

## Report on the 11<sup>th</sup> meeting of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics

On 12-13 July 2012, the UNWTO World Committee on Tourism Ethics (WCTE) met in Rome, Italy, for its eleventh meeting. As the representative of educational institutions, Mrs. Sietske Gras-Dijkstra attended the meeting of the WCTE.



*Photo: UNWTO World Committee on Tourism Ethics, Rome 2012*

From left to right: Mr. Jean-José Bertani (Director of Responsible Tourism, Directorate of Tourism and Conventions, Monaco Government Tourist and Convention Authority), Prof. Kam-hon Lee (Chinese University of Hong Kong), Mr. Zoltan Somogyi (UNWTO Executive Director), H.E. Mr. I. Gede Ardika (Indonesia), Mr. Foley Dahlen (Togo), Mr. Mahmoud El Kaisouni (Egypt), Ms. Sietske Gras-Dijkstra (NHTV Breda University of Applied Sciences, The Netherlands), Mr. Taleb Rifai (UNWTO Secretary-General), H.E. Mr. Piero Gnudi (Minister of Regional Affairs, Tourism and Sports of Italy), Mr. Dawid de Villiers (Chairman of the UNWTO World Committee on Tourism Ethics), Ms. Caterina Cittadino (Italy), Mr. Norberto Tonini (International Bureau of Social Tourism [BITS]), Mr. Helmut Krüger (Germany), Mr. Hermes Navarro del Valle (Costa Rica), Mr. Ron Oswald (International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations - IUF/UITA), Mr. Mauro Maiani (Head of International Relationship UNWTO Liaison officer, Ministry of Tourism San Marino), Ms Marina Diotallevi (Programme Manager Ethics & Social Dimensions of Tourism).

The meeting in Rome was attended by eleven Committee members from all over the world, as well as the Chairman of the World Committee Mr. Dawid de Villiers, the Secretary of the World Committee Ms. Marina Diotallevi, and her (temporary) assistant Ms. Daniela Moreno. Also present were the Secretary-General of the UNWTO World Tourism Organization, Mr. Taleb Rifai, UNWTO Executive Director Mr. Zoltan Somogyi, three staff members of the Permanent Secretariat of the Committee in Rome (Mr. Roberto Rocca, Ms. Danielle Fabrizi, Mr. Francesco Baroni), special guest Dr. Caroline Danneels (VZW Safe Coastal Tourism, Flemish Community of Belgium), and 3 observers.

As the body responsible for promoting and monitoring the implementation of the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, the Committee applauded the signature of the first **Private Sector Commitment to the Global Code of Ethics** by 11 of Spain's most prominent tourism companies at the 1st International Congress on Ethics and Tourism (15-16 September 2011, Madrid, Spain). This Commitment represents a public pledge on behalf of tourism enterprises to implement and promote the values enshrined in the Code of Ethics, both by integrating ethical practices into their business operations, and by reporting periodically to the Committee on their actions in this regard.

The Committee heard from invited guest, Dr. Caroline Danneels, founder of the non-profit organization "**Safe Coastal Tourism**", on the importance of safety precautions at beaches and marinas across the globe. Based in the Flemish Community of Belgium, the organization works to raise awareness of the crucial need for adequate safety measures and the provision of accurate information to tourists to prevent often fatal accidents at coastal sites. Committee members drew particular attention to the need for safety warnings, in the form of signs and flags, to alert visitors to dangerous conditions, and the absolute necessity of life-guards and life-buoys to aid in rescues,

even during tourist “low-season”. The meeting closed with calls to make “**Safe Coastal Tourism**” a priority in coastal destinations worldwide.

Furthermore, the body analyzed a number of pressing ethical issues including the fight against human trafficking and child exploitation, the road to greater gender equality and accessibility in tourism, and developments for the protection of tourists/consumers and tourism enterprises. With reference to the latter, the Committee reiterated its support for UNWTO’s preparation of an international legal instrument in this area.

Committee members backed UNWTO’s firm stand against **human trafficking**, especially child trafficking, in the tourism sector, applauding the Organization’s signature of a cooperation agreement with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in April 2012. In the sphere of **accessible tourism**, the Committee reasserted its support of the collaboration between UNWTO, the Spanish ONCE Foundation and ACS Foundation, as well as the European Network for Accessible Tourism (ENAT), in the interest of improving tourism’s accessibility, particularly for persons with disabilities.