



A/RES/578(XVIII)

**Declaration on the facilitation of tourist travel**

Agenda item 20  
(document A/18/20)

The General Assembly,

Having taken cognizance of the report of the Secretary-General on this matter,

Having before it the Declaration on the facilitation of tourist travel approved by the Executive Council at its eighty-fifth session,

1. Approves the attached text of the Declaration;
2. Recognizes that the Declaration is of a purely recommendatory nature and has no binding force and is conscious that the facilitation of tourist travel is a continuous process, which should be under periodic review;
3. Requests the Secretary-General to disseminate the Declaration to countries, the media and other interested parties;
4. Entrusts the Secretary-General of UNWTO to:
  - (a) seek advice from the World Committee on Tourism Ethics to further examine ways to facilitate tourist travel;
  - (b) promote the principles set in the Declaration, including the use of modern information and communication technologies, in relation with travel advisories and visa facilitation;
  - (c) encourage all possibilities of organizing information exchanges, training sessions and other activities beneficial to all Member States and to provide them with technical assistance if they so require;
  - (d) advise UNWTO Member States to encourage all stakeholders in tourism to observe and follow the recommendations contained in this Declaration; and
  - (e) report to its the next session on the follow up of the present Declaration.
5. Warmly thanks the members of the Working Group for the work they have accomplished and pays tribute to Ms. Blanka Belosevic for her performance as Chair of the Group on behalf of Croatia.

**ANNEX****DECLARATION ON THE FACILITATION OF TOURIST TRAVEL**

The General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization,

*Convinced* that the facilitation of tourist travel contributes to the development of the tourism sector and, beyond that, to international understanding, peace, prosperity, and universal respect for and observance of human liberties, without distinction as to race, gender, language or religion, in accordance with the mission of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO),

*Considering* that, despite the great strides made in recent decades in facilitating tourist travel, there is still room for considerable progress in this area in the interests of all stakeholders in tourism development,

*Bearing in mind* its earlier resolutions on the facilitation of tourism development, and in particular resolutions 139 (V), 180 (VI) and 243 (VIII), as well as the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism,

*Concerned* about the need to further facilitate tourist movements throughout the world,

**DECLARES THE FOLLOWING:**

1.1. Member States of UNWTO and all tourism stakeholders should take all possible measures to facilitate tourist travel.

1.2. To that end, they commit to consider all possible means to eliminate or reduce barriers to tourist travel of a legal, financial, or technical nature that are not strictly indispensable to maintain security, safety, health and public order.

1.3. Member States of UNWTO, undertake to give priority consideration to measures to facilitate tourist travel and to encourage all tourism stakeholders to do so, especially in the following areas:

- Travel advisories;
- Visa issuance modalities (with the exception of basic conditions for such issuance, which do not fall within the mandate of UNWTO);
- Tourist travel by persons with disabilities;
- Tourist travel by persons affected by the HIV virus.

**2. Travel Advisories**

2.1. *Aware* that travel advisories have an undeniable role to play in providing useful information to protect citizens when travelling abroad, the General Assembly also

acknowledges that they can have serious consequences for tourism activity and the economies of countries and destinations.

2.2. The General Assembly therefore reaffirms the provisions of paragraph 5 of Article 6 of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism:

“Governments have the right – and the duty - especially in a crisis, to inform their nationals of the difficult circumstances, or even the dangers they may encounter during their travels abroad; it is their responsibility however to issue such information without prejudicing in an unjustified or exaggerated manner the tourism industry of the host countries and the interests of their own operators; the contents of travel advisories should therefore be discussed beforehand with the authorities of the host countries and the professionals concerned; recommendations formulated should be strictly proportionate to the gravity of the situations encountered and confined to the geographical areas where the insecurity has arisen; such advisories should be qualified or cancelled as soon as a return to normality permits”.

