



2017
INTERNATIONAL YEAR
OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM
FOR DEVELOPMENT



Second UNWTO/UNESCO World Conference

on Tourism and Culture: Fostering Sustainable Development

An official event of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development 2017

Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, 11-12 December 2017

Muscat Declaration on Tourism and Culture: Fostering Sustainable Development

We, the representatives of Tourism and Culture administrations and heads of delegation of the member states of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), representatives of UNWTO, UNESCO, international and regional organizations, academia, private sector, local communities and non-governmental organizations, gathered on the occasion of the UNWTO/UNESCO World Conference on Tourism and Culture – Fostering Sustainable Development, an official event of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development 2017, held in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, on 11-12 December 2017 under the high patronage of H.H. Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud al-Said, Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers of Oman, with the attendance of the Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and of the Assistant Director-General for Culture of UNESCO;

Recalling:

The Siem Reap Declaration on 'Tourism and Culture – Building a New Partnership Model' (2015) that sets out a range of priorities and opportunities for action in the broad field of cultural tourism, with a particular impact on the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals;

The UN General Assembly Resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015 on 'Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);

The UN Resolution A/RES/70/193 declaring 2017 as the International Year for Sustainable Tourism for Development, a unique opportunity to promote the contributions of tourism and culture as a 21st century human activity to shape a better future for people and planet;

The UNWTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism adopted by the UNWTO General Assembly in 1999 and endorsed by the UN General Assembly in 2001, that reaffirms that "tourism is a user of the cultural heritage of humankind and contributor to its enhancement";

The United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development held in Quito, Ecuador, in October 2016 which adopted the New Urban Agenda – a new framework and lays out how cities should be planned and managed to best promote sustainable urbanization; and

The UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO on 20 October 2005, to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions.

The UNESCO Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (World Heritage Convention), adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO on 16 November 1972, for the protection, conservation and presentation of cultural and natural heritage with outstanding universal value to all mankind.

Reaffirm our commitment to:

1. Strengthen the synergies between tourism and culture and advance the contribution of cultural tourism to the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the 17 SDGs by

1.1. Creating a clear vision and defined frameworks at local, national, regional and international level that foster the coordination and cooperation between tourism and culture stakeholders from public and private sector as well as local communities;

1.2. Generating better information on cultural tourism including the use existing data sources and big data to measure and chart tourism and culture synergies;

1.3 Developing cultural tourism policies that advance the contribution of culture and tourism to sustainable development and that are aligned with the UN 2030 Agenda;

1.4 Stimulating the engagement of both the private sector and local communities in tourism and the development of cultural tourism as well as in the preservation of cultural heritage; and

1.5 Promoting a culture of respect among tourists and local communities, their identities, ways of living, and beliefs when visiting sites and destinations for purposes of sustainable cultural tourism.

2. Enhance the role of tourism and culture in peace building and heritage protection, especially in conflict affected areas by

2.1. Making sustainable cultural tourism more ‘peace-sensitive’ so that it can contribute to strengthening global citizenship and encouraging visits to peace-related sites, cross-border travel, exchange visits and religious tourism;

2.2. Promoting experiences of cultures, cultural exchange and dialogue through innovative tourism models that facilitate the host-guest interaction, value cultural diversity and heritage, engage and empower local communities;

2.3. Raising awareness of sustainable cultural tourism’s impacts on peaceful societies among international, national and local stakeholders and conducting further research on tourism’s role in peace-building, reconciliation and security; and

2.4. Integrating sustainable cultural tourism in security systems as a global response to security concerns and include the protection of heritage into national, regional and international security frameworks.

2.5 Underlining the importance of protecting historical heritage sites with shared cultural and religious values, such as those of Jerusalem, by preserving and improving its social diversity for the benefit of all its people, that of the wider region and the world.

3. *Promote responsible and sustainable tourism management of cultural heritage by*

3.1. Protecting cultural heritage and safeguarding intangible heritage, which is essential to maintain the attractiveness of tourism destinations;

3.2. Promoting responsible and sustainable tourism management at World Heritage sites;

3.3. Ensuring the engagement of local communities in managing tourism at heritage sites in a sustainable, responsible and inclusive manner and meeting the aspirations of communities on safeguarding and transmitting their tangible and intangible culture heritage and values;

3.4 Promoting sustainable tourism management of cultural sites within the principles of effective visitors management, resource efficiency and the quality of the visitors' experience; and

3.5 Ensuring the necessary financing for preserving cultural heritage sites and safeguarding intangible cultural heritage through investments and self-financing models.

4. *Encourage a creative and innovative approach for sustainable urban development through cultural tourism by*

4.1. Using new technologies and innovation to support the development of engaging experiences to raise awareness about tangible and intangible heritage;

4.2. Encouraging innovation in cultural tourism interpretation, products and services through design of tourism experience for urban cultural heritage tourism;

4.3. Promoting cultural tourism experiences that consider cultural diversity;

4.4 Fostering creative business opportunities in cultural tourism and enhancing socio-economic benefits of creative cities and sustainable urban development, particularly in terms of job creation and entrepreneurship; and

4.5 Aligning the urban tourism and cultural tourism policies in cities with the New Urban Agenda.

5. Explore the inter-linkages between culture and nature in sustainable tourism by

5.1. Integrating natural and cultural heritage policies and management in sustainable tourism development;

5.2. Creating new methods of promoting the interconnected character of the natural, cultural and social value of land and seascapes through sustainable tourism;

5.3 Developing and promoting cultural tourism programmes to support sustainable development of cultural tourism in rural areas, particularly by supporting local SMEs; and

5.4 Promoting national and cross-border thematic interpretive routes and itineraries that maximize the engagement and benefits for host communities, promote cultural understanding and the links between culture and nature tourism.

And express their sincere appreciation and gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said Sultan of Oman, as well as the Government of Oman for their warm hospitality and their fundamental contribution to advance the links between tourism and culture with the aim of promoting a more sustainable future for all.

Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, 12 December 2017