

International Conferences on Responsible Tourism in Destinations

The first International Conference on Responsible Tourism in Destinations took place in Cape Town in 2002, it was organised with Western Cape Tourism as a side event to the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg ten years on from Rio.

The Cape Town Conference had representation from UNWTO, UNEP, UNESCO, and a number of other international organisations. The Cape Town Declaration was drafted by Harold Goodwin and passed after line by line debate on the Conference floor. The Cape Town Responsible Tourism in Destinations Conference drew on South Africa's experience of seeking to implement its national Responsible Tourism policy and other international experience to develop an international approach to using tourism for "shaping sustainable spaces into better places". The Cape Town Declaration called on all stakeholders – national and local governments, planning authorities, tourism businesses, tourists and local communities – to "take responsibility for achieving sustainable tourism, and to create better places for people to live in and for people to visit" and defined Responsible Tourism as having the following characteristics:

1. minimises negative economic, environmental, and social impacts;
2. generates greater economic benefits for local people and enhances the well-being of host communities, improves working conditions and access to the industry;
3. involves local people in decisions that affect their lives and life chances;
4. makes positive contributions to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage, to the maintenance of the world's diversity;
5. provides more enjoyable experiences for tourists through more meaningful connections with local people, and a greater understanding of local cultural, social and environmental issues;
6. provides access for physically challenged people; and
7. is culturally sensitive, engenders respect between tourists and hosts, and builds local pride and confidence.

This is the aspiration of World Responsible Tourism Day, organised by World Travel Market with support from the United Nations World Tourism Organisation. www.wtmwrtd.com

Responsible Tourism is firmly based in the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics and calls on all those involved in tourism to take responsibility for making it more sustainable. The purpose of the Responsible Tourism Movement is to use tourism to create better places for people to live in, to enable tourism to contribute to good lives for people in thriving destinations. The particular issues and solutions vary from destination to destination reflecting, and celebrating, our world's cultural and ecological diversity. The annual conferences enable a sharing of experience and help people from diverse places to learn from each other.

The annual Responsible Tourism in Destinations conferences address the issues which matter in the regions where they are hosted. The **Kerala** Conference in 2008 reflected on the experience of diverse stakeholders in implementing the principles of Responsible Tourism. In **Belize** in 2009 the conference addressed a series of issues of real importance there: local economic development,

marine and coastal issues, cruise tourism, second home and condominium tourism and climate change. In **Oman** the government made a statement to the conference on livelihoods, local economic development and human resources; tangible and intangible heritage management; the challenge of tourism in a world of finite resources; and responsible destination marketing and management. In **Canada** there is for the first time a youth conference, in the main conference the themes being addressed are access for all, polar tourism, indigenous tourism drawing on the experience of Canadian and other indigenous peoples, local economic development in developed countries and governance.

There have now been a series of International Conference on Responsible Tourism in Destinations, the conference has been organised annually since 2008. Each time the conference has been hosted by a local organization and co-chaired by someone from the organising country and Harold Goodwin.

	2002	Cape Town	Western Cape Tourism	280 delegated from 20 countries
Declaration	http://www.responsibletourismpartnership.org/CapeTown.html The Cape Town Conference established the city as the founder of the idea of Responsible Tourism in Destinations and enabled it to capitalise on the South African national policy adopted in 1996 and effectively attached to the city of Cape Town in 2002. The City has been at the forefront of Responsible Tourism implementation in South Africa and globally and the World Travel Market World Responsible Tourism Day is based on the Cape Town Declaration. For developments in Cape Town see http://haroldgoodwin.blogware.com/blog/_archives/2009/11/12/4381223.html For World Responsible Tourism Day see http://www.wtmwrtd.com/			
RTD2	2008	Kerala	Department of Tourism	503 delegates from 29 countries
	http://www.artforum.info/documents/KeralaDeclaration.pdf The Conference in 2008 assisted Kerala is establishing Responsible Tourism as its tourism strategy at state and local level. http://www.keralatourism.org/rt-index.php For a recent report on Responsible Tourism in Kerala (June 2011) see http://haroldgoodwin.blogware.com/blog/_archives/2011/6/6/4834622.html			
RTD3	2009	Belize	ICRT Belize & Ministry of Tourism	250 delegates from 19 countries
	http://icrtbelize.org/pdf/DECLARATIONS.pdf The conference enabled a broad debate to occur in Belize as a new government came to power. Belize is currently finalising a National Responsible Tourism Policy – for a copy www.saveourpeninsula.org/.../Final%20Draft_Policy_on_RespTourism_March2010.pdf			
RTD4	2010	Oman	Ministry of Tourism	380 delegates from 34 countries
	http://www.haroldgoodwin.info/uploads/RTD4/RTD4OmanConfStatement.pdf The Ministry of Tourism used the conference to establish its credentials and to engage			

	with international experts on the next steps for tourism development in Oman. Oman is working with UNEP on its sustainable tourism policy. For details of Responsible Tourism in Oman see Destination:RT published in English and Arabic. www.responsibletourismpartnership.org/documents/RTD4DestinationRT_Eng.pdf www.responsibletourismpartnership.org/documents/RTD4DestinationRT_Arab.pdf		
RTD5	2011	Alberta	ICRT Canada & Ministry of Tourism
	<p>There were 193 participants from over 20 countries.</p> <p>There was a Conference Declaration on the themes of the conference and a statement from the Ministry of Tourism. The conference themes were access for all, polar tourism, indigenous tourism, governance and tourism & local economic development in a developed country.</p> <p>Conference Declaration http://rtd5.icrtcanada.ca/?p=1132</p> <p>Ministry Statement http://rtd5.icrtcanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/Bill-Werry-Responsible-Tourism-Statement.pdf</p>		

Who attends is a function of the conference programme and the ways in which the conference is marketed locally and internationally. The delegates who attend the conferences are very diverse:

- international and inter-governmental agencies
- national and local government
- tourism businesses – hotels, tourism operators, incoming agents and guides
- planners, architects and developers
- consultants and development agency staff
- media

The aspiration for 2012 is to run a conference immediately before Rio+20 and to reflect on progress and learning since 1992, using the two themes of Rio in 1992: Environment and Development.

There is information about the conferences is on line – see www.artyforum.info/rtd.html