



## **Phnom Penh Declaration On Community Development through Tourism**

The International Conference on Community Development through Tourism, held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia from 16-17 September 2014, organized by the Royal Government of Cambodia, in collaboration with the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) and the University of the Sunshine Coast (USC).

The event brought together *over 200 participants from* tourism authorities, community tourism experts and practitioners from *28 nations* to discuss various aspects of community based tourism and development. The aim of the conference was to present case studies, examine the mechanisms (both institutional and practical) that have led to successful inclusion of stakeholders, implementation, and analysis of the lessons learned in developing community based tourism enterprises.

The conference also provided a platform for sharing and collating information with a view of providing input to the development of the Phnom Penh Declaration on Community Development through Tourism, which in turn will contribute to the success and development of community based tourism initiatives. Above all, community based tourism aims to sustain our communities and their unique attributes, conserve and protect their natural environment and cultural resources, foster knowledge exchange, and promote local socio-economic development, capacity building, empowerment, and poverty reduction.

Those in attendance resolved to adopt the principles to guide the development of community development through tourism through the following declaration.

### **Recognizing:**

- The principles and guidelines for community development through tourism, hereinafter community based tourism, fall under the principles and guidelines for social responsibility and holistically sustainable and responsible development across all sectors;
- The potential for the socio-economic development of communities through the implementation of initiatives under these principles and guidelines;
- The work of UNWTO, UNESCO, UNEP, and other UN agencies in promoting sustainable and responsible tourism in partnership with tourism stakeholders across all sectors;
- The work of ASEAN in developing community based tourism standards as part of its ASEAN Tourism Standards Program;



- The affirmed global commitment to building a green economy to achieve sustainable development and poverty alleviation, through Agenda 21, the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg), the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), the subsequent High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, and the processes in developing a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which build upon the Millennium Development Goals and converges with the post 2015 development agenda;
- The UNWTO's Global Code of Ethics, which is a comprehensive set of principles designed to guide key players in tourism development in maximizing the sector's benefits while minimizing its potentially negative impact on the environment, cultural heritage, and societies across the globe;
- The Cape Town Declaration on Responsible Tourism in Destinations, which outlines principles and guidelines in development strategies for sustainable and responsible tourism;
- The Larrakia Declaration on the Development of Indigenous Tourism, which asserts that the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples provides the foundation for advancement of global indigenous tourism, and supports control by indigenous peoples over developments affecting them and their lands, territories, and resources;
- The existing work that has already been done in establishing standards for community based tourism;
- The diversity of the world's cultures, habitats and species, and the wealth of cultural and natural heritage that underpins tourism;
- The importance and value of harmonious multi-stakeholder partnerships involving host communities, community trusts, non-governmental organizations and relevant associations, academia, politicians and government officials at all levels, social service providers and civil society organizations, private sector, donors and supporting agencies, and visitors, which allow responsible tourism to flourish;
- Environmental and community health are fundamental to the success of community based tourism initiatives;
- That this Declaration and aims to reflect universal core values of the idea of a community.

### **Recognizing Community Based Tourism (CBT):**

- Is also known as community based eco-tourism, community tourism, community based sustainable tourism;

- Is a form of socially responsible tourism development with the potential to contribute substantially to local socio-economic development, including capacity building, empowerment, and poverty reduction;
- Occurs where tourism activities are operated, for the most part, by local community members, and where the local host community is empowered and has at least partial ownership and/or management of the tourism product and/or service;
- Can provide benefits to the host community as a whole through enhancing local prosperity, generating and diversifying income, and increasing job opportunities;
- Is environmentally sustainable and responsible tourism that protects the natural resources, biodiversity, and ecosystems of the host community;
- Respects, celebrates, and contributes to the protection of tangible and intangible cultural heritage resources (e.g. attractions, relics, history, traditional culture, rituals, wisdom, values, and language);
- Is a form of tourism where visitors travel to a local community that welcomes outsiders and invites them to learn about and experience the authentic lifestyle of that particular community;
- Builds awareness and facilitates mutual, cross-cultural learning, and gives the host community a sense of pride and place.

### **Definition:**

Community based tourism (CBT) is tourism activity, community owned and operated, and managed or coordinated at the community level that contributes to the well-being of communities through supporting sustainable livelihoods and protecting valued socio-cultural traditions and natural and cultural heritage resources.

