritage;
- 2.4. protecting and sustainably managing World Heritage Sites and encouraging the implementation of the World Heritage Sustainable Tourism Programme, including the implementation of effective tourism congestion management measures, training and capacity building of site managers and other stakeholders;
- 2.5. supporting the fight against trafficking of cultural heritage;
- 2.6. promoting examples for responsible and sustainable tourism management at World Heritage Sites, ensuring that the local or host community benefit from tourism; and
- 2.7. implementing effective and appropriate heritage and socio-economic sustainability impact assessment procedures prior to the approval of tourism projects associated with World Heritage Sites and the local communities in the vicinity of such sites.

3. *link people and foster sustainable development through cultural routes by,*

- 3.1. where appropriate, encouraging and facilitating international and national initiatives that draw together historically or thematically linked heritage places, including World Heritage Sites, into tourism routes, corridors or circuits;
- 3.2. building international or regional networks across culture and tourism government agencies and within other relevant government areas such as foreign affairs, transportation, interior or immigration;
- 3.3. cooperating across regional or national borders to facilitate and build governance and certification models to ensure quality and consistency of the visitor experience along the cultural routes;
- 3.4. fostering equity of governance structures, tourism development and marketing activities across the entire cultural route;
- 3.5. ensuring that local communities are consulted and engaged as stakeholders in the formulation and management of tourism along cultural routes;

- 4. *promote closer linkages between tourism, living cultures and creative industries by,***
 - 4.1. encouraging opportunities for cultural tourism to be a valuable generator of business opportunities and socio-economic development for creative industries and the cultural sector;
 - 4.2. encouraging and facilitating new forms of cultural tourism, such as creative tourism, and tourism related to special interests such as museums, industrial, underwater or memorial heritage;
 - 4.3. promoting sustainable value chains within local communities that ensure a consistent quality and creativity in the presentation and/or performance by cultural industries;
 - 4.4. fostering local training and educational opportunities for on-going participation and growth in cultural industries; and
 - 4.5. encouraging public and private investment in physical and institutional infrastructure to sustain local creative industries.

- 5. *promote the contribution of cultural tourism in urban development by:***
 - 5.1. ensuring that local cultural traditions, museums and contemporary creative industries are integrated into programmes for urban development and/or regeneration;
 - 5.2. ensuring that regeneration of degraded or redundant industrial areas of historic cities include the integration of cultural heritage;
 - 5.3. ensuring that urban development is undertaken in association with local communities and provides equitable opportunities for socio-economic development;
 - 5.4. ensuring that urban development is integrated socially and culturally with other urban areas to improve interaction between new and existing communities; and
 - 5.5. ensuring that cultural programmes and creative industry initiatives aimed at regenerating urban areas include participation of tourists as well as of local people.

- 6. *and express their sincere appreciation and gratitude to the Royal Government of Cambodia and the provincial government of Siem Reap for their warm hospitality and the excellent arrangements for the conference as well as their fundamental contribution to advance the links between tourism and culture in the aim of promoting a more sustainable future for all.***

Siem Reap, Cambodia, 5 February 2015.