

Nom del diàleg: Turisme, diversitat cultural i diversitat
Data: 15 Juliol
Sessió: L'habitat humà i la convivència turística

Ponent: Alain-Philippe Feutré



Tourism as Creator of Spaces to Share

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IH&RA: THE VOICE OF THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY WORLDWIDE

For 57-years IH&RA has served as the **only international trade association exclusively devoted to promoting and defending the interests of the hotel and restaurant industry.**

Officially recognised by the United Nations, IH&RA permanently monitors major issues of concern and advocates industry positions before the international agencies.

Our two categories of membership include national hotel and restaurant associations around the world, such as F.E.H.R., FEDERACIÓN ESPAÑOLA DE HOSTELERÍA. Our second category of membership includes international and national hotel and restaurant chains including Carlson Hospitality Worldwide, Hilton International, Kempinski, Marriott International, Radisson SAS Hotels & Resorts, Starwood Hotels & Resorts, and many more. IH&RA also welcomes contributions from “supporters and worldwide partners of the hospitality industry” including consulting firms and educational institutes. I would like to recognize two supporters of our association in Spain: **ESC. REST. & HOST. DE BARCELONA and Swiss Hotel School Les Roches in Marabella, Malaga to name a few.**

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IH&RA's primary role is to be the voice and advocate of the hospitality industry, speaking directly to international policy making bodies. IH&RA also provides a two-way information channel for our members and offers many opportunities for networking and exchange of expertise.

IH&RA monitors many issues at the international level, one of the primary being, of course, **sustainable development of tourism.**

Tourism as Creator of Spaces to Share

People often dread the tourism high season while their cities are bombarded with tourists. It must be remembered, however, that these **tourists and the money that they spend while visiting, helps to support these local communities. Tourism is responsible for the increased economic activity, for maintenance and building of local infrastructure, renovating and restoring of local cultural heritage sites and tourist attractions. Without tourism, many cities could not survive.**

Tourism services – hotels, restaurants, cultural sites, transportation – are also generously taxed by local and national governments. These taxes are used to benefit local peoples. Without this revenue from tax on tourism businesses, the onus of the tax would fall on the local communities.

Tourism can also create entire communities which would not otherwise exist, creating the infrastructure and commerce which benefits the local people. In my native country of France, **Eurodisney** was built in empty farmland, a place scattered with only small towns. Since the opening of this tourist attraction, this empty farmland has turned into a busy and bustling area filled with hotels, homes, commerce and

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more. Tourism was responsible for the creation of increased infrastructure – direct metro links, buses to Eurodisney - which also benefited the surrounding and growing neighbourhoods. It also provided a wealth of jobs for local and neighbouring commerce. Of course, hotels are still being built to accommodate the number of ongoing visitors to this site.

Dubai, UAE is another example of tourism creating spaces to share between tourists and the local population. Dubai, not willing to rely solely on oil revenues, has turned duty-free shopping and luxurious, world-renowned hotels and beautiful beaches into a profitable tourism industry for both leisure and business travellers, meetings, incentives and conferences. **Dubai, today, is in such rapid development, it is sure to become one of the leading destinations of the future – bringing unprecedented revenue to the locals of this city and the UAE.**

In many countries in Africa and island countries of the Caribbean, tourism is the number one leading source of revenue which allows governments to build and improve infrastructure – roads, transportation links – habitats for the locals, hotels restaurants, commerce and more. The revenue from tourism also allows the local communities to restore their cultural heritage sites. Tourism is so important to these societies that, without it, the local communities and their environment would no longer thrive.

Tourism – Not all tourists are alike

In European countries, **the majority of tourists are local people travelling from their primary home to their secondary home.** “Locals,” therefore, cannot always be juxtaposed against the “incoming tourist”. The very process of a local travelling to their

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family home in the country is also a form of tourism, showing once again, human habitats being shared with tourism.

Hotels, represented by IH&RA, are intrinsically linked to the environment in which they are built and operate. This environment includes both the natural setting, the site's cultural heritage and the health and livelihood of the people of the host community.

Hotels, and restaurants, are strongly dependent on the wellbeing of the destination in which they are located. Hotels must protect this environment by employing responsible business practices to ensure the livelihood of the community and the environment, which in turn ensures the livelihood of their businesses.

Responsible business, however, is not just the lone responsibility of hotels and restaurants. It is best accomplished with successful private – public partnerships. If hotels and restaurants are to effectively conduct business in a way that preserves the environments and creates healthy “spaces to share,” they must have the support from public institutions and the government which also must cherish these values.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM

Tourism, by its very nature, is a business of sharing. It is a service industry. It is an industry where local communities welcome visitors to share and exchange experiences. It is also an industry of great economic importance worldwide. Recent figures show that:

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Tourism, the largest business sector in the world economy, employs 200 million people, generates \$3.6 trillion in economic activity and accounts for 12 jobs worldwide.

