

**Committee:** The Economic and Social Council

**Topic:** Promoting the development of sustainable tourism industry

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**Position:** LDP member

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## Introduction

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) coordinates the work of the 14 UN specialised agencies, 10 functional commissions, and 5 regional commissions, and receives reports from 9 UN funds and programmes. According to the United Nations Charter, ECOSOC is accountable for promoting higher living standards, full employment, and economic and social progress.

While tourism can be seen as a strong economic factor that composes an integral part of a nation's socioeconomic development, it shows numerous drawbacks such as environmental pollution, disputes between the locals and the travellers and economic concerns. To address these problems, the United Nations Committee, UNEP, suggested 12 main goals for sustainable tourism. The concept of sustainable tourism is subject to SDGs(Sustainable Development Goals), as they cover various sectors of the sustainable tourism industry. The term sustainable tourism refers to travel and tourism's prioritising socioeconomic principles including environmental conservation, economic growth, and sociocultural development among the community in all types of travelling.

To ensure the implementation of a sustainable tourism industry, the global society has to tackle such problems including negative environmental impacts, ignored sociocultural values of the destinations, and economic problems that are invoked by tourism. In order for nations to solve these issues at hand efficiently, a suitable balance must be established among these three aspects so as to guarantee its long-term sustainability.

## **Definition of Key Terms**

### **Sustainable Tourism**

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization(UNWTO), the definition of sustainable tourism is tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, societal and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities. It aims to construct a tourism-oriented society in which it could seek for such values as biodiversity, economic growth, and resource efficiency.

### **Right to Tourism**

The right to tourism, one of the fundamental human rights, is a concept that acknowledges opportunities for all individuals to travel and experience other cities without any obstacles. It is often considered to be similar to the right to leisure and rest, including reasonable limitations to working hours, for the right to tourism facilitates widespread access to leisure and rest.

### **Green Tourism**

Green tourism is a term used to describe environmentally benign travel. Its concept is fairly similar to sustainable tourism in that it does not in general concern itself with cultural or economic elements of the destination.

### **Sustainable Society**

According to the United Nations, sustainable society refers to one in which human beings do not damage the environment or overuse resources, and is therefore able to leave a beautiful, peaceful, and bountiful earth that future generations can continue to inhabit. This concept is devilishly related with the tourism industry as it causes a lot of social problems and conflicts to occur, hindering the development of a sustainable society.

### **Local Economy Support**

Local economy support is a concept by which initiatives support and prioritise financial growth and sustainability of destination by taking advantage of local services, goods, and companies. This term can also mean ensuring job opportunities and labour rights such as fair wages and decent working conditions of the local population.

## **Biodiversity**

Biodiversity refers to the variety of species or life on Earth. Biodiversity can be regarded as both broad and narrow. In other words, biodiversity could mean all of these concepts: genetic variability, species diversity, ecosystem diversity, and phylogenetic diversity. While achieving biodiversity goals is important, it is not realised on the globe due to several human activities including travel or tourism.

## **Greenwashing**

Greenwashing is behaviours or activities that make people believe certain companies or bodies are doing more to protect the environment than they really are, which might mislead consumers, investors, and the public, hampering the trust, ambition, and action needed to bring about global change and secure a sustainable planet. The UN views greenwashing as a disturbance of environmental growth. In terms of sustainable tourism, greenwashing impedes both the exercise of ecological conservation and economic growth.

## **Socioeconomic Development**

Socioeconomic development is the process of social and economic progress in one community. It is usually measured with indicators, such as GDP, life expectancy, literacy and levels of employment. The choices that are available in a community are impacted by social and economic factors. These choices include the population's ability to afford medical care and housing and to manage stress. Various member states rely on tourism to achieve socioeconomic goals, hoping to operate as a factor of great economic growth.

