

Declaration of Galapagos
Summit of Ibero-American and Caribbean Tourism and Environment
Authorities
Galapagos May 30-31, 2002

The Tourism and Environment Authorities, their Representatives or the Heads of Delegation:

Committed to the principles and objectives contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as in the regional agreements on tourism, the environment, the conservation of the cultural and natural heritage and on sustainable development, guided by the principles stated in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, as well as by the recommendations contained in Agenda 21;

Recalling prior declarations on tourism issues, such as the Manila Declaration on World Tourism, The Hague Declaration, the Charter for Sustainable Tourism of Lanzarote, the Berlin Declaration on Biological Biodiversity and Tourism, the Code of Ethics for Tourism, the Declaration of Lima, written within the Framework of the Andean Regional Conference on Ecotourism, the First Summit of Ministers of Tourism of Ibero-America in Cuzco, and the Quebec Declaration on Ecotourism;

Aware that tourism, as a worldwide social, cultural and economic phenomenon, is a fast-growing activity that contributes to the economic and social development of our populations, especially within the global strategy of the fight against poverty;

Acknowledging the significance of sustainable development in the conservation of the biological and cultural diversity of our populations;

Convinced that tourism must be a strategic ally in the conservation of our natural and cultural heritage;

Stressing the importance of public education and awareness related to the benefits of sustainable tourism;

Concerned by the effects that tourism may have on the development of local communities and on the conservation of natural areas, when these activities are not undertaken following sustainable development and management criteria;

Taking into account the recommendation of national and regional governments to formulate, as a matter of urgency, action plans for sustainable development applicable to tourism;

In view that sustainable tourism contributes to local development and to the development of communities, helping them recognize the value of their cosmovision and their culture;

Convinced that nature, the wealth of its biodiversity and the multiple systemic relationships generated therein, require strategies and mechanisms of protection, conservation, and sustainable use, and that areas with high biological diversity deserve special attention and care;

Aware that the sustainable development of tourism must be a shared responsibility among all social sectors, including the Government at its various levels, national and international non-governmental organizations, the private sector, the local population, and other organizations linked to tourism, both in tourist-generating and receiving countries;

Determined to work together so that tourism develops in a sustainable fashion in the region, with the purpose of promoting the well-being of local communities, the conservation of the natural environment, and cultural diversity;

Reiterating our commitment, as parties to the United Nations Biodiversity Agreement, to sustain and distribute, in a fair and equitable way, the benefits derived from the use thereof;

Aware of the importance of scientific research in the conservation of the environment and the development of ecotourism;

Have agreed to the following:

POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND STRATEGIES

- 1.- To foster the development of tourism in the region, based on sustainable development criteria, taking into account the cultural, social, and natural heritage and the traditional activities of the communities, while fully respecting the environment.
- 2.-To promote the development of sustainable tourism for the benefit of local communities, as a tool to improve job opportunities and the quality of life of the population.
- 3.-To promote timely national and international cooperation and investment lines aimed at local capacity-building and conserving the environment for the development of sustainable tourism.
- 4.- To develop, among countries in the region, environmental policy instruments that contain tourism impact assessment tools.
- 5.- To analyze the convenience of harmonizing national laws in Tourism and Environmental matters.
- 6.- To agree on international efforts and foster the transfer of technologies to optimize the sustainable development of tourism.
- 7.- To foster assessment and monitoring mechanisms related to the compliance of rules, regulations and ethics codes in effect at the local, national, regional, and global levels in matters related to natural resources, tourism, and the environment.
- 8.- To foster, in each country, coordinated actions among official Tourism and Environmental agencies.

CONSERVATION

- 9.- To prioritize research on biodiversity in areas with tourism potential, as well as to prepare national and local development plans that include the component of environmental protection and biodiversity conservation as a cross-cutting element of tourism development.
- 10.- To promote compliance with the objectives of conservation and of existing regulations to ensure the territorial and functional integrity of protected areas, as a basis for the development of sustainable tourism and ecotourism.

