




International Summit on
Child Protection
in Travel and Tourism

**The International Summit on
Child Protection in Travel and Tourism**
Ágora Bogotá Convention Centre:
Bogotá DC, Colombia | 6-7 June 2018

DECLARATION AND CALL FOR ACTION for the Protection of Children in Travel and Tourism

We, the participants of the first International Summit on Child Protection in Travel and Tourism, which was hosted by the Government of Colombia, and co-organised by The World Travel and Tourism Council, ECPAT International, UNODC, UNICEF, the High Level Global Task Force on Child Protection in Travel and Tourism and ECPAT Colombia/Fundación Renacer:

Reiterate that the sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism encompasses a broad spectrum of exploitation of children; including in prostitution and pornography; for the production of online child abuse material; and in the sale and trafficking of children in all its forms; and that various travel products put children at risk of exploitation, such as voluntourism, orphanage tourism or mega events.

Recognize that the travel and tourism industry is in a unique position to identify and prevent this crime and it is a moral imperative for each of the segments, both private and public, to take an active role in eradicating the sexual exploitation of children.

Stress that the sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism is fuelled by increasing child vulnerability due to soaring poverty rates, social disparities, gender discrimination, drug and alcohol abuse, environmental degradation, HIV, displacement, migration, armed conflicts, natural disasters, some harmful social norms and societal tolerance of this crime.

Recall the Convention on the Rights of the Child as a framework instrument that defines a child as a person under 18-years-old and emphasizes the principles of non-discrimination, the right to life, survival and development, the best interests of the child, and the right to participate.

Recognize that the Summit brought together pivotal world leaders representing governments, international and regional multilateral organizations, the private sector, law enforcement agencies, child rights experts, non-governmental organizations and youth representatives. This was done to identify the action required to implement the



recommendations of the *Global Study on Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism*, (which are aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals) - and to develop a roadmap to address this persistent worldwide challenge.

Highlight that the Global Study, which was produced and widely disseminated in cooperation with 67 partners worldwide documents the continued growth of the sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism, the increasing numbers of child victims, and the global and evolving nature of this crime in an increasingly globalized and interconnected world.

Affirm the conclusions of the Global Study, which include, but are not limited to:

- The vulnerability of children has increased as the number of travellers and tourists has more than doubled in the last 20 years. This has been exacerbated by the rapid development of the ICT sector and the increasing expansion of social networks that facilitate easier contact with children in all parts of the world.
- No region is untouched and no country is immune to this crime – as the travel and tourism sector is expected to continue to expand and diversify in the future.
- Most offenders sexually exploit children because they have the opportunity to do so, as there is a prevailing perception of impunity and anonymity. There is no typical offender – the sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism involves not only tourists but also business travellers, transient workers or volunteers that exploit children in various settings – often with the support of suppliers and intermediaries.
- The sexual exploitation of children is not just about international tourists, as regional and domestic travellers commit the vast majority of offences throughout the world.
- The sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism is multi-dimensional and involves different manifestations of often interlinked forms, including trafficking for sexual purposes, sexual exploitation of children for prostitution, online child sexual exploitation and early or forced child marriage.
- Although significant progress has been made over the past years towards better protection of children from the sexual exploitation in travel and tourism, the global situation continues to exacerbate risks. Governments, NGOs and other organizations face multi-faceted challenges in tackling these crimes due to insufficient multi-stakeholder cooperation across sectors, along with fragmented approaches that do not take into account its multidimensional nature.

Emphasize that the increasing vulnerability of children worldwide is linked with complex risk factors, such as conflict, migration, displacement, living in child care institutions, orphanages or on the streets, that deprive them of a protective environment.



Note with concern that the sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism is under-reported and under-prosecuted – often due to social tolerance, cultural taboo, fear of reporting cases and obstacles to accessing the justice system. These factors intensify the feeling of anonymity and impunity of offenders.

Also note that the Global Study provides comprehensive guidance for establishing a child-rights centred, multi-stakeholder plan of action for the effective and sustainable protection of children in travel and tourism.

Acknowledge the benefits to national economies from travel and tourism but recognize that the expansion of the industry increases potential risks of the sexual exploitation of children.

Recognize the critical role played by each of the participants of the Summit, representing governments, the private sector, law enforcement agencies, UN agencies, civil society organizations, and youth, as a catalyst of change in the promotion of child protection in travel and tourism.

Emphasize the central role of children in promoting their rights in the context of travel and tourism.

Emphasize the crucial role of governments, and in particular Ministries of Tourism (or their equivalents) in cooperation with justice, law enforcement and social sectors, in prioritizing child protection and the elimination of all forms of violence against children within tourism and travel agendas in particular in accordance with Sustainable Development Goals 5, 8 and 16.

Emphasize the key role played by the travel and tourism sector, and related industries, including information technology, in strengthening the protection of children from the sexual exploitation in travel and tourism, recognising, in particular, good practices implemented by hotels, airlines, travel agencies, tour operators, taxi companies and others from all over the world that serve as model for travel and tourism sectors.

Emphasize the importance of regional intergovernmental bodies in undertaking efforts to protect children in travel and tourism.

