**78th UNGA Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

**“Tourism and the rights of Indigenous Peoples”.**

**Submission of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)**

UNWTO collaborates with indigenous peoples guided by the principles of UNDRIP, the **Global Code of Ethics for Tourism[[1]](#footnote-1)** and the **Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics[[2]](#footnote-2)**The Code makes a reference to the role of tourism stakeholders in protecting and respecting the cultures of indigenous people, their rights and their ancestral traditions.

The World Indigenous Tourism Alliance (WINTA) has been UNWTO’s key partners ever since UNWTO supported the Larrakia Declaration, through its Executive Council in 2012. The Declaration underlines the respect for human rights and indigenous leadership when developing indigenous tourism operations.

The UNWTO General Assembly adopted in 2019 a set of the baseline **UNWTO Recommendations on Sustainable Development of Indigenous Tourism[[3]](#footnote-3)**, upon their endorsement by the **World Committee on Tourism Ethics**[[4]](#footnote-4). These Recommendations were developed in partnership with key global indigenous leaders in tourism. Their aim is to encourage tourism businesses to develop their operations in a responsible and sustainable manner, while enabling indigenous communities that wish to open up to tourism to take a full grasp of opportunities, following a thorough consultation process. The first Recommendations of UNWTO in the indigenous development sphere, stress the need to develop equitable partnerships, to ensure an enhanced economic benefit and to protect cultural and natural resources. This guidance document also calls for timely identifying, preventing, and curbing any adverse impact of tourism on key resources and the indigenous way of life.

UNWTO partnered with the World Indigenous Tourism Alliance (WINTA) in 2021 to publish the **UNWTO Inclusive Recovery Guide focused on Indigenous Communities[[5]](#footnote-5)**, with the view to address the socio-cultural impacts of COVID-19 on indigenous peoples in relation to tourism. These Recommendations advocated for putting the indigenous knowledge and cultural capital at the centre of the recovery plans and future partnerships. UNWTO and WINTA, who also benefitted from inputs of OECD, insisted on monitoring the impact of tourism on the indigenous cultures and the biodiversity that indigenous livelihoods depend on.

From 2021 to 2022, UNWTO conducted a **Weaving the Recovery[[6]](#footnote-6)** pilot project, focusing on the inclusion of indigenous women master weavers and artisans in the tourism value chain. The project was selected by the Paris Peace Forum 2020, as one of the ten most promising global initiatives, out of 800 presented projects, to tackle global governance challenges. UNWTO partnered with leading civil society organizations in Mexico for the pilot and created a fruitful alliance with the French Embassy, GSMA representing the mobile communications industry and American Movil, to secure donations of tablets for indigenous women of Chiapas and Veracruz, aimed at accessing vital training and new sales channels. The same groups of women received an introductory training on e-commerce, digital marketing and the use of social media.

In March 2023, UNWTO published its first **Compendium of Good Practices in Indigenous Tourism[[7]](#footnote-7)**, in partnership with WINTA, with a special focus on the Americas. The partners developed a conceptual framework illustrating a wide range of issues, including the awareness-raising and the contribution of destinations and visitors, to the safeguarding, conservation, and management of cultural and biocultural heritage of indigenous, communities. Other key topics, such as women's empowerment, entrepreneurship, governance within protected areas or an improved distribution of tourism benefits, are also being tackled in the publication. Besides providing case studies from 10 countries and a sound analysis of different policies, the highlight of this research has been putting forward a series of Recommendations for National Tourism Administrations and Destination Management Organizations. Finally, the report features basic recommendations for tourists engaging in indigenous tourism.

1. <https://www.unwto.org/global-code-of-ethics-for-tourism> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.unwto.org/ethics-convention> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. World Tourism Organization (2019), Recommendations on Sustainable Development of Indigenous Tourism, UNWTO, Madrid, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284421299> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <https://www.unwto.org/world-committee-tourism-ethics> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. World Tourism Organization (2021), UNWTO Inclusive Recovery Guide – Sociocultural Impacts of Covid-19, Issue 4: Indigenous Communities, UNWTO, Madrid, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284422852> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. <https://www.unwto.org/weaving-the-recovery-indigenous-women-in-tourism> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/10.18111/9789284424184> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)