

FEZ DECLARATION FOR RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL ACTION

Since the pioneering initiatives of the Casablanca Eco-Tourism Manifesto of 1990 and the Responsible Traveller Guidelines (Nairobi, 1995), the African Travel Association has demonstrated a commitment to the global awareness of specific Cultural Heritage and Eco-tourism needs. This declaration guarantees the continuity of that commitment, as a result of the significant discussions conducted during the Sixth Cultural Heritage and Eco-Tourism conference of the African Travel Association, hosted in Fez, Morocco, December 8-13, 2002, the following statements were agreed to by the delegates as recommendations for serious action trajectories to be taken by the broader tourism industry in regard to Cultural Heritage and Eco-tourism directions.

It was agreed that:

1. There should be concerted efforts to stimulate, educate, and involve, through direct partnership, local communities in Eco-tourism products which will affect their lives. That this involvement of the local communities must include consistent ethical practices which will provide full respect of their unique cultural, religious, linguistic and personal integrity.
2. That all ground operators; tour operators, travel agents and group organizers are encouraged to include community-based tourism projects in their proposed programs.
3. All tourism institutions participating in the Cultural Heritage and Eco-tourism sector should compile and make public some form of a stated Environmental Policy for their organisation, with specific conditions for its implementation and updating.
4. All tourism institutions participating within the areas of Cultural Heritage and Eco-tourism should strive to achieve, in the immediate future, products of an equivalent quality to recognized and certified international standards, and that those standards are regularly controlled for the maintenance of the unique products and services demanded by Eco-tourism clients.
5. All tourism institutions participating in the Cultural Heritage and Eco-tourism sector, should take intentional and substantial steps toward the quality training of all staff and personnel for the specific needs of Cultural Heritage and Eco-tourism clients, and that there should be a clearly defined relationship of the tourism industry with youth employment and educational awareness programs; with an emphasis on cultural and environmental issues.
6. All tourism institutions participating in the Cultural Heritage and Eco-tourism sector should implement specific educational programs on the diversity and quality of ecologically-oriented products for field guides and management personnel regarding products acquisition and ongoing management policy.
7. All tourism institutions participating in the Cultural Heritage and Eco-Tourism sector, should take significant efforts to stimulate a public awareness for, and take direct actions to implement, sustainable conservation programs for water and other natural resources, including the protection of flora and fauna in the environment of their tourism product.

8. The tourism industry must recognize the significant inter-relational role of Cultural Heritage and Eco-tourism within the broader aspects of a host nation's full social, political and economic systems.

9. That there must be both a consistency of purpose and of commitment for strategic linkage among the World Tourism Organization, the nations of Africa and the international travel industry to achieve the goals outlined in this document, and dealing with the delicate balance between commercialisation and conservation of Africa's heritage and environment.

10. That the ATA should reactivate their Environment Committee, and further deputize this group to identify, propose and implement reasonable measures to move ATA into the Responsible Travel mainstream in a leadership capacity, including concrete actions such as screening of conference venues, to insure that host facilities comply with Cultural Heritage and Eco-tourism standards.

These committed recommendations, to be called The Fes Declaration for Responsible Travel Action, after extensive discussions have been agreed to by the delegates of the Sixth Cultural Heritage and Eco-Tourism Conference, Fes, Morocco, on March 30, 2003.