

20th anniversary of the Montreal Declaration

Montreal Declaration

Towards a humanist, social vision of tourism

1996

Preamble

Twenty years ago, during its congress held in Montreal in September 1996, ISTO –formerly known as BITS– adopted the declaration “Towards a humanist, social vision of tourism”. This text, which resulted from extensive discussions and exchanges, remains –for most of us– surprisingly relevant and topical. Its authors should be praised for such achievement.

The addendum, which was adopted during the Aubagne congress in 2006, provided useful details to the original text, specifying how and why BITS set its vision and action towards “a tourism based on development and solidarity”.

Today, by focusing on these two key dimensions, ISTO truly wants to embody the spirit of this landmark text. The idea is not to rewrite the text but to translate into facts, into our extended scope and into our action the very foundations of our commitment to support women and men, their local communities, and universal development through tourism.

Our duty is to ensure the long-term relevance of the Montreal Declaration through those values.

Jean Marc Mignon, ISTO President
September 2016

What does social tourism mean in today's world? How do social tourism stakeholders see their role? What are their beliefs and ambitions?

As we enter the third millennium, what are our main challenges and opportunities?

Through the Vienna Charter in 1972, ISTO – formerly known as BITS – identified the social, cultural, political and economic dimensions of tourism, the defining trend of our time.

Subsequently, the World Tourism Organization, in its Manila Declaration, formally confirmed the purposes of social tourism.

What will social tourism mean in upcoming years? This is the fundamental issue to be addressed in the Montreal Declaration.

1. Social tourism

An ambitious approach to overcome discrimination and meet the challenge of integration

Tourism is growing rapidly today in a world in which:

- growth in the wealthiest countries is at a standstill, leaving challenged population groups and people with disabilities at the margin of society, resulting in social inequalities;
- advances in science and information technology go hand in hand with a reduced workforce, opening up as yet undreamed-of social and cultural opportunities;
- large economic alliances are formed, operating according to their own free-market logic;
- some countries experience rapid growth, paving the way for the development of domestic tourism;
- other countries, and even whole continents, are trapped in appalling poverty;
- everyone is searching for meaning.

Business and leisure travels are on the rise, borders are opening-up, destinations are more and more diverse, and innovation improves communication and transport.

While the distribution between work and leisure/travel time is being questioned throughout the world, there are still many inequities. In some countries, diverse forms of exploitation of local people still prevail, including child prostitution.

Art. 1.

In its Article 24, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that “Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay”.

This right is far from being universally accepted. Everyone's right to leisure and tourism needs to be pursued through the principles of social tourism, which primarily aims at providing access to tourism and leisure activities for all.

Art. 2.

The prime objective of all tourism development initiatives should be the full realisation of each individual's potential, both as a person and as a citizen.

2. Social tourism's benefits for the future

Social Tourism:
“a shaper of society”

Art. 3.

The aim of making leisure tourism accessible to all – including families, young people and senior citizens – implies a strong commitment to fight inequality and the exclusion of people with different cultures, limited resources, disabilities, or those who live in developing countries.

To this end, specific measures need to be identified and implemented: the definition of social policies of tourism, the creation of infrastructures, the setting-up of support systems for the disadvantaged, awareness-raising campaigns, staff training, etc. Small-scale initiatives, forming part of a wider strategy, can often be as effective “shapers of society”, as large-scale projects.

Art. 4.

Holidays and travel can provide great opportunities for personal fulfilment, through the discovery of new environments, cultures and civilisations, through physical, artistic, sport and leisure activities, by meeting people across educational or generation divides, and through other responsibilities taken on freely by tourists.

Social tourism operators are willing to contribute to the development of human interactions, both through their training and their activities; social tourism drives social cohesion.

Social Tourism: a driver of economic growth

Art. 5.

Designed for all social classes and age groups, social tourism allows hundreds of millions of people to travel and enjoy holidays throughout the world.

A key component of the social and solidarity economy, social tourism offers remarkable opportunities for economic growth.

Tourism for all drives economic power. It generates a continuous flow of people and investment, which contributes to regional development, creates value at the national and international levels, and fosters the transfer of resources from the richer economies to the poorer countries.

Art. 6.

Tourism must benefit the whole community. Its benefits must contribute to the social and economic development of regions and their peoples. The tourism sector should both create jobs and guarantee the fundamental rights of all workers.

