TOURISM LAW AND LEGISLATION

ASSIGNMENT 4

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1. Discuss the purpose of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism and explain its importance for promoting ethical tourism practices.

**The purpose and importance of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism

The Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (GCET) was passed by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UN Tourism, previously known as UNWTO) in 1999 and was approved by the UN General Assembly in 2001. It consists of ten principles which are meant to guide governments, tourism businesses, local communities and tourists. Although the code is voluntary and not legally binding, Article 10 created the World Committee on Tourism Ethics to promote it and take responsibility for putting its principles into practice.

*Purpose

The main objective of the Code is to make sure that the benefits of tourism are as great as possible while at the same time reducing its adverse effects on the environment, cultural heritage and local communities. It achieves this by establishing a common ethical framework for all the relevant parties. The ten articles include:

Tourism's contribution to mutual understanding and respect between peoples Tourism as a vehicle for individual and collective fulfilment Tourism as a factor of sustainable development Tourism as a user of the cultural heritage of humanity Tourism as a beneficial activity for host countries and communities Obligations of stakeholders in tourism development the right to tourism Liberty of tourist movement Rights of workers and entrepreneurs in the tourism industry Implementation of the principles

*Importance for ethical tourism

First, it establishes a common standard within the global tourism industry. Since tourism involves crossing borders, the Code offers operators, governments and tourists a single basis

for responsible behaviour, thus ensuring consistency among different regions which have varying regulatory strengths.

Second, it safeguards the host communities and their cultures. The Code achieves this by requiring that the local people should share in the benefits of tourism and by ensuring that cultural heritage is respected, thus helping to prevent exploitation, the commodification of culture, and the displacement of residents.

Third, it connects tourism with sustainable development. The Code acknowledges that environmental protection and long-term economic viability are interdependent, which brings the tourism industry in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, especially those relating to decent work, responsible consumption and life on land and below water.

Fourth, it protects workers and travellers. It helps to ensure fair working conditions, eliminates discrimination, promotes safety and secures the right of everyone to access tourism, and it opposes exploitation, including that which involves the sexual exploitation of children.

Fifth, it influences policy and corporate practices. Numerous national tourism strategies, industry codes of conduct and corporate sustainability policies are based on its principles, and companies use it in order to gain credibility and trust from consumers who are becoming more conscious.

The main limitation lies in the fact that it is voluntary. Since there are no enforcement mechanisms, the effect achieved depends on the commitment of the stakeholders and therefore it functions most effectively when supported by national legislation, certification schemes and public pressure. Nevertheless, it still serves as the basic reference point for

ethical tourism and thus provides the industry with a values-based basis for balancing growth with responsibility.

2. Case study: Select a tourism destination and assess whether tourism activities there follow the principles of responsible and sustainable tourism. Recommend three measures to improve responsible tourism practices.

**Assessment

Venice is an example of a destination that has not managed to achieve responsible and sustainable tourism, even though recent measures have been taken to improve the situation.

*Where it falls short

Venice has about 50,000 residents in its historic area but sees millions of visitors each year, a large number of whom are day-trippers who stay for only a short time. The strain this puts on the infrastructure crowds out ordinary people's daily lives. The social impact is that housing has been turned into short-term holiday rentals, which has increased costs and led to a decline in population; this is in contradiction with the Code's idea that tourism should benefit the communities in which it occurs. There are serious concerns regarding environmental damage caused by large cruise ships, specifically in relation to water pollution, wave erosion, and damage to the delicate lagoon. Meanwhile, the city is also very susceptible to flooding and rising sea levels. The culture is being eroded since the heavy commercialisation has caused traditional occupations and local services to be replaced by souvenir shops.

*Where it is making progress

Large cruise ships have been prohibited from entering the central lagoon since 2021. Since 2024, Venice has introduced a day-visitor entrance fee on busy days in order to control the

number of people and to help with the cost of maintenance. The MOSE flood barrier system also provides protection against high tides. These measures are significant, although critics doubt whether the fee actually reduces the number of visitors or merely generates revenue.

Overall judgement: Venice only partly follows responsible tourism principles. It has noticed its problems and taken action. However, the city still faces too many visitors, people moving away, and stress on the environment.

*Three recommended measures

Limit and disperse the number of visitors by introducing daily visitor quotas based on timed tickets and by actively promoting less well-known areas within the wider Veneto region and during off-peak seasons. This will reduce pressure on the historic centre and spread the economic benefits more widely. We should protect housing for residents by strictly limiting the number of short-term rental licences, enforcing the requirement to register, and providing incentives for long-term local leases. It is only by keeping residents in the city that its cultural authenticity and social fabric can be preserved. Move in the direction of higher-value, lower-impact tourism by promoting overnight stays instead of day trips, supporting local artisans and businesses via certification or procurement schemes, and enhancing the environmental monitoring of the lagoon. The income from the entry fee should be clearly reinvested in conservation and in community services.