

# Organizational And Legal Aspects Of International Tourism (Using The World Tourism Organization As An Example)

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**Abstract:** This article is devoted to understand the reasons why there are so many organizations in tourism sector at the national and international levels and the evolution of World Tourism Organization and its role and activities in promoting tourism equitably world over. This article analyzes the tourism sphere – one of the fastest growing economic sectors and one among the top three industries in the world. Conceptually, it is a social process emerged by the movement of people from their usual environment to a different place for specific purposes other than for remunerative activities. This phenomenon has been evolved through many centuries and now it has occupied a prominent position in the social life of people of almost all societies across the world.

**Keywords:** Tourism, Global tourism organizations, United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), Global Code of Ethics for Tourism.

**Introduction:** Tourism, being a complex process, necessitates active involvement of a large number of organizations at various levels ranging from international to local for its effective and efficient functioning. These organizations have different roles to perform, such as to act as catalyst, facilitate planning and development, have effective coordination between different sectors, obtain financial and technical assistance, statistical support as well as for promotion. Tourism policy formulation, infrastructure development, protecting the rights of tourists and hosts, negotiations, technical and legal assistance, etc., are some other areas where these organizations are involved. The nature of these organizations varies on different bases. Some are quasi-government bodies, some are international associations, some others are professional bodies, etc. These organizations are either formed out of representations from governmental agencies or formed by the private agencies. The organizations directly and indirectly associated to tourism can be classified into two broad categories, such as:

- International organizations
- National organizations.

These organizations operate at the international level and are further classified as global, regional and continental organizations. They can be further classified on different bases.

The following is one type of subclassification of international organizations:

- **Intergovernmental bodies:** There constitute the organisations that are created by treaties entered into by sovereign states or nations. United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) is a typical example of this.
- **Nongovernmental bodies:** Organisations consisting of individuals or organisations (rather than governments). World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) is such a professional body with operations spanning across the world.

International organizations can also be classified on the basis of the span of operation.

The following are such two categories:

- **Global tourism organizations:** These organizations function at the world level, and are concerned with global tourism. Examples include both UNWTO and WTTC.

- **Regional tourism organizations:** The operation is limited to a specific region of the world. Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) is an example of a regional organization.

International organisations may also be classified depending on the nature of interest in tourism:

- **General organisations:** These organisations are concerned with all the aspects relating to tourism. United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) is that kind of organisation which deals with almost all aspects of tourism happening across the world.

- **Specific organisations:** The focus of organisations belonging to this category will be only on a specific aspect of tourism. Tourism is a multidisciplinary subject and the possibility of such organisations is high. International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and International Air Transport Association (IATA) focus on civil aviation and commercial aviation areas of tourism.

- **Partial interest in tourism:** They are not tourism organisations, yet have partial interest in tourism with a certain amount of linkage with tourism. World Health Organisation (WHO), and UNESCO are examples.

There are a number of international tourism organizations functioning and have been formed with representation from both public and private sectors together as well as separately. A brief account on United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), International Air Transport Association (IATA), United Federation of Travel Agents Association (UFTAA), World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), and Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) are given below.

#### **United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)**

United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) is the most important intergovernmental organization to hold worldwide responsibilities, encompassing all tourism activities. This organization plays a major role in the development of international tourism.

The WTO has its beginnings as the International Congress of Official Tourist Traffic set up in 1925 in Hague. It was renamed as the International Union of Official Travel Organization (IUOTO) after World War II and moved to Geneva. Around 109 national tourist organizations and 88 Associate Members from the public and private agencies were included in IUOTO. By 1960s, it became clear that there was a need for more effective tools to keep developments under review and to provide tourism with intergovernmental machinery especially equipped to deal with the movement of persons, tourism policies and tourist's aspects. In 1969, a movement was held in this direction and a resolution

to the same effect was passed by the UN General Assembly, which recognized the decisive and central role the IUOTO should play in the field of world tourism in cooperation with the existing machinery within the UN. Following this resolution, the WTO's statutes were ratified in 1974 by the states whose official tourists organizations were members of IUOTO. Thus, IUOTO became World Tourism Organization (WTO) and its first general assembly was held in Madrid in 1975. The headquarters was set up in Madrid (Spain). In 1976, WTO became an executing agency of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and in 2003, it became a specialized agency of the UN.

By 2015, its membership consisted of 157 countries, 6 Associate Members and over 480 Affiliate Members representing the private sector, educational institutions, tourism associations and local tourism authorities.

