

UNWTO adopts Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics



On 11th September, during the 23rd UNWTO General Assembly in St Petersburg, the UNWTO adopted the international Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics. This is a big step forward as UNWTO works to make the global tourism sector more ethical. The Convention on Tourism Ethics constitutes a binding instrument of great significance at a time when children are more and more vulnerable to sexual exploitation in the context of growing travel and tourism. The Convention will be open for signature by member states from 16th October 2019.

The text of the Convention on Tourism Ethics can be downloaded from the UNWTO website. The following articles refer specifically to children:

Art 5.2 refers to the promotion of the rights of children:

Tourism activities should respect the equality of men and women; they should promote human rights and, more particularly, the individual rights of the most vulnerable groups, notably children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples.

Art 5.3 refers directly to the protection of children from sexual exploitation:

The exploitation of human beings in any form, particularly sexual, especially when applied to children, conflicts with the fundamental aims of tourism and is the negation of tourism; as such, in accordance with international law, it should be energetically combated with the cooperation of all the States concerned and penalized without concession by the national legislation of both the countries visited and the countries of the perpetrators of these acts, even when they are carried out abroad.

Art 9.6 refers to the media and the ways of addressing the problem of sexual exploitation in tourism:

The press, and particularly the specialized travel press and the other media, including modern means of electronic communication, should issue honest and balanced information on events and situations that could influence the flow of tourists; they should also provide accurate and reliable information to the consumers of tourism services; the new communication and electronic commercial technologies should also be developed and used for this purpose; as is the case for the media, they should not in any way promote sexual exploitation in tourism.

This conversion of the Code of Ethics for Tourism into an international convention and its consequent ratification by UNWTO Member States is in line with the very first recommendation of the Global Study on Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism. Whereas the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics was a voluntary instrument, the Convention on Tourism Ethics as a binding instrument will help to further engage key stakeholders to protect children in travel and tourism.

Read more about The Global Study recommendations for businesses, governments and non-governmental organizations [here](#).