



Declaration of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) and the World Federation of Friends of Museums (WFFM) for worldwide Sustainable Cultural Tourism. (December 2007)

ICOM and WFFM have made it their self-imposed ethical mission to ensure that tourism interacts respectfully with cultures around the world, and that attitudes and approaches take into consideration not only tangible and intangible heritage, but the cultural present as well. Knowledge of tourist destinations, of their surrounding cultures, their natural -historic heritage and their areas of special scientific importance and beauty should increase understanding amongst the local population thus strengthening their self-confidence and cultural identity

Sustainable Cultural Tourism affects many groups, such as tourists, local population, museums, archaeological sites, landscapes, tourism agents and authorities.

Therefore, it is necessary to raise awareness on this matter among all groups and advise them on good managing practices. Sustainable Cultural Tourism does not affect only tourists visiting foreign countries as it is hinted on the document "The responsible tourist and traveller". There is also a great number of domestic tourists (scholars, associations....) that affect museums and monuments in the same way.

In order to achieve these aims, museums need to address tourists more directly than they have done to date. A museum's educational content should contribute to history, culture and the environment by promoting increased knowledge, changes in attitudes and greater tolerance. Ultimately, this leads to respect for other ways of life, religions, views and social conditions, while also making tourism more environmentally friendly.

ICOM and WFFM believe that tourists who are more knowledgeable and skilful in dealing with cultures and natural reserves contribute to sustainable, positive development as well as to protecting landscapes and societies. It is thus important to impart such knowledge and skills to tourists. This is particularly true since, frequently, as tourists, they behave in ways that compensate for their daily lives, thereby reflecting societal and educational models that do not necessarily meet the expectations or views held by those who live in the places they are visiting.

Consequently, ICOM and WFFM encourage travellers – as well as the native populations of tourist destinations – to learn about how mass tourism can lead to a "touristification" of land and societies that frequently reflects the tourists' desires (holiday culture) and affects the destination's service culture as well as its local culture in general. Travellers should be aware of the impact of tourism in economic terms; however, they also need to understand how certain tourist expectations and attitudes can threaten land and nature management, in addition to potentially causing changes in the behaviour of the populations visited. "Enjoy, not destroy" should be the ultimate aim of all those involved in tourism.

ICOM and WFFM deem that changes in attitudes and greater understanding lead to new, holistic ways of preserving ecosystems in tourist destinations, and contribute to protecting the cultural uniqueness of the visited communities as a whole (and not just of that segment of the population directly involved in tourism).

ICOM and WFFM firmly believe that museums and friends of museums can make a significant educational, cultural and political contribution to the sustainable development of tourism, thereby also helping to advance UNESCO's goals for 2005-2014, the "Decade of Education for Sustainable Development".

ICOM and WFFM consider the "Proposal for a Charter of Principles for Museums and Cultural Tourism", formulated by ICOM during a conference in Bolivia and Peru in 2000, a shared framework for future efforts on behalf of Sustainable Cultural Tourism. Some paragraphs should be taken into special consideration:

Introduction

" Cultural heritage cannot become a consumer product nor can its relationship with the visitor be superficial. If the tourist is able to identify with the heritage, he can appreciate its value and the importance of preserving it and therefore become an ally of the museums. "

Principle nº 3

" In regards to cultural tourism, museums should encourage the active participation of the local communities in the planning of both heritage management and the operations of tourist venues"

"Museums should encourage the communities to manage their cultural heritage, for which they should encourage suitable training."

Principle nº 4

" It is important to plan tours using temporary programmes which are restricted to satisfy both the leisure periods of the local inhabitants and offer alternatives for foreign tourist.

Museums and cultural tourism should encourage the interaction between visitors in a framework of respect towards the values and the hospitality that are offered."

ICOM and WFFM also recognise the documents drafted by the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) in 1999 ("Code of Ethics for Tourism", adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2001) in which it is stated *"that Tourism policies and activities should be conducted with respect for the artistic, archaeological and cultural heritage, which they should protect and pass on to future generations; particular care should be devoted to preserving and upgrading monuments, shrines and museums as well...."* and in 2005 ("The Responsible Tourist and Traveller").

Both organizations firmly believe as does the "International Cultural Tourism Charter" of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), that *"conservation and Tourism Planning for Heritage Places should ensure that the Visitor Experience will be worthwhile, satisfying and enjoyable"*

UNESCO, ICOMOS, the World Tourism Organisation have all crafted tourism charters. These documents are important but appear more or less almost exclusively to focus on the host country and its institutions, highlighting what needs to be done and taking a defensive stand to protect historical and cultural assets.

But who addresses the tourists themselves? Who tries to make them part of the process? Too often the codes and strategies appear as a series of top-down statements – and treat the tourist visitor as a passive agent – indeed they make no attempt to engage the visitor. That is not to say that there are no codes of conduct for visitors.

As the third largest economic factor in the world, tourism, both domestic and international, has a global reach. Museums, which exist worldwide, affect people both in the regions where tourism originates as well as in its destinations. This gives museums a strong chance of succeeding in their educational efforts to replace rigid ideas about culture and land use with a dynamic notion of culture and environmentally sustainable nature management.

Museums should be integrated increasingly into concepts of tourism, to ensure that they have a measure of influence over economic and governmental decision-makers in planning processes, and to allow them to reach tourists more directly.

ICOM and WFFM are committed to raising the awareness of museums and of friends of museums around the world on the topic of Sustainable Cultural Tourism through the associations' global activities, including an International Museum Day.