UNWTO is vested by the UN with a central and decisive role in promoting the development of responsible, sustainable and universally acceptable tourism, with the aim of contributing to economic development, international understanding, peace, prosperity and universal respect for, and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms. In pursuing this aim, the organization pays particular attention to the interests of the developing countries in the field of tourism.

Acting as an umbrella organization for world tourism, UNWTO plays a catalytic role in promoting technology transfers and international cooperation, in stimulating and developing public-private sector partnership and in encouraging the implementation of the "Global Code of Ethics for Tourism," with a view to ensure that member countries, tourist destinations and businesses maximize the positive economic, social and cultural effects of tourism and fully reap its benefits, while, at the same time they minimize its negative social and environmental impacts.

Through tourism, UNWTO aims at stimulating economic growth, creating job, providing incentives for protecting the environment and cultural heritage, and promoting peace, prosperity and respect towards human rights.

#### **The UNWTO functions through the following five bodies:**

- **General assembly:** This is the principal gathering of UNWTO and it meets every two years. Every four years it elects a Secretary General. This is composed of full members and associate members. The meeting approves budget and programme of work and debates topics of importance.

- **Executive council:** This is the governing board,

responsible for ensuring that the organization carries out its works and adheres to its budget. It meets twice a year. It is composed of 27 members elected by the General Assembly. As host country, Spain has a permanent seat.

- **Regional commission:** UNWTO has six regional commissions – Africa, America, East Asia and the Pacific, Europe, the Middle East and South Asia. They meet at least once a year and are composed of all the full members and associate members from that region.

- **Committees:** Separate committees on programme, budget and finance, statistics and macroeconomic analysis, marketing intelligence and promotion, sustainable development, education, tourism, etc., advice on management and programme content.

- **The secretariat:** The Secretariat is led by the Secretary General. It is located in Madrid. The officials are responsible for implementing UNWTO's programme of work and serving the needs of the members.

- **Membership:** UNWTO has three categories of membership:

(a) Full members: This category of membership is open to all sovereign states.

(b) Associate membership: This is open to all territories not responsible for their external relations. That means territories which are not sovereign states like Gibraltar.

(c) Affiliate members: This comprises a wide range of organizations and companies working directly in travel, tourism and related sectors. They may include airlines, other transport operators, hotels, restaurants, tour operators, travel agents, insurance companies, etc.

Apart from these categories of members, one permanent observer – "The Vatican" is also included in UNWTO.

UNWTO provides assistance in the following areas:

- Inventories of existing and potential tourism resources, national tourism development master plans, and formulation of policies, plans and programmes for development of domestic tourism.

- Institutional framework of national tourism administrative structures, tourism development corporation, legislation and regulation.

- Evaluation of the impact of tourism on the national economy and on the environment.

- Statistics, forecasting, statistical analysis, market research, market analysis, promotion, publicity and public relations.

- Training, feasibility studies for tourism and hotel schools, and management development.

- Planning and management of the aims of national, social and cultural value for tourism user.

- Area development, development of new tourism sites, development of particular tourism products.

- Tourist accommodation, planning, and operating assistance, and hotel classification systems.

- Source and methods of finance for tourism investments, pre-investment studies, feasibility studies of investment projects, cost-benefit analysis.

- Safety of tourists and tourist facilities.

Some important areas of activities, which UNWTO is engaged in, are listed below.

UNWTO is committed to ensuring ethics and social responsibility in tourism the world over. The following are the focus areas under The Ethics & Social Responsibility Programme of the UNWTO.

#### **Global Code of Ethics for Tourism**

- Promotes and disseminates the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism and monitors its implementation.

- Coordinates the activities of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics.

- Corporate social responsibility (CSR).

- Promotes the private sector commitment to the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Increasing awareness of the importance of tourism, promoting the UNWTO's work and objectives through effective communication in order to provide transparency of its activities; helping achieve the goals of all sectors; and keeping the involved communities informed about new projects, studies, seminar results and upcoming UNWTO activities, are the primary goals of UNWTO's press and communications sector.

UNWTO has an extensive programme of publication and documentation activities to act as permanent source of information for its members and world community. Every year, it publishes a number of books and reports along with annual global and regional tourist statistics.

Tourism is poised for further growth. Yet, a range of issues cause disruptions in its smooth development. As always, tourism will certainly demonstrate its strong resilience to come back whenever hit by external forces of various kinds. There are a large number of reasons on the anvil to facilitate the evolution of tourism to greater heights. Whatsoever, it is inevitable to develop tourism adhering to the sustainable developments in the most possible manner and to minimize its impacts to the lowest levels.

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