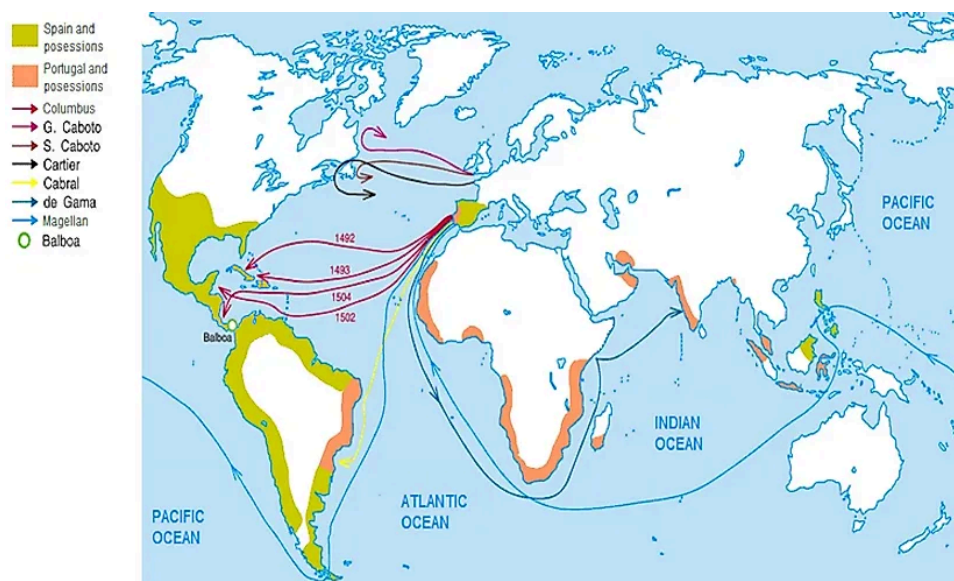
## Background Information

### Historical Background

The first tourism era dates back to 3000 B.C.E, Egypt. In ancient Egypt, tourism was primarily popular around pilgrimages. People travelled to temples and constructed such sites as the Pyramids of Giza, seeking spiritual accomplishments. Wealthy Egyptians also enjoyed leisure travel along the Nile River, engaging in recreational activities.

The travel the world refers to today first emerged in the Renaissance era. The Renaissance era witnessed the emergence of the Grand Tour, a cultural quest undertaken by young European aristocrats or the royal family. These travellers sought to experience the art, culture, and history of Western civilization, particularly in Italy and France.

The time when tourism was unprecedentedly popular and showed the most rapid growth was the age of discovery right after the Renaissance, with European travellers exploring other continents. It was a huge revolution that not only noblemen but commoners could travel around the globe. This era also opened global routes or channels and facilitated exchanges of cultural values, laying the groundwork for future international tourism.