Art. 7.

All tourism development stakeholders are subject to the same requirements. Whether as entrepreneurs, facility managers, tour organisers or guides, educators or entertainers, they are all economic agents, subject to the same expectations of skills, capacities and performance.

The successful pursuit of a social purpose depends on exemplary management practices and improved outcomes.

Social Tourism: driving regional planning and local development

Art. 8.

Long before their promotion by international organisations, social tourism had already adopted “sustainable and sustained development goals” in order to:

- reconcile tourism development, environmental protection and a respect for the identity of local communities;
- bring fresh resources into neglected regions;
- promote the development of destinations without depletion of resources;
- generate local economic, social and cultural benefits for the community.

While tourism is one of the main drivers of regional development throughout the world, under no circumstances may it lead to the uncontrolled invasion of a destination, the exploitation of the local population, or the destruction of its culture.

Art. 9.

Tourism can, and should, be a source of opportunities for many fragile economies. The conservation of the natural environment should not be leveraged for the appropriation of tourist sites for the benefit of a few.

Art. 10.

As initiator and manager of tourism development projects, social tourism has a critical responsibility to raise awareness, share information and knowledge to ensure tourists are respectful of the environment and local communities.

Social Tourism: a partner in global development programmes

Art. 11.

The Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment, United Nations programmes, and the Rio Earth Summit, among others, have clearly identified the responsibilities of present generations in setting limits to growth.

Tourism, when it is controlled and respectful of the natural environment and local communities, constitutes one of the economic, social and cultural hopes of many developing regions. Present and future social tourism stakeholders are, and will be, well placed to design development projects, tailor legal structures and financial packages, and contribute to the creation, management, and coordination of all tourism projects planned in the framework of global development programmes.

Art. 12.

Throughout the world, new collaborations and partnerships are, and will be, essential. Tourism development requires the support of Governments, local authorities, social organisations, trade unions, financial partners, family, youth, cultural, sport, and ecology movements, and, of course, tourism industry professionals, including social tourism stakeholders serving the public good.

3. Social tourism identification criteria

Art. 13.

Any tourism organisation (association, cooperative, mutual company, foundation, federation, non-profit organisation, business company etc...) which, in its articles of association or statement of aims clearly identifies with social goals and the aim of providing access to travel and tourism for all – not with the sole aim of profit maximisation –, may claim to be part of the social tourism movement.

The term “social” means more solidarity and fraternity, and is a source of hope for all the people throughout the world who still have no leisure time.

Art. 14.

In order to be part of the social tourism movement, an organisation must comply with the following conditions:

- The offer of activities must incorporate humanist, educational and cultural values and promote respectful human development.
- The target groups are clearly identified, without discrimination on racial, cultural, religious, political, philosophical or social grounds.
- The creation of non-economic value forms an integral part of the product.
- The seamless integration into the local environment should be a clear priority.
- The type of activity and price are clearly mentioned in the contract documents. Prices are compatible with the stated social goals. Annual surpluses, in whole or in part, will be re-invested to improve services offered to the public.
- Workforce management practices abide by social regulations, promote job satisfaction and provide appropriate on-going staff development training.

Art. 15.

The legitimacy of tourism stakeholders is derived from their actions in pursuit of a clearly stated objective, not from their legal statutes or processes.

Statutes or articles of association may vary according to habits, practices and changing legislation. It is only a means to an end. There is no one-size-fits-all model in the world today.

Aubagne Addendum

2006

Towards a tourism
based on development
and solidarity

Preamble

The Montreal Declaration (1996) reaffirmed the historical and current relevance of social tourism as a “shaper of society”, “driver of economic growth”, “driver of regional planning and local development” as well as a “partner in global development programmes”.

It specified, at Articles 13 to 15, the identification criteria of social tourism, which are not limited to legal aspects, although social tourism is mainly driven and governed by the social economy players, including associations and cooperatives. More than before, the Declaration focused on the need to protect the environment and be respectful of local populations. The Montreal Declaration has introduced a relationship of solidarity between tourists and host populations aiming at a “sustainable and sustained development”.