2.3. UNWTO Member States issuing travel advisories in respect of third countries, are called upon to commit to consult as widely as possible with the governments of these countries and destinations, especially on the safety and security aspects of each tourist region in the country, and to update the relevant information at regular intervals, at least every six months.

2.4. The General Assembly also reaffirms the full validity of the guiding principles for official travel advisories attached to its resolution 508 (XVI), adopted during its session in Dakar, Senegal, (2005) and, in addition, calls upon Member States to consider other relevant recommendations issued by other competent organizations.

### **3. Visa issuance**

3.1. The General Assembly reaffirms the sovereign right of States to control the access of foreign nationals to their territories—notably by means of visa policies, which they have the authority to determine freely, unilaterally, or in cooperation with other States. The General Assembly recognizes the discretionary authority of States in this regard, yet it considers that improving visa issuance modalities could help facilitate tourist travel significantly.

3.2. *Convinced* that tourist travel could be greatly facilitated by measures that can be implemented easily and without detriment to this discretionary authority, the General Assembly calls upon Member States, whenever possible and taking consideration of the respective legislation, to adopt measures to simplify visa application and processing formalities and to improve the timeliness of visa issuance,

### **4. Persons with disabilities**

4.1. *Deeply convinced* that the facilitation of tourist travel by persons with disabilities is a major element of any responsible tourism development policy.

4.2. *Bearing in mind* the Preamble of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of 30 March 2007, which recognizes "the importance of

mainstreaming disability issues as an integral part of relevant strategies of sustainable development", the General Assembly recalls that responsible tourism is a necessary component of such strategies and that great efforts should be made to ensure that tourism policies and practices are inclusive of persons with disabilities, the majority of whom live in developing countries.

4.3. The General Assembly furthermore solemnly reaffirms the principles it enunciated at its session in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 1991 (A/RES/284(IX), entitled "Creating Tourism Opportunities for Handicapped People in the Nineties."), and which were updated at its session in Dakar, Senegal, (in resolution A/RES/492(XVI), entitled "Accessible Tourism for All") and again calls upon all States:

- to make their tourism sites and establishments accessible to persons with disabilities and to offer them special facilities at no additional charge to them;
- to offer special training to the staff of tourism sites and establishments and tourism related services, preparing them for work with persons with disabilities; and
- to publish clear and detailed information on existing receptive facilities for persons with disabilities as well as the problems they may encounter during their tourist travel.

4.4. It also endorses the general principles enshrined in Article 3 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and invites all States to implement them. It also draws attention to the work which is being done by the Inter-Agency Support Group for the Convention.

4.5. It requests the Secretary-General of UNWTO:

- to consult with representative non-governmental organizations active in the area of assistance for persons with disabilities in order to determine more precisely what role UNWTO could play in this field and to communicate the results of these consultations to the Executive Council; and
- to arrange for the UNWTO to be represented at meetings of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities when it examines the provisions of the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* relevant to the UNWTO's mandate.

## **5. Persons affected by the HIV virus**

5.1. *Concerned* by the restrictions on tourist travel by persons affected by the HIV virus, the General Assembly decides to remain seized of the matter, taking into account the recommendations of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics.

## **6. Finally**

6.1. While the present Declaration is of a purely recommendatory nature and has no binding force, the General Assembly is conscious that the facilitation of tourist travel is a continuous process, which should be under periodic review.

6.2. To this end, the General Assembly entrusts the Secretary-General of UNWTO to:

- (a) seek advice from the World Committee on Tourism Ethics to further examine ways to facilitate tourist travel;
- (b) promote the principles above, including the use of modern information and communication technologies, in relation with travel advisories and visa facilitation;
- (c) encourage all possibilities of organizing information exchanges, training sessions and other activities beneficial to all Member States and to provide them with technical assistance if they so require;
- (d) advise UNWTO Member States to encourage all stakeholders in tourism to observe and follow the recommendations contained in this Declaration; and
- (e) report to its the next session on the follow up of the present Declaration.