



Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations 25th Anniversary



1

**CONVENTION:
CULTURE A UNIFYING GUIDE
TALLINN 30 JANUARY – 4 FEBRUARY
2011**

HERVÉ BARRÉ UNESCO

***“WORLD HERITAGE, CULTURES:
UNESCO AND TOURIST GUIDES:
COMMON GOALS?”***

What is UNESCO ?

2

- UNESCO was created on 16 November 1946
- 193 Member States
- “United Nations’ brain” (education, sciences and culture)
- Works to facilitate dialogue between cultures and people based upon respect for shared values
- “Since the wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed” . UNESCO Constitution

Overarching Objectives

3

- Attaining quality education for all and life long learning
- Mobilizing science knowledge and policy for sustainable development
- Addressing social and ethical challenges
- Fostering cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue
- Supporting freedom of expression and press

Two global priorities: Africa and Gender equality

Objectives in the Field of Culture

4

- Promote cultural diversity by safeguarding heritage in its various dimensions and enhancing cultural expressions as humanity's "public good"
- Promote social cohesion by fostering pluralism, intercultural dialogue, as well as securing the central role of culture in development
- A set of conventions has been established to ensure the protection and safeguarding of humanity's shared heritage in both tangible and intangible forms

The World Heritage Convention

5

- 911 properties inscribed on the List
- 185 State Parties
- An agreement, a legal instrument that imposes binding legal commitments that sets out duties of State Parties and the UNESCO World Heritage Centre in implementing the convention
- Each State Party in the Convention “recognizes the duty of ensuring the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of the cultural and natural heritage”. Article 4 of the convention

The Convention (1)

6

- Conveys the idea of a collective responsibility for heritage preservation
- Creates an international duty of cooperation for protecting world heritage
- Associates nature conservation, and preservation of cultural sites

The Convention (2)

7

- Institutes a mixed mechanism of a political committee and scholarly expertise
- Founded on the premise that certain places on Earth are of “outstanding universal value” and as such, form part of the common heritage of humankind
- Preserves the outstanding universal value of sites, that is to say their “integrity”, “authenticity” and “sense of place”.

The World Heritage Committee (1)

8

- Composed of 21 members/countries elected by the State Parties for up to six years
- Responsible for the implementation of the WH Convention
- Each year it adds new properties – proposed by State Parties – on the List
- Applications are reviewed by two advisory bodies, ICOMOS and IUCN

The World Heritage Committee (2)

9

- Decides to allocate funds for assistance in the fields of training, technical cooperation, emerging and preparatory assistance
- The World Heritage centre is the Secretariat of the Convention and is responsible for the day - to - day management and administration of the World Heritage Fund
- The WH Centre is in charge of preparing the annual sessions of the Committee and develops thematic programmes as the World Heritage Tourism programme

The Outstanding Universal Value (1)

10

- To be included in the WH List, properties must be of outstanding universal value and meet at least one out of ten selection criteria
- ICOMOS and IUCN, two independent associations of cultural and environmental experts evaluate each proposal to the inscription on the list
- Properties inscribed on the List are of OUV from the point of view of history, art, science, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view

The Outstanding Universal Value (2)

11

Historic City of Tallinn

- Criteria 2: important interchange of human values on developments in architecture, town planning or landscape design
- Criteria 4: be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural ensemble which illustrate significant stages in human history

Sri Lanka's highlands Natural Site

- Criteria 9: be an outstanding example representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial and communities of plants and animals
- Criteria 10: contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in – situ conservation of biological diversity



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The future of the Convention (1)



12

- Enhancing the underrepresented categories of sites
- Improving geographical balance of inscribed sites
- Increasing public awareness, involvement and support for World Heritage
- Fostering participation of local communities and tourism partners in implementing the Convention's goals

The future of the Convention (2)

13

- Reinforcing the link between conservation and development
- Broadening the definition of World Heritage : cultural landscapes, historic urban landscapes, sacred sites, industrial sites, contemporary architecture...
- Undertaking the challenges of tourism

The challenges of tourism (1)

14

- Making of the tourism industry an ally in heritage protection and implementing the Convention for a sustainable use of heritage
- Improving cooperation between the site managers and the tourism industry
- Mitigating growing pressure of tourism – persons and infrastructures – on number of sites
- Cooperating in developing value based management of properties/management plan

The challenges of tourism (2)

15

- Financing site conservation and museum management
- Interpreting and presenting sites values to a large public
- Preventing unplanned tourism infrastructures and excess of commoditization
- Associating local communities to be involved and benefit tourism

Cultural heritage...

16

- Is a living process that links past to present and future
- “Culture should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs” UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity 2001
- There is no hierarchy of any sort among the values of the different cultures that are equal in dignity

Why preserve heritage ?

