



ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES
Inter-American Council for Integral Development
(CIDI)



**TWENTIETH INTER-AMERICAN
CONGRESS OF MINISTERS AND
HIGH-LEVEL AUTHORITIES OF TOURISM**
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QUITO CONSENSUS ON CONSCIENTIOUS TOURISM IN THE AMERICAS

(Approved during the ninth plenary session held on September 13, 2012)

WE, THE MINISTERS AND HIGH-LEVEL AUTHORITIES OF TOURISM OF THE MEMBER STATES OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES (OAS), gathered in Quito, Ecuador, on September 12 and 13, 2012, at the XX Inter-American Congress of Ministers and High-level Authorities of Tourism;

TAKING NOTE of the holding of the Second International Congress on Ethics and Tourism and the Fifty-fourth Meeting of the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Commission for the Americas, held in Quito, Ecuador, September 11 and 12, 2012;

CONSIDERING that the holding of the XX Inter-American Congress of Ministers and High-level Authorities of Tourism represents an opportunity for political and technical dialogue at the highest level among tourism stakeholders in the public and private sectors, academics, and other nongovernmental organizations in the Hemisphere;

UNDERSCORING the significant contribution of the tourism sector to national efforts to reduce poverty and combat social inequality; the improvement in the quality of life for tourist sending and host communities; the sustainable development of our countries, particularly in relation to job creation, leisure, recreation, and business opportunities; the development of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), particularly for social sectors in situations of vulnerability, such as women children, persons with disabilities, racial and ethnic minorities, and indigenous peoples; and the advancement and promotion of human rights and social inclusion;

RECOGNIZING that at the XX Inter-American Congress of Ministers and High-level Authorities of Tourism, "*Conscientious Tourism*," elements of a dynamic, new philosophy for tourism were considered, with particular emphasis on sustainability, ethics, and responsibility, as well as its potential as a life transforming experience;

CONSIDERING that "*Conscientious Tourism*" is a concept in the process of development that is being discussed in international forums, and considering that some countries have incorporated it into their public policies given its potential to contribute to the objectives of development and social inclusion;

RECOGNIZING that “*Conscientious Tourism*” could take into account the current and future economic, social, and environmental repercussions of tourism activity that seeks to meet the needs of visitors, host communities, the environment, and industry;

CONSIDERING further that integrating the concept of “*Conscientious Tourism*” into tourism activities could facilitate the implementation of policies and create mechanisms to effect positive change in the way tourism is practiced, and improve the well-being of our peoples;

ACKNOWLEDGING also the importance of promoting tourism through an inclusive approach as a basic and cross-cutting element of any policy;

RECOGNIZING likewise that in the Declaration of San Salvador for Sustainable Tourism Development in the Americas, the member states undertook to “facilitate policies that benefit women-owned businesses, which are a driving force of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises in the countries of the Hemisphere”;

RECALLING that the Declaration of San Salvador for Sustainable Tourism Development in the Americas recognizes “that tourism should be promoted with ethical and social responsibility, taking into account measures needed to prevent, combat, and eradicate human trafficking in all its forms, especially commercial sexual exploitation of children”;

RECOGNIZING that support for tourism operations by local communities is crucial for the creation of innovative livelihood strategies;

RECOGNIZING ALSO that tourism standards and certification criteria are an useful tool for industry bench-marking and marketing, and expressing our concern that the proliferation of sustainability certification, its criteria and its costs are, among other factors, some of the main challenges facing those that engage in tourism activities;

REITERATING the importance of intraregional tourism as an invaluable instrument of integration and knowledge among our peoples as well as the importance of fostering domestic tourism as a driving force in the economy;

RECOGNIZING that accurate information on tourism’s environmental, social, and economic impacts makes a significant contribution to responsible decision-making and the formulation and implementation of appropriate tourism policies;

EXPRESSING APPRECIATION FOR the generous contributions received from the Ministries of Tourism of Barbados, Belize, El Salvador, Mexico, and Trinidad and Tobago to provide the initial capital for the Hemispheric Tourism Fund agreed on in the Declaration of San Salvador for Sustainable Tourism Development in the Americas as a financing and cooperation mechanism to support communities that live in extreme poverty and have tourism potential in their environment but cannot fully achieve development;

WELCOMING with satisfaction the establishment of the Inter-American Committee on Tourism (CITUR), the adoption of its Rules of Procedure, and the holding of its first meeting on August 23 and 24, 2012;

RECOGNIZING the guidelines arising from the first regular meeting of CITUR for the establishment of the operational mechanism for the Hemispheric Tourism Fund;

THEREFORE, WE, THE MINISTERS AND HIGH-LEVEL AUTHORITIES OF TOURISM OF THE MEMBER STATES:

1. REITERATE that to promote sustainable tourism, we must combat the serious problems of poverty, social exclusion, and inequity, through approaches that recognize the need for responsible and ethical use of tourism resources by the sector's various stakeholders involved.

