

Human Rights in Tourism: Identifying and overcoming challenges

A practical dialogue on current assessments from Mexico, Vietnam, and Myanmar

Berlin, 8 March 2016

At ITB the Roundtable Human Rights in Tourism gathers for the first time world leaders in Human Rights Impact Assessments in tourism. Through its panel discussion it will enable mutual learning and exchange within the sector. On 10 March 2016 from 12-1 pm the experts on the panel will give exclusive insights into assessments conducted in Mexico, Vietnam and Myanmar as well as practical advice for businesses and civil society.

In 2011 the United Nations adopted the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. It is evident ever since: The respect for human rights is not a passive responsibility but requires action from businesses in order to assess and effectively eliminate risks of their operations. Examining the human rights situation within a destination is a core element and an important first step. As part of so-called Human Rights Impact Assessments (HRIA) pioneers in tourism seek the dialogue with business partners, local non-governmental organisations and government institutions to understand the impacts of tourism on the country and the population as well as to develop solutions at the local level.

Importance of knowledge sharing and dialogue

“Especially because only few Human Rights Impact Assessments in tourism exist so far, it is crucial to exchange experiences and share knowledge”, Antje Monshausen from Tourism Watch – Bread for the World and chairwoman of the Roundtable stresses. Sibylle Baumgartner from Kuoni Group, a founding member of the Roundtable, complements: “Ultimately the purpose is not to reinvent the wheel time and again, but to benefit from existing assessments and apply what we have learned in order to respond appropriately to human rights risks in business operations.”

Impact assessments as a basis for the respect of human rights

The Roundtable is optimistic that the exchange between businesses and civil society organisations will contribute to the development of further destination-related impact assessments in the upcoming years. Therefore, specific questions emerging from practical experiences will be discussed as part of the event. Destination on-site assessments are an important basis for companies to understand the impacts of their business activities on human rights and to develop individual adaptation strategies. Not least the challenges and costs for individual businesses can be reduced through cooperation.

The Roundtable welcomes new members

The dialogue within the sector is particularly important to better coordinate the cooperation and create synergies. This is one reason why the Roundtable is pleased to welcome German Travel Association (DRV) and Dutch Travel Association (ANVR) as new members. At the ITB event the new members will be represented by Norbert Fiebig, president of the German Travel Association (DRV), and Gerben Hardeman from the Dutch Travel Association ANVR. Norbert Fiebig confirms: “As associations we have a key role in progressing the sector dialogue and discussing joint sustainable solutions.” In addition to forum anders reisen, four national travel associations namely from Germany, Austria, Switzerland and the Netherlands are now members of the Roundtable.

Event

„How to start human rights due diligence in practise? Impact assessments as part of corporate human rights strategies” on Thursday, 10 March 2016 from 12-1 pm, Hall 4.1, Pow-Wow-Stage

Panel talk with **Nicole Häusler** (Advisor for sustainable tourism), **Beth Verhey** (Unicef), **Michelle Naggar** (Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide), **Sibylle Baumgartner** (Kuoni Group), **Gerben Hardeman** (ANVR – Dutch Travel Association), moderated by **Antje Monshausen** (Bread for the World – Tourism Watch).

Starting at 12:50: **Stakeholder talk with new association members** including the signing ceremony with the new members of the Roundtable: **Gerben Hardeman** (ANVR) and **Norbert Fiebig** (DRV).

About the Roundtable Human Rights in Tourism

The Roundtable Human Rights in Tourism is a multi-stakeholder initiative, supporting businesses' implementation of human rights due diligence. Currently the Roundtable has 24 members, including tour operators, travel associations, certification bodies as well as sector-specific multipliers and non-governmental organisations. The Roundtable is an open dialogue platform and provides information, materials and good practise examples.

Members: a&e erlebnis:reisen, Akte – Working Group on Tourism & Development, ANVR – Dutch Travel Association, Austrian Travel Association, Bread for the World - Tourism Watch, ECPAT Germany, forum anders reisen e.V., Gebeco – Society for International Encounters and Cooperation, German Travel Association, Global Compact Network Germany, Hamburg Foundation for Business Ethics, Hauser Exkursionen, ITB Berlin, kate – Ecology & Development, Kuoni Travel Management Ltd., Naturefriends International, One World – Reisen mit Sinnen, Studiosus Reisen, Swiss Travel Association, TourCert, Travelife for Hotels and Accommodations, Viventura, Vocational School 14 Hanover, Willy Scharnow Tourism Foundation

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