

Applying the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism

The Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (GCET), adopted by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in 1999, is a comprehensive set of principles that aims to guide governments, communities, stakeholders in the tourism industry, and tourists towards a responsible and sustainable tourism development strategy. It aims to ensure that the benefits of tourism are maximized while its impacts on culture, society, and the environment are minimized.

The application of the GCET in my country could yield substantial economic, social, cultural, and environmental benefits.

1. More Sustainable Economic Growth

Tourism is an important engine for the global economy and has the potential for earning foreign exchange, creating employment opportunities, and attracting investment. The Code exhorts states to engage in tourism that is beneficial to their communities and preserves their resources. By adopting principles that foster economic gains and channelize tourism earnings for local development, my country can:

- **Enhance local livelihoods** through job creation in hospitality, services, and related sectors.
- **Reduce economic leakage** by supporting local enterprises, ensuring profits benefit domestic businesses rather than foreign corporations.
- **Attract responsible investment** that respects national goals and long-term development rather than short-term gains.

These outcomes not only strengthen GDP but also spread economic benefits more equitably across regions.

2. Protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage

Another of the basic principles of the GCET is the need for tourism to respect and preserve cultural traditions, heritage, and the natural environment. The Code also emphasizes the need for tourism to be practiced in harmony with cultural traditions and for tourism to be used for the preservation of cultural heritage.

This means that:

- Historic sites, monuments, and cultural practices can be maintained and restored with tourism revenues, ensuring they survive for future generations.
- Policies guided by ethical principles can prevent over-tourism and environmental degradation that often accompany unmanaged tourist influxes.
- Ethical tourism can promote **intercultural understanding and mutual respect** between visitors and local hosts.

Such protection not only preserves national identity but also enhances the destination's attractiveness and longevity.

3. Strengthening Social Inclusion and Rights

The Code advocates for **fair treatment of tourism workers** and **inclusive access to tourism** for all segments of society, including vulnerable groups. By embedding these values in national policy:

- Workers in tourism can enjoy better job security, training, and social protection.
- Tourism can become a means to reduce inequality by providing opportunities across genders, age groups, and regions.
- Communities are empowered to participate in decision-making, increasing local ownership and pride in tourism outcomes.

Conclusion

By implementing the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, my country will be provided with a tool to promote responsible and balanced tourism development that ensures economic prosperity, cultural and natural heritage conservation, and social inclusion. The Code does not only promote tourism in terms of growth in tourist numbers, but it promotes value-driven tourism that benefits both tourists and host communities, thus ensuring prosperity in the long term.

References:

1. UNWTO – Global Code of Ethics for Tourism overview and principles.
2. Explanation of benefits when states adopt ethical tourism frameworks.
3. Background on the Code and its intent to balance tourism's impacts.