Since the adoption of the Montreal Declaration in 1996, world tourism has shown remarkable resilience, by maintaining its growth momentum despite slowdown periods due to natural disasters, health hazards, wars, terrorism... Its main form, mass tourism, does not always deliver the expected benefits and marginalises important population groups. Through its industrial approach, mass tourism often redirects profits to emitting countries, to the detriment of host communities. More and more organisations go against this approach by offering “soft” forms

of tourism focusing on the accountability and solidarity of all the stakeholders involved in the chain of tourism.

Bearing this in mind, it is important to make some clarifications and additions to the Montreal Declaration.

AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY HELD IN AUBAGNE IN MAY 2006, MEMBERS OF ISTO – FORMERLY KNOWN AS BITS – REAFFIRMED THE TOPICALITY AND RELEVANCE OF THE MONTREAL DECLARATION ADOPTED IN 1996, AND:

- 1 Remind, in reference to Article 1, the role of independent and democratic workers’ trade unions in the promotion and advocacy of everyone’s right to a reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay;
- 2 Specify that the full realisation of each individual’s potential both as a person and as a citizen, which constitutes the prime objective of all tourism development initiatives, as asserted at article 2, applies to both visitors and host communities;
- 3 Want all tourism development stakeholders, which are – in accordance with Article 7 – subject to the same expectations of skills, capacities and performance, to ensure that their operations create more value for, and further benefit host populations;
- 4 Reassert, further to article 9, that host communities should have access to their own tourism resources and leverage the benefits of tourism. Visitors should be welcomed without discrimination, but prioritising groups of adequate size to avoid negative impacts on the natural and cultural environments;
- 5 Consider that special attention should be given to families, young people and senior citizens – as mentioned in article 3 – and to the development of travels and trips for children and teenagers, including during school terms. For many, these trips are precious moments to discover other environments and people and contribute to social cohesion, while giving them a taste for travel;

Les 20 ans de la Déclaration de Montréal

- 6 Insist that the participation of populations – particularly in Global South countries – in international tourism should not be limited, by political or administrative measures, to hosting visitors. Efforts should be made at all levels to ensure the free movement of people by facilitating tourist visa procedures;
- 7 Suggest, following the approach of establishing partnerships with global development programmes as stated in Articles 11 and 12, to encourage tourism operators and visitors to support development projects in the local host communities, in a spirit of solidarity and in a practical and financial manner;
- 8 State that among the stakeholders, mentioned at Article 12, with whom partnerships and collaborations should be established, one needs to integrate local non-profit development associations, non-governmental cooperation organisations (NGO) and enterprises in the social and solidarity economy, engaged in solidarity-based financial transactions, fair trade and microcredit;
- 9 Specify that positive workforce management practices, abiding by social regulations, defined under Article 14 as one of the identification criteria of social tourism, must comply with the principles set out by the International Labour Organization, fundamental labour rights and applicable collective agreements;
- 10 Declare that in spite of the challenges caused by international terrorism and natural disasters, which require an increased level of global security, the development of tourism needs to move forward. The priority is to turn tourism into a driver of sustainable development, bridging the gap between peoples, fostering dialogue among cultures and religions, in order to contribute to world peace.

Il y a tout juste 20 ans, le congrès du BITS, réuni à Montréal en septembre 1996, adoptait la Déclaration « Pour une vision humaniste et sociale du tourisme ». Ce texte, qui fit l'objet de nombreux débats et échanges préalables, demeure – selon la plupart d'entre nous – d'une étonnante actualité, et il convient d'en rendre hommage à ses auteurs.

L'addendum, adopté lors du congrès d'Aubagne, en 2006, compléta très utilement le texte initial en précisant comment et pourquoi le BITS inscrivait sa réflexion et son action dans « un tourisme de développement et de solidarité ».

Aujourd'hui, c'est en prenant en compte ces deux dimensions essentielles, que l'OITS souhaite s'approprier davantage encore le message porté par ce texte riche; nous ne proposons pas de reprendre la plume mais de traduire dans les faits, dans notre périmètre élargi, dans notre action, ce qui est à la source même de notre engagement en faveur d'un tourisme au service des femmes et des hommes, de leurs territoires et d'un développement au service du plus grand nombre.

Sachons faire encore vivre longtemps la Déclaration de Montréal autour de ces valeurs.

Jean Marc Mignon, Président de l'OITS
Septembre 2016