Hospitality – hotels and restaurants – make up a large portion of the tourism economy. We estimate that **hospitality comprises some 300,000 hotels, 8 million restaurants, employs 60 million people worldwide and contributes 950 billion USD annually to the global economy.**

IH&RA: Promoting 3 dimensions of Sustainable Development

Environmental : By encouraging environmental best practice through its Environmental Award & partnerships with the industry.

Social: By combating the commercial sexual exploitation of children in tourism.

Economic: By advocating that sustainable development makes “good business sense” and contributes significantly to GDP.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: CREATING SPACES TO SHARE IS A “SHARED” RESPONSIBILITY PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS & SYNERGIES

Representing the private industry, IH&RA has worked successfully with the public sector to ensure sustainable development of tourism and the creation of healthy and thriving spaces to share. We work very closely with UNEP – the United Nations Environment Programme; UNESCO - the United Nations Environmental, Scientific and Cultural Organization; the World Health Organization and UN AIDS; ECPAT – **End**

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Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes and, of course, the World Tourism Organization.

UNEP: THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

Some of the joint initiatives of IH&RA and UNEP have been: Tour Operator Initiative work on Global Reporting Indicators for the Tourism industry to enable hospitality companies to report coherently and systematically on their actions to achieve sustainability;

Preparations for World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), which was held 26 Aug-4 Sept 02 in Johannesburg, South Africa;

Cooperation in the Coral Reef Initiative where hotels were used as a communication vehicle to raise consumer awareness about the fragility of the world's Coral Reefs.

Finally, UNEP has been a long-standing participant and judge in the IH&RA Environmental Award.

IH&RA and UNEP have also worked together on a variety of publications and manuals to teach Environmental Best Practice and Corporate Social Responsibility.

UNESCO: THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENTAL, SCIENTIFIC, CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

IH&RA and UNESCO signed an official agreement of implementation for the international project "Memories of the Future" at the Ih&RA Congress held in Amsterdam in 1997. The major objective of this partnership between the hospitality industry and UNESCO is the safeguarding and promotion of the World's cultural and natural heritage for the benefit of present and future generations.

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It is clear that tourism is linked to the “tangible” (historic sites, monuments) and intangible (art, dance, folklore) cultural heritage of any destination. The two are mutually dependent and, therefore, hotels and restaurants are committed to doing what they can to preserve this heritage. As an example, IH&RA member Radisson SAS Hotels & Resorts provide financial assistance for the conservation of monuments such as Qasr El Bint Altar in Petra, Jordan, the Bahla Fort in Oman and for the restoration of the tapestry, “Histoire du Chevalier au Cygne” of the Royal Castle of Wavel in Cracow, Poland.

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION – UNAIDS

The sustainable growth of tourism depends on proper destination management reconciling the sometimes conflicting demands of host population and visitors. Poor hygiene, air and water pollution and the outbreak of infectious diseases all act as deterrents to travel.

IH&RA has produced a Manual on dealing with HIV/AIDS in the workplace, in collaboration with UNAIDS, the joint UN programme on HIV/AIDS.

IH&RA actively encourages its members to foster a healthy work force in a healthy work environment.

IH&RA supports the initiatives of UNAIDS and of public and private sector partners in combating this pandemic.

IH&RA actively opposes the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION

ECPAT

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IH&RA works very closely with the World Tourism Organization on a number of issues and I am pleased serve as the Chairman of the WTO Business Council.

One of our most important projects together, and in partnership with ECPAT, is the work done to end the sexual exploitation of children in tourism. Unfortunately, tourism offers a convenient cover for child sex abusers when far removed from their local environment and moral constraints, and the two have become associated. We must do everything in our power to stop this and work together to protect the children in the communities in which tourism flourishes.

IH&RA Member, Carlson Hospitality Worldwide, recently became the first North American Company to sign the “Global Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel & Tourism”. Signature to the Code means a commitment to:

1. Establishing an ethical policy regarding sexual exploitation of children
2. Training the personnel in the country of origin and travel destinations
3. Introducing a clause in contracts with suppliers, stating a common repudiation of commercial sexual exploitation of children.
4. Providing information to travellers by means of catalogues, brochures, in-flight films, ticket-slips, home pages, etc.
5. Providing information to local “key persons” at the destinations.
6. Reporting annually.

In conclusion, we did not inherit the earth from our parents, it was lent to us by our children.

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IH&RA and our hotel and restaurant members worldwide are committed to sustainable development of tourism; practicing corporate social responsibility and promoting “tourism as a creator of spaces to share.”

Please join us to discuss these issues and “Building Business – Building Partnerships” at the IH&RA 41st Annual Congress to take place in Istanbul, Turkey on 19-22 November.

IH&RA

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