Recognize the role of the civil society organizations in protecting children from sexual exploitation in travel and tourism and providing direct help to child victims – as well as encouraging cooperation among various stakeholders, including mobilizing and supporting the private sector in advancing responsible business practices towards child protection.



Value the leadership of the *High Level Global Task Force on Child Protection in Travel and Tourism* that guided the development of the *Global Study on the Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism* and later shifted its mandate to the elimination of sexual exploitation of children through the implementation of the recommendations of the *Global Study*.

Reaffirm strong commitments by leaders and international experts representing some private sector, law enforcement agencies, international and regional bodies, as well as INGOs active in the field, to address the sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism (as discussed at the “Transition Meeting” hosted by the UNWTO in July 2017 in Madrid).

Recognize that a number of joint initiatives linked to child protection in travel and tourism have already been successfully implemented in many countries, such as the work that UNODC and UNICEF are doing supported by the European Union under GLO.ACT on victim support services and relevant government authorities to develop frameworks for the protection and assistance of children.

Recall the *Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations 'Protect, Respect and Remedy' Framework* and *Children's Rights and Business Principles*, which provide a framework for business to respect and support children's rights.

Stress the significance of transforming the *Code of Ethics for Tourism* into an international convention, known as the *UNWTO Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics*.

Recall the legacy of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development 2017, which called for tourism industry to lead sustainable development with the slogan “Leaving no one behind” including children.

Stress that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development enshrines specific targets related to ending all forms of violence against children (5.2, 8.7, 16.2) and promoting development of sustainable tourism (8.9, 12b) that are interrelated.

Highlight the strategic opportunity in 2019 provided by the UN High-Level Political Forum to assess progress towards the elimination of sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism as one of the forms of violence specifically mentioned by the Sustainable Development Goal 16, target 16.2 in the 2030 Agenda.

Recognize that the development and implementation of global, national and regional strategies to advance the 2030 Agenda offers an opportunity to strengthen cross-sectoral and cross-regional partnerships, which are necessary to protect children from sexual exploitation in travel and tourism.



Recall the need to ratify and implement other international instruments and revise national laws accordingly, including:

- The Optional Protocol to the CRC on a Communications Procedure (OP3 CRC), 2014;
- The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, 2000;
- The ILO Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour No.182;
- The following Council of Europe Conventions: Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, CETS No.201, 2007 (Lanzarote Convention); Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, CETS No. 197, 2005 and Convention on Cybercrime, CETS No. 185, 2001; and
- The United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime and the United Nations Trafficking in Persons Protocol, to combat organized crime to investigate and prosecute child traffickers and child sex offenders.

Recall the United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/64/293 where the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons was adopted in 2010 and where a call was made to address the social, economic, cultural, political and other factors as well as eliminate the culture of tolerance towards violence that make young people and children vulnerable to being trafficked.

Acknowledge that 2019 will see the 30th anniversary of the Convention of the Rights of the Child, which provides an opportunity to spur accelerated action to ensure the right of every child to live free from all forms of sexual exploitation.

Reiterate the urgent need for accelerated action to protect children in travel and tourism.

We call upon all key stakeholders to adopt a comprehensive, child rights-centred multi-stakeholder framework where all key actors actively **work together to end impunity for travelling child sex offenders**, through:

- **Strong and sustainable evidence-based awareness** that will inform and mobilize key actors, including communities, families and children to end societal tolerance to the sexual exploitation in travel and tourism and open a constructive dialogue with the media on the need to enhance child protection in travel and tourism and promote the use of the appropriate terminology.



Multi-stakeholder actions:
 Launch a global campaign;
 Create a central repository of existing resources to make them accessible to provide practical guidance.

- **Proactive, comprehensive, context specific and sustainable prevention** based on identifying and tackling underlying risk factors, empowering children as actors in child rights protection, and promoting self-regulatory mechanisms, codes of conduct and other standards on child protection to respond to existing and new forms of the exploitation of children in the context of travel and tourism.

Multi-stakeholder action:
 Train relevant key stakeholders for a common and appropriate understanding of the sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism along with the implementation of standards on child protection across the travel and tourism sector.

- **Strong and effective legal frameworks** ensuring the protection of children and the prosecution of offenders; increasing cooperation between law enforcement and the justice system for successful cross-border investigations.

Multi-stakeholder actions:
 Strengthen or develop operational reporting systems such as helplines, hotlines and online reporting platforms; Establish standards to report cases of the sexual exploitation in travel and tourism and engage the public to actively use reporting mechanisms; Ensure that law enforcement is well-resourced and trained to identify, investigate and use child-friendly methods when dealing with child victims and witnesses.

- **Access to child and gender sensitive justice, protection, comprehensive care and full recovery** for children by providing special and prompt protection and assistance that is appropriate to prevent further victimization and trauma.

Multi-stakeholder action:
 Ensure financial and human resources for appropriate and long term medical and psycho-social support for children taken into account along with reintegration, psychological and physical issues potentially faced by victims.



Appreciate the contributions from all the partners and participants, and the multi-stakeholder dialogue that was scaled-up with the first International Summit on Child Protection in Travel and Tourism.

We reaffirm our commitment to build upon this Declaration and the Call to Action of the Summit to ensure the protection of children in travel and tourism and to end impunity.