### **Principles**

Community Based Tourism:

- Involves and empowers a community to ensure ownership and transparent management,
- Establishes partnerships with relevant stakeholders,
- Has standing with relevant authorities,
- Improves social well-being and maintains human dignity,
- Includes a fair and transparent benefit sharing mechanism,
- Enhances linkages to local and regional economies,
- Respects local culture and tradition,
- Contributes to natural resource conservation,



- Improves the quality of visitor experiences by strengthening meaningful host and guest interactions, and
- Works towards financial self-sufficiency.

## Guidelines

CBT should be holistically sustainable, considering people, planet, and profit in the triple-bottom line approach to sustainability.

### 1. **CBT enterprises in their socio-political context:**

- 1.1 Involve and empower local communities as a whole:
  - a. Includes the community in the decision making, planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation process;
  - b. Community has right to self-governance and legal recognition from relevant authorities;
- 1.2 Exist in an environment of transparency and political stability;
- 1.3 Facilitate development of appropriate infrastructure: physical, technological, and regulatory:
  - a. Regulations and strategy at all political levels (local, municipal, regional, state, national) are aligned;
  - b. Policy supports development of community based tourism;
  - c. Taxes are not prohibitive;
  - d. Government/policy does not impose legal burden.

### 2. **CBT enterprises as part of a destination:**

- 2.1 Is integrated in the vision, mission, and strategic plans for the destination;
- 2.2 Promotes and preserves the uniqueness, integrity, pride, and authenticity of the area, destination, and community through quality and authentic community tourism products and services ;
- 2.3 Addresses implementation challenges in the local context by:
  - a. Considering carrying capacity, seasonality, skills needs, accessibility, financing needs, and land rights of the host community;
  - b. Monitoring and evaluating positive and negative impacts through assessment with appropriate indicators;
  - c. Responding to evaluations with actions that address negative impacts and reinforce positive impacts;
  - d. Establishing a local mechanism to manage tourism and community development, which mitigates conflicts and disasters, safeguards and strengthens community tourism management and stakeholder participation;



2.4 Promotes host community and visitor benefits: cultural exchange, shared learning, mutual respect, peace and tolerance, and international friendship.

**3. CBT enterprise management:**

3.1 Has good governance and is managed and owned by and with consent and voluntary participation of the community, with the community's best interests in mind ("do no harm");

3.2 Applies sound business knowledge and practices:

- a. Provides quality, authentic community based tourism products and services;
- b. Has good market access, and community based tourism products and services that are financially and commercially viable and self-sufficient;
- c. Supports the tourism value chain by providing a diversity of tourism product offerings;
- d. Provides interpretation as a vehicle to strengthen positive interaction between host and guest;

3.3 Conforms to ethical business practices:

- a. Applies fair practices to human resources, including fair wages and hours, and appropriate facilities for staff;
- b. Abides by health, safety, and hygiene standards.

**4. Social responsibilities of CBT enterprises include:**

4.1 Respecting, celebrating, and contributing to the protection of tangible and intangible cultural heritage resources:

- a. Is sensitive to and respects local lifestyle, social structure, cultural concerns;
- b. Promotes preservation and awareness of local ethnic and traditional culture, attractions, relics, history, rituals, wisdom, values, and language;

4.2 Respecting community aspirations for modernization and development

- a. Respects cultural differences and human dignity;
- b. Community is empowered and has a sense of ownership and has rights in tourism resource management;
- c. Community wants to participate in its own development;
- d. Development improves quality of life and boosts social equity;

4.3 Facilitating knowledge transfer, information flow, and human capital development

4.4 Collaborating with all stakeholders, including host communities, community trusts, non-governmental organizations and relevant associations, academia, politicians and government officials at all levels, social service providers and civil society organizations, private sector, donors and supporting agencies, and visitors;

- a. Stakeholders are in regular contact with each other and respectful of differing views.