11.- To ensure that the introduction of invasive exotic species is prevented during the development of tourism projects.

12.- In agreement with the Declaration of Cancun, to praise the Mexican initiative of organizing the Group of Megadiverse Countries, as an element aimed at articulating strategies of conservation and sustainable use of Biodiversity.

13.- To support the initiative of Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, and Ecuador to establish the First Corridor of Sustainable Use of Marine Biodiversity GALAPAGOS – COCO.

DEVELOPMENT

14.- To promote the establishment and adaptation of tourism infrastructure and offer of the region towards activities developed within sustainable patterns.

15.- To analyze the convenience of harmonizing a regional environmental impact assessment system for tourism, facilitating and exchanging information and experiences, as well as follow-up and feedback mechanisms.

16.- To foster local, national, and international investment in environmentally friendly infrastructure and to ensure that its operation, maintenance and disposal are made using sustainable practices.

17.- To promote the adoption of a region-wide tourist sustainability certification system.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

18.- To aim investments towards development and training of local human capital, in order for it to assume the management of tourist operations, thus generating greater benefits and fostering the economic and social development of the local community.

19.- To foster the joint work of all the economic and social bodies and actors related to tourism and environmental activities, at local, national, and international levels.

20.- To ensure that the processes of generation of future tourism policies and their respective planning and management instruments are participatory and take local actors into account.

RESEARCH

21.- To support the development of an inventory of biodiversity and scientific cooperation as an element to enhance the development of sustainable tourism.

22.- To foster long-term biodiversity assessment and monitoring systems, to be used as sustainability indicators in tourist destinations.

23.- To promote the exchange of scientific research that contributes to conservation and sustainable tourist use.

24.- To disseminate the results of scientific research projects in view of increasing environmental awareness for the development of sustainable tourism.

IMPLEMENTATION

25.- To disseminate this Declaration in tourism and/or environmental events at local, national, regional, and world levels.

26.- To inform the governments in the region about the multiple opportunities for cooperation and synergy found in the Summit of Tourism and Environmental Authorities of Ibero-America and the Caribbean. To recommend that these meetings continue and are extended to other sectors.

27.- To recommend the implementation of effective tools in the measurement of results obtained in the achievement of the elements listed herein, within the terms established, highlighting the effectiveness of tourist sustainability programs.

28.- To ask multilateral and bilateral financing and technical assistance agencies to include in their Action Plans the agreements of the Summit of Ibero-American and Caribbean Tourism and Environmental Authorities.

29.- To inform through all Governments signatories of this Declaration, the World Tourism Organization, WTO, the United Nations Environment Program, UNEP, the United Nations Development Program, UNDP, and the organizers of the Johannesburg Summit.

30.- To thank the kind offer of the Government of the Republic of Peru to host the next Meeting of Ibero-American and Caribbean Tourism and Environmental Authorities; Peru will assume the coordination of resources for the preparation of the next Meeting.

31.- The host country of the present meeting will assume the Pro tempore coordination for the follow-up of the agreements adopted, until the convening of the next meeting.

The Tourism and Environmental Authorities, their Representatives of Heads of Delegation, express their congratulations for the organization of this Summit meeting and their thanks to Dr. Gustavo Noboa Bejarano, President of the Republic of Ecuador; the First Lady of the Nation, Mrs. María Isabel de Noboa, the Ministers of Tourism and the Environment, Mrs. Rocío Vázquez and Mrs. Lourdes Luque de Jaramillo, as well as to the Ecuadorian people for the warm hospitality shown in the city of Quito and in the Galapagos Islands.

The Tourism and Environmental Authorities, their Representatives and the Heads of Delegation also wish to express their gratitude to the World Tourism Organization (WTO), the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP); and to Ecuadorian private companies that lent their support for the realization of this Summit.

The Tourism and Environmental Authorities, their Representatives and the Heads of Delegation agree that this document should be known as the ***Declaration of Galapagos*** and sign it in the city of Puerto Ayora, on May 31, 2002.