17

- Heritage is our legacy from the past, what we live with today and what we will pass on to the future generations
- Heritage is what shapes our identity, an irreplaceable source of inspiration and emotion through travelling
- A common heritage representing a diversity of cultures contributes to social cohesion
- Heritage bears cultural, social and economic values. If we do not know where we come from it is difficult to know where we are going
- Intangible heritage is a particularly fragile type of heritage – music, dances, culinary arts, traditions... -
- Heritage represents the public good of humanity and a resource for development

Main threats to heritage

18

- Inappropriate development and housing schemes – not respecting the core zone in building infrastructures – non appropriate presence of shops...
- Using building material and architecture not compatible with local culture and the “spirit of the place”
- Non qualitative tourism services and guiding: tourists in non - authorized areas, overcrowding, commoditization of heritage
- Non efficient management of water and waste, poaching, looting and vandalism

Preserving heritage: whose responsibility?

19

- The State Parties to the Convention, Ministerial departments, experts, academics
- The local Governments
- The resident communities, civil society, each citizen, tourists, NGOs
- The tourism industry, the tourist guides
- The international community through UNESCO, expert networks (ICOMOS...)



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UNESCO and the role of tourist guides



20

Two ethical goals of UNESCO:

- Preserving the authenticity and integrity of the properties – Outstanding Universal Value
- Providing access to the largest public for its understanding of the sites values and to share its values as a human experience

The tourist guides link these two goals

On the role of tourist guides (1)

ICOMOS charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage sites

21

Interpretation and presentation should be an integral part of the conservation process enhancing the public awareness of specific conservation problems encountered at the site and explaining the efforts being taken to protect the site's physical integrity and authenticity and Outstanding Universal Value

On the role of tourist guides (2)

22

- Facilitating understanding and appreciation of cultural heritage sites
- Fostering public awareness and engagement on the need for their protection and conservation
- Informing on the respective roles of the Governments, UNESCO – WHC, other institutions towards the Convention and conservation in general
- Communicating the meaning of cultural heritage based on documented sources; refer to the statement of OUV of the property
- Indicating clearly what is replaced, rebuilt and authentic

On the role of tourist guides (3)

23

- The public interpretation of a cultural heritage site should clearly distinguish and date the successive phases and influences in its evolution
- It should also take into account all groups that have contributed to the historical and cultural significance of the site
- Intangible elements of a site's heritage such as cultural and spiritual traditions, oral tradition, stories, myths, music, dances, theatre, literature, social customs and culinary heritage should be considered in the interpretation

On the role of tourist guides (4)

24

Respect the authenticity of cultural heritage sites by communicating the significance of their historic function and cultural value and preventing them from:

- Inaccurate or inappropriate interpretation including the use of preconceived notions, cultural clichés and ethno, culturally or nationally centered historic versions
- Inappropriate and non responsible behaviour from tourists towards the sites and populations
- Intrusive interpretive infrastructure
- Excessive visitor pressure

On the role of tourist guides (5)

25

Contributing to a successful tourist experience by:

- Presenting cultural heritage in a “not annoying” educational exercise – culture is not boring –
- Making the visitor discover a site with pleasure and emotion and giving him/her the feeling of living a unique experience – culture makes people dream –
- Finding the right balance between the rigorous communication and methods for keeping the attention and interest of visitors

On the role of tourist guides (6)

•26

The role of tourist guides in site protection:

- Tourist guides can contribute in improving site management by reporting comments from tourists to the site managers
- Tourist guides can encourage tourists in adopting responsible behaviour through raising awareness on the fragility and value of heritage

On the role of tourist guides (7)

27

Tourist guides have an important role to play:

- In contributing to the achievement of the World Heritage Convention's goals
- In raising visitors awareness on the values and fragility of heritage, conservation issues and responsible behaviour of tourists at sites
- In contributing to improve site management and mitigate threats



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Ambassadors of whom, of what?



28

- The tourist guides should be the ambassadors of heritage values and of nothing else: institutions, countries, cultures, religions...
- They should consider that all cultures are equal in dignity and have no hierarchical position between themselves
- The question of “who speaks to whom” is a key question in your profession

*“He who controls the present controls the past
He who controls the past controls the future”*

George Orwell

A need of WFTGA for

29

- Improving guiding skills and standards both on technical and ethical aspects
- Improving guides' status as in many countries the profession is not officially recognized and guides are paid only with visitors tips
- Raising awareness of the public at large on heritage preservation issues

Possible fields of cooperation

30

- Guides to provide adequate information on the World Heritage system, the Convention's goals
- Jointly developing training workshops for improving guiding skills and information on WH system, OUV...
- Associating the WFTGA to some relevant international programmes as “Dialogue between Civilizations” or the “World Heritage Sustainable Tourism Programme”

Guide Training Course Lalibela, June 2010

31











