

Seoul Declaration on Fair Tourism

1. Fair Tourism encompasses inter-generational and intra-generational equity. It means managing tourism so that it is fair for the current stakeholders and fair to future generations because it delivers sustainable tourism: tourism that does not deny resources of natural and cultural heritage and environmental and social resources for our children and grandchildren. The year 2017 has been designated by the UN as the ‘International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development’ Sustainable tourism cannot exist without sustainable life, and the two are inseparable in any tourist destinations all around the world.
2. Korea welcomed 13 million visitors in 2015, of which some 10 million (78.7%) came to Seoul, the nation’s capital. Mega-cities are at the center of tourism in many countries. In this context, more attention is needed to ensure that tourism remains a happy activity for both the tourists and the local people. Seoul recognizes that tourism should benefit local people and that great places to live are great places to visit.
3. The ‘Seoul International Fair & Sustainable Tourism Forum 2016’ not only raises issues and calls for changes regarding the importance of fair tourism and tourism development, but also aims to initiate practical mid-to-long-term solutions and policies for implementation. All forms of tourism can be fairer, benefiting local people, their culture and environment as well as creating meaningful and memorable experiences for our guests. Fair Tourism is inclusive tourism ensuring that tourism is accessible to all.
4. Marking 2016 as the new start of its tourism policies, the Seoul Metropolitan Government has reviewed, through the SIFT (Seoul International Fair Tourism) Forum, whether its tourism policies are fair and sufficiently embrace and protect the public interest, as Seoul experiences very rapid growth in tourism numbers, putting increasing pressure on local communities, the city’s infrastructure and environment.
5. We stand at a turning point where it is now essential to ensure the Seoul Metropolitan Government more pro-actively manages tourism in the city. This will require a whole of government approach including the tourism department, planning, building control, transport, environment and waste management. Only through a whole of government approach can Seoul Metropolitan Government effectively manage tourism to benefit, rather than harm, local communities and their environment. The rights of citizens to enjoy their residence and neighborhood needs to be protected by the city government.
6. Tourism policies should not just aim at growth and development, but embrace the principle of ‘tourism for a sustainable life.’ What policies and solutions are needed? How should they be implemented so that both the local inhabitants and the tourists can enjoy fair and sustainable tourism? What must the policy makers, academics, civil society and experts do in their capacity? New paths and principles are set forth in this ‘Seoul Declaration on Fair Tourism’, Seoul aspires to be a leader in fair urban tourism for not only Seoul but other mega-cities in Asia and beyond.
7. We travel as local, domestic or international travelers to share different cultures and environments and to enhance the quality of our lives, and sometimes the lives of those we visit. A core value of Fair Tourism is respect. We travel to other people’s places and we must recognize our responsibility to treat local people and their natural and cultural environment with respect. Respect requires that local people have a significant say in how tourism is managed in their neighborhood. When tourist activities cause inconvenience to the local residents or damage the local environment and culture, they are no longer fair and therefore no longer welcome.
8. The UN has declared 2017 as the ‘International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development and the City of Seoul plans to ensure that tourism contributes to the sustainable development of the city by using tourism to make Seoul a better place to live in. Achieving this objective requires the active engagement of their elected representatives, all government departments, the tourism industry, local

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communities and civil society. Policy makers must continue to seek and implement policies that ensure that all forms of tourism are fair. This requires that citizens are effectively engaged in the planning, decision-making, implementation and monitoring of tourism policy and practices in the city and in their neighborhoods. They choose what aspects of their lives they want to share. We recognize that more emphasis must be placed on the yield that the city gets from tourism, the jobs and sustainable development created, rather than on simply arrivals and bed nights.

9. The tourist industry serves an important role in connecting the tourists and local inhabitants and thus promoting cultural and economic exchanges. The industry must work to develop fair and creative tourism models that can promote more exchanges while respecting the lives and cultures of both the tourists and the local residents. The tourism industry must re-evaluate the values that must be preserved, while introducing new tourism products that respond to the changing needs.
10. Fair and sustainable urban tourism development should further be expanded to not only mega-cities but also to small and medium sized towns and cities as well. Local activists, field specialists, local government officers, industry experts, scholars and policy makers should share experiences and cooperate with one another to achieve this goal.
11. The paradigm of fair and sustainable tourism development should be shared among mega-cities in Asia. This calls for active leadership of the city governments in mega-cities. We hereby declare that fair, sustainable, tourism development by no means discourages tourism, but rather seeks to realize a more bountiful life based on mutual respect and cooperation among the local inhabitants, tourists and the tourism industry as a whole.