*The age of discovery, (WorldAtlas)*

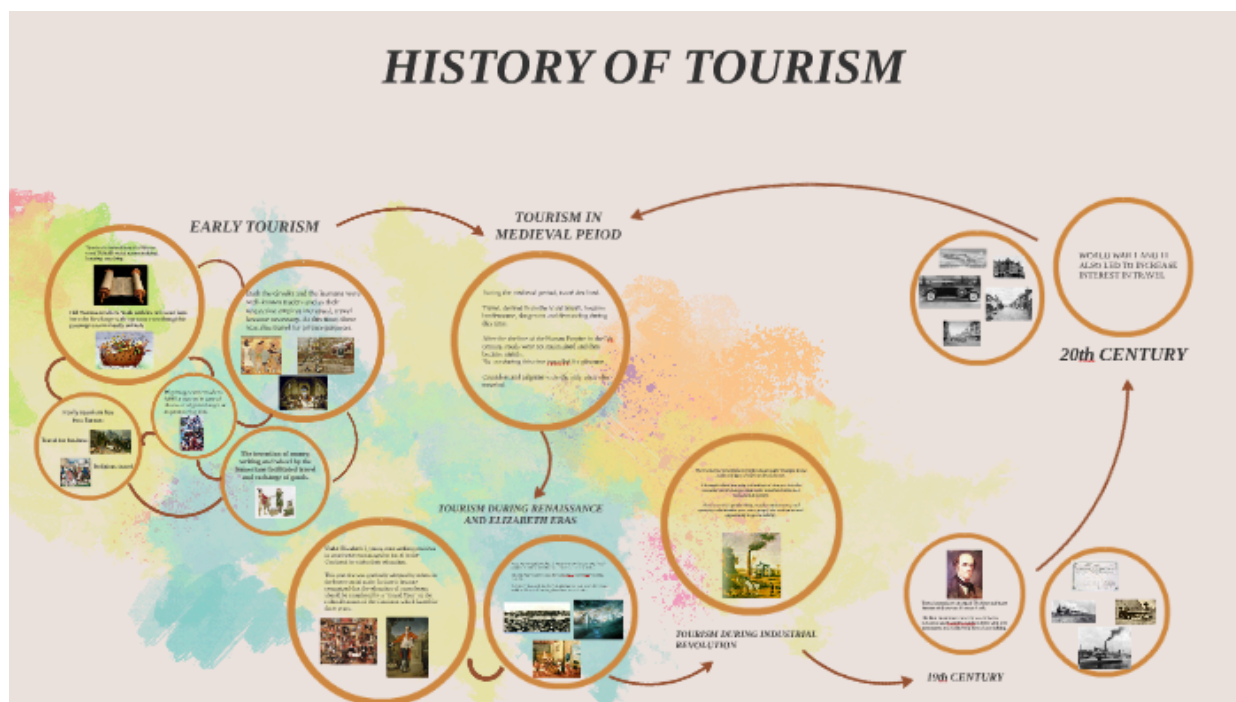
The Industrial Revolution marked a turning point in the history of tourism. Technological advancements, such as the steam engine and railways, made travel easier, safer, faster and more affordable. Also, the concept of package tour was first suggested by Thomas Cook, a pioneering figure in 1841, making organised group travel a reality.

Then in the 1960s, the movement towards environmental sustainability and conservation suggested the concept of “sustainable tourism”. Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring" (1962), highlighted the adverse impacts of human activities including tourism on the environment.

After the 1980s, the formal beginning of sustainable tourism as a distinct concept emerged. The term was started to be used with the publication of the Brundtland Report, "Our Common Future" (1987), by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED). This particular report defined sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." Hence, the concept of sustainable tourism. During this decade, people began to consider tourism not just as a factor in economic growth but also as a contributor to environmental degradation and cultural destruction. The awareness of these impacts promoted a growing emphasis on developing tourism, having the public appreciate environmentally responsible, societally equitable, and economically positive tourism.

By the late 20th and early 21st century, it gained further public traction and the UN's intervention had occurred, as the committee United Nations World Tourism Organisation was founded. The organisation's efforts helped integrate sustainability into national and international tourism policies. Therefore, the concept itself was specified, providing additional concepts like green tourism or ecotourism.

Nowadays, the changes over time brought some significant changes in tourism. For instance, the COVID-19 pandemic deleteriously impacted the tourism industry, underlining the need for resilience and sustainability. Post-pandemic efforts to recover from negative impacts emphasise building back(a strategy aimed at reducing the risk to the people of nations or communities in the wake of future disasters and shocks), with a stronger focus on sustainability, inclusivity, and resilience.



*History of tourism, (Prezi)*

## Sustainable Tourism and Sustainable Development Goals

The notion of sustainable tourism focuses on minimising the negative impacts of tourism on the environment, society, and economy while maximising the positive contributions to these areas. SDGs also aim to transform the world in a positive way, suggesting a deep relationship between sustainable tourism and SDGs.

