

Tourism Law and Legislation

Assignment 2

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1. Subsidiary Bodies in International Tourism Governance: Their Role within the UNWTO

In the complex world of international tourism governance, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) acts as the leading global forum. However, to address the sector's vast and technical nature, the UNWTO relies on a network of specialized committees and entities known as subsidiary bodies. Think of them as the organization's expert task forces, each focused on a specific area to drive progress and provide detailed guidance.

Their general role within the UNWTO is threefold. First, they provide technical expertise and recommendations. Bodies like the Committee on Tourism and Sustainability or the Committee on Tourism Statistics delve deep into their respective fields, crafting guidelines and best practices that inform the UNWTO's broader programmes and resolutions. Second, they facilitate regional and specialist representation. The six Regional Commissions (e.g., for Africa, Europe, Asia) ensure that global policies are adapted to local realities, while bodies like the World Committee on Tourism Ethics focus on niche but critical cross-cutting themes. Finally, they monitor and advise on implementation, reviewing how member states are applying agreed-upon frameworks and suggesting corrective actions. In essence, these subsidiary bodies are the operational engines of the UNWTO. They transform the high-level political will of the General Assembly into actionable, technical work, ensuring the organization's policies are both expert-led and responsive to the diverse needs of its global membership (UNWTO, 2023; Lapierre, 2020).

2. The Manila Declaration on World Tourism (1980): A Foundational Milestone

Adopted at the World Tourism Conference in 1980, the Manila Declaration on World Tourism is widely regarded as a watershed moment in global tourism policy. Its significance lies in its radical redefinition of tourism's purpose, shifting the discourse from a purely economic activity to a fundamental human right and a force for social good.

The Declaration's milestone status stems from several groundbreaking principles. Most famously, it asserted that "the right to rest and leisure" and the "right to tourism" are inherent to modern life, framing travel as an essential element of personal fulfillment and education, not just a luxury. It also placed unprecedented emphasis on tourism's role in

national development, particularly for developing countries, advocating for its integration into broader social and economic planning. Furthermore, it stressed the responsibility of states to facilitate tourism for their citizens while protecting the cultural and environmental heritage of host communities.

By holistically linking tourism to human rights, development, and peace, the Manila Declaration provided the first comprehensive philosophical and moral framework for the sector. It moved beyond technical metrics to establish tourism's higher purpose, directly influencing subsequent landmark documents like the 1999 Global Code of Ethics for Tourism. It is, therefore, considered the foundational text that established the modern, human-centric ethos of sustainable and accessible tourism (Pizam & Mansfeld, 2006; UNWTO, 1980; Diekmann & McCabe, 2011).

References

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