**5. Environmental responsibilities of CBT enterprises include:**



- 5.1 Protecting the natural resources, biodiversity, and ecosystem of the host community:
  - a. All CBT activities are underscored by policies of environmental protection, conservation of local biodiversity, and local natural resources;
  - b. Environmental sustainability and sustainable use of natural resources is ensured or improved;
  - c. Standards and policies exist for the management of water, waste, air, and local ecosystems, including wildlife and vegetation;
- 5.2 Considering the significance of natural heritage to the local community:
  - a. Local community is aware of and participates in ecotourism initiatives;
- 5.3 Recognizing environmental limitations and is disaster prepared;
- 5.4 Procurement and supply chain that supports local products that are environmentally friendly.

**6. Economic responsibilities of CBT enterprises include:**

- 6.1 Establishing and enhancing linkages to the local and regional economy:
  - a. Provides income generation and diversity of employment opportunities;
  - b. Leakages are reduced by engaging local community in providing ancillary products and services;
- 6.2 Providing equitable benefits to the host community:
  - a. Fair share of profits are reinvested in community;
  - b. Profits from CBT activities contribute to a community fund for the welfare and development of the community;
  - c. Investment incentives and finances are available to facilitate entrepreneurship, joint ventures, and stronger market power;
  - d. Systems and mechanisms are in place for managing income from CBT activities and reinvesting in the community;
- 6.3 Providing opportunity for women, youths, rural, poor, and otherwise disadvantaged or marginalized local populations by creating employment prospects and other gainful, income-generating opportunities.

**7. External needs of CBT enterprises include:**

- 7.1 Guiding standards for CBT management and operations:
  - a. Standards should be adapted to meet the local community's needs and realistic capabilities;
  - b. Community receives assistance in implementing standards;
- 7.2 Community receives supplementary assistance in contributing to the process of community development, local socio-economic development, including capacity building, empowerment, and poverty reduction;
- 7.3 Community receives supplementary assistance in increasing interaction with stakeholders, including host communities, community trusts, non-governmental

organizations and relevant associations, academia, politicians and government officials at all levels, social service providers and civil society organizations, private sector, donors and supporting agencies, and visitors;

7.4 Community receives assistance in careful management and implementation of holistically sustainable, responsible, and CBT practices and principles:

- a. Strengthening of local institutions in management and development of infrastructure, preferential policy;
- b. Integration of organizational management, research, partnership development and networking, marketing, and promotion;
- c. Benchmarking, monitoring, and evaluation;
- d. Implementation standards for quality and authentic CBT products;

7.5 Community receives assistance to encourage local entrepreneurship and increased private sector involvement to:

- a. Promote increased market access;
- b. Increase product diversity and quality;
- c. Support and encourage investment in CBT;
- d. Facilitate development and delivery of CBT product;

7.6 Increased contributions from government at all levels to support policy framework and infrastructure to favour and ensure the sustainability of CBT;

7.7 Greater support for environmental and natural resource protection programs, and awareness of conservation and biodiversity amongst both locals and visitors;

7.8 Greater support to preserve and respect local tangible and intangible cultural heritage resources: attractions, relics, history, traditional culture, rituals, wisdom, values, and language;

7.9 Strengthened education and training; the need remains for a skilled or well-trained and rewarded workforce; and capacity building for:

- a. Principles and practices of community tourism;
- b. Partnership building and collaborative management involving all stakeholders;
- c. Business skills: ethical and responsible business practices, business strategy and planning, operations and administration, financing and accounting, product development, marketing and communications;
- d. Tourism-related skills: guiding, responsible tourism, customer service and hospitality;
- e. Interest-specific: environmental stewardship, volunteer tourism, child protection, animal welfare and marine tourism, indigenous tourism, responsible donations, etc.;
- f. Benchmarking, monitoring and evaluation, reporting;
- g. Advocacy, policy, and navigating the legal system;
- h. Health, safety, and security
- i. Language



7.10 Assistance with facilitating cultural exchange, peace, and tolerance between hosts and visitors.

We, in attendance at the International Conference on Community Development through Tourism, hereby resolve to adopt the principles and guidelines set forth in this document. We commit ourselves to address the needs of community based tourism, thereby addressing the need to sustain our communities and their unique attributes, conserve and protect their natural environment and cultural resources, foster knowledge exchange, and promote local socio-economic development, capacity building, empowerment, and poverty reduction.

Phnom Penh, 17<sup>th</sup> September 2014