Among the 17 goals of SDGs, Responsible consumption and production (No.12) requires all member states, communities, and individuals to be responsible for their consumption and production. Target B of this particular SDG calls for the development and implementation of tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism that create jobs and promote local culture and products. Corporate practices in the source markets affect tourism production in the destinations. Thus, to address this particular agenda, emphasis of SDG 12 is indispensable.

Furthermore, Climate action (No.13) also contributes to the practice of sustainable tourism, given that this particular SDG urges nations to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts since the tourism sector is a substantial contributor to greenhouse gas emissions.

## **Negative Impacts Caused by Tourism on Global Societies**

As mentioned above, tourism has a number of drawbacks, which make the destination less attractive, causing the tourism industry to decline as a whole.

Since the tourism industry is often subjected to overconsumption, It generates significant amounts of waste and pollutants. According to recent studies, tourism generates up to 8% of greenhouse gas globally. In some places in which over-tourism occurs, travellers produce twice as much waste as local residents. This can and has put considerable strain on the local waste management systems, causing landfills and sewage plants to overflow. Furthermore, such travel facilities as hotels, and cruise liners often improperly dispose of trash. For instance, cruise ships produce 70,000 tons of wastewater every year, merely in the Caribbean alone. These problems not only make travel destinations unattractive but also have a detrimental effect on local populations and their wildlife. In order to efficiently address this problem, both tourists and destination communities should promote the optimal usage of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping conserve natural heritage and biodiversity.

One representative example that shows over-tourism and its negative consequences is Maya Beach. Located in Thailand, Maya Beach gained international fame after it was featured in the 2000 movie “The Beach,” directed by Danny Boyle and starring Leonardo DiCaprio. Furthermore, Maya Bay is renowned for its breathtaking natural beauty. The bay is surrounded by tall limestone cliffs covered with lush green vegetation, giving it a secluded and picturesque ambience. The bay’s clear waters and white sandy beach create a postcard-perfect tropical paradise. Due to these ideal aspects for travelling, Maya Beach was so popular that it received more than 5,000 tourists per day. This huge influx did have a positive impact on financial growth yet this over-tourism also brought many huge issues. The excessive influx of tourists to Maya Beach led to harmful environmental degradation, threatening the beauty that made it famous. In response to the environmental impact, the Thai government took measures to preserve the delicate ecosystem and temporarily closed Maya Bay to visitors from mid-2018 onwards. The closure aimed to allow the damaged coral reefs and marine life to recover. After the Covid-19 pandemic, the government reopened the beach; but with restrictive rules. Maya Beach is now partially recovered, but the original beauty is totally lost.





*Leonardo DiCaprio's beach, Maya Bay, closed to tourists, (The Times)*

Conserving sociocultural values is also a major element of achieving sustainable tourism. However, there exist several problems that hinder sociocultural preservation in destinations. The most impending and prominent obstacle is Cultural Clashes. Differences between the cultural background and traditional norms have caused several conflicts between the locals and tourists, some of which had become so violent that it caused casualties. Also, the influx of tourists can and has impeded local residents from exercising their right to privacy and reduced access to public facilities, again leading to tension and resentment. Additionally, the commodification of cultural heritage is a significant issue with respect to sociocultural development. Some tourists have caused both physical and environmental damage to the cultural heritage of the destination which might have a symbolic meaning to its culture. To solve these problems, Tourists must respect the sociocultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to intercultural understanding and tolerance.

Venice, the city of Italy could be taken as an example of this issue. Venice, known for its stunning tourist sites and beautiful streets, is one of the most famous travelling sites on the entire globe. However, Venice on a typical day is nothing but overtourism. Venice is now swamped by day trippers, who far outnumber overnight visitors and local residents. Every year, Venice receives 20 million visitors. On its busiest day, there are 120 thousand individuals visiting Venice, which is home to just 55 thousand permanent residents. Furthermore, among these 120 thousand visitors, 44 thousand of them are from the cruise ship staying no more than a few hours, see little, buy a few trinkets and leave. In this way, they bring no economic benefits for the city but cause overtourism and environmental and cultural degradation. Since tourists will stick to the famous landmarks with great cultural value, overtourism makes such sites extremely crowded. In addition, on any given day, residents are forced to negotiate with crowds and put up with noisy wheelie suitcases, selfie sticks and



often disrespectful behaviour such as swimming in canals, and picnicking on bridges, as they try to go about their daily lives. This damages Venice's fragile buildings, strains its infrastructure, and inhibits local people from going about their business.

