

FORUM: United Nations World Tourism Organization

QUESTION OF: Discussing the promotion of ecotourism as a tool for biodiversity conservation

SUBMITTED BY: Ukraine

CO-SUBMITTERS: DRC, France, Germany, Greece, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Switzerland

THE UNITED NATIONS WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION,

Recognizing that threats to biodiversity posed by unsustainable tourism can contribute to habitat destruction, pollution, and wildlife exploitation,

Noting that there are no universal criteria and norms that envisage sustainable practices of ecotourism, which causes unintended adverse effects on biodiversity,

Highlighting the prospects of ecotourism to appreciate the environmental cause as well as to promote cross-cultural exchange, while showing respect for the local people and their environment,

Welcoming the development of ecotourism and all its benefits regarding environmental conservation and economy,

Acknowledging UNCED's efforts in preserving biodiversity and natural habitats by publishing Agenda 21, a plan of action that strategically protects the environment,

1. Encourages the establishment and enforcement of robust transparency and oversight mechanisms by the UN to combat corruption within non-governmental organisations that target tourism and the environment, with the aim of promoting the effectiveness of ecotourism policies, through measures such as but not limited to:

- a) requirements for full transparency in the decision making process which will:
 - i Demand Publication of all relevant documentation,
 - ii Ensure access to this information for the public,
- b) use of digital platforms to manage financial transactions and documentation,
- c) collaboration with anti-corruption organizations such as Transparency International and the Independent Commission Against Corruption to align local and global practices,
- d) periodic third-party audits of tourism related environmental management bodies like GSTC to ensure accountability and detect potential anomalies in operations or finances,

2. Suggests the promotion of safe and beneficial ecotourism in collaboration by travel agencies along with non-profit organizations such as IUCN, Tourism Cares and UNEP that focus on environmental protection and biodiversity conservation instead of international enterprises, in order to:

- a) establish a sense of environmental solidarity and raise awareness of ecological problems, which can lead to:
 - i. developments in the policies implemented and measures taken to protect the environment,
 - ii. further funding for biodiversity conservation,
- b) ensure that money made from ecotourism goes to the government instead of international corporations, and is partly used to fund environmental and biodiversity preservation efforts;

3. Requests that all organizations and businesses that engage in ecotourism but violate guidelines, which have been designed to minimize environmental impact and promote sustainable practices, face penalties such as:

- a) fines proportionate to the severity of the violation and its environmental impact,
- b) suspension of operation with temporary or permanent revocation of permits for businesses repeatedly violating ecotourism guidelines,
- c) prosecution under applicable environmental protection laws for severe or deliberate violations,
- d) illegalization of currently legal acts that are harmful to biodiversity and the environment in protected areas, such as littering in member states where it is not already illegalized;

4. Calls for the creation of a Body under the United Nations, with the responsibility of supervising, identifying and designating protected areas such as habitats of endangered species and affected areas by deforestation and pollution, to ensure their preservation and the sustainable management, through measures such as:

- a) the employment of qualified experts in the fields such as but not limited to:

- i. Environmental science,
 - ii. Ecology,
 - iii. Geography,
- b) evaluating and monitoring ecosystems and biodiversity to identify areas in urgent need of protection,
 - c) periodically reporting to relevant governmental or intergovernmental organizations to ensure adherence and provide updates on the status and effectiveness of designated protected areas;

5. Recommends the creation of defensible eco-tourism projects funded and operated by the UN which will help defend exceptional nature and atmospheres like carbon-rich ecosystems such as:

- a) the creation campaigns controlled by the government along with travel agencies and environmental management bodies to raise awareness,
- b) limitation of access to the public in endangered areas by environmental organizations in extreme cases of pollution,
- c) creation of new volunteer projects contributing to environmental preservation as well as further funding and promoting existing volunteer projects in order to further involve local communities in environmental conservation efforts thus raising awareness;

6. Requests that conservation NGOs, and universal sponsors lessen the impact of tourism on local populations in order to improve quality of life through:

- a) collaboration with companies such as IUCN and UNEP, sustainable tourism could benefit local communities,
- b) providing subsidies to fund sustainable tourism for local communities;

7. Suggests that member states start prioritising conservation to limit over extraction of natural resources by creating stricter regulations such as:

- a) setting up tourism programs that promote eco-friendly tourism to citizens,
- b) involvement of local communities through:
 - i selecting a number of locals from different areas to take part in the decision-making council and will be differentiated each year,

- ii advocacy campaigns for locals to ensure they voice their concerns as regards the destruction of the environment,
- c) technology-driven management and supervised by trained personnel such as AI technologies.