2. ENCOURAGE dialogue, cooperation, and consultation to continue with the process of development of the concept of "*Conscientious Tourism*" among tourism stakeholders as an approach that could have a fundamental and positive impact on the well-being of sending and host communities.

3. RECOMMEND that CIDI adopt the Draft Statute of the Hemispheric Tourism Fund (CIDI/TUR-XX/doc.6/12 rev. 1) and the Proposed Rules of Procedure for the Presentation of Projects for the Hemispheric Tourism Fund (CIDI/TUR-XX/doc.6/12 rev. 1) with a view to adopting them as soon as possible.

4. INSTRUCT the Inter-American Committee on Tourism (CITUR), with the support of the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development (SEDI) of the OAS General Secretariat, through its Department of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism:

- a. To follow up on the mandates emanating from previous meetings of the Inter-American Travel Congress.
- b. To prepare an annual work plan in order to have an instrument to promote the development of the tourism sector in the Americas.
- c. To formulate a strategy to promote the participation of associate members, in accordance with Article 19 of the Rules of Procedure of CITUR, in its activities.
- d. To prepare, within the framework of its annual work plan, a strategy to increase voluntary contributions to the Hemispheric Tourism Fund.
- e. To report to the XXI Inter-American Congress of Ministers and High-level Authorities of Tourism on the execution of the Hemispheric Tourism Fund.
- f. To promote, in coordination with the pertinent areas of the OAS, the creation of mechanisms for sharing experiences involving public policies and best practices for strengthening, articulating and monitoring actions undertaken by member states to prevent, combat and eradicate human trafficking in all its forms, especially the sexual exploitation of children during travel and tourism

5. COMMITTED , as part of the process of developing the concept of “*Conscientious Tourism*,” to the development of ethical, responsible, and sustainable tourism in our nations, we consider it important to:

- a. Foster tourism sector cooperation policies, programs, and projects that emphasize the cross-cutting nature of tourism and its relationship to other economic and social development sectors in our countries.
- b. Continue, as appropriate, with the process of development of the concept of “*Conscientious Tourism*” that would emphasize the concepts of responsible, ethical, sustainable, and inclusive tourism and that emphasizes the importance of the life experience that tourism imparts and its potential to be a transformative experience for the individual.
- c. Promote a responsible and ethical approach to sustainable tourism development which continues the process of development of the concept of “*Conscientious Tourism*” with a view to engendering more equitable and inclusive economic development that contributes effectively to the reduction of poverty and inequality.
- d. Urge all tourism stakeholders to include ethics, responsibility, and sustainability in all their actions in the sector and to consider the principles of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism contained in United Nations General Assembly Resolution 56/212.
- e. Promote gender equity and empowerment of women as a mechanism to expand the positive impact of tourism development.
- f. Promote the strengthening of policies and actions among member states to ensure that tourism is not used for human trafficking in any of its forms, especially sexual exploitation of minors.
- g. Encourage the development of community tourism operations through, *inter alia*, the sharing of successful experiences and the promotion of joint activities.
- h. Foster cooperation at the regional and hemispheric levels to encourage tourism that is accessible to persons with disabilities and to senior citizens.
- i. Promote initiatives that foster and facilitate local, regional, and intraregional tourism, recognizing its importance to integration and knowledge among our peoples.
- j. Adopt measures to support responsible decision-making and the formulation and implementation of policies that promote tourism through, *inter alia*, the development of tourism information systems, tourism satellite accounts,

tourism observatories and mechanisms for research and compilation of accurate information on tourism's environmental, social, and economic impacts.

- k. Accept with satisfaction the offer of the Republic of Honduras to hold the XXI Inter-American Congress of Ministers and High-level Authorities of Tourism in 2013.

6. THANK the Government and the people of Ecuador for their warm and generous hospitality and for their commitment and contribution to the success of the XX Inter-American Congress of Ministers and High-level Authorities of Tourism in the framework of the OAS.