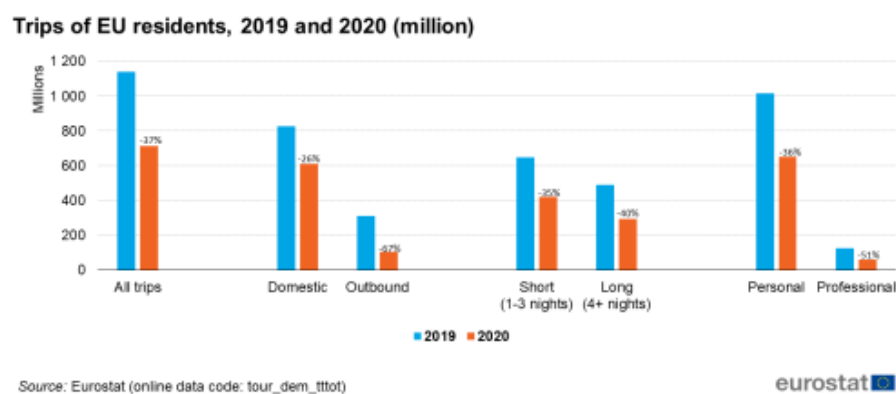


*Italy's battle against mass tourism, (DW)*

The last major problem to be addressed is economic sustainability. As stated at the beginning of the introduction, economic growth is the major reason why nations promote and support the tourism industry. However, while tourism can have a positive impact, it poses several economic challenges. Economic inequity is one of them. Often, the economic benefits of sustainable tourism do not reach the entire community. Major parties involved in the travel industry such as foreign tour companies might capture most of the revenue, whereas local businesses and residents see little economic gains for themselves. This phenomenon excludes locals from the tourism industry, making destinations unattractive. It is not only economic inequity but also economic dependence that causes problems. If a certain nation or community focuses merely on developing its tourism industry, it may be challenging for them to handle unexpected circumstances such as natural disasters or outbreaks of pandemics. In reality, many groups and societies which centred their economy on tourism faced a great economic crisis during the Covid-19 era. To handle this particular issue, governmental organisations should be responsible for ensuring viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders, making sure that such benefits as stable employment and income-earning opportunities are fairly distributed, offering social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation.

### **Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on Tourism Industry**

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused an array of considerable impacts on the tourism industry not only due to the resulting travel restrictions but a slump in demand among travellers as well. The tourism industry has been massively affected by the outbreak of the virus, as many countries have introduced travel restrictions in an attempt to stop its spread. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) estimated that global international tourist arrivals could have decreased by 58% to 78% in 2020, leading to a potential loss of US \$0.9–1.2 trillion in international tourism factors including hotels, cruise ships, restaurants, and even rental car industries. In recent 2 years, however, as global society has met the post-pandemic era, damages and negative effects posed by Covid-19 are now decreasing. Compared to 2020, when travel almost ground to a halt, restrictions are more relaxed, and tourist arrivals are on the rise. Furthermore, according to a new report released by the UNWTO, the number of tourists in 2024 is expected to reach 1.53 billion, representing a considerable increase from previous years. This number can be interpreted as 97% of pre-pandemic levels.



*impact of Covid-19 on trips of Europeans, (Tourism statistics, 2020)*

## Climate Change and Tourism

Climate change is one of the most pressing challenges facing the tourism industry today. The impacts on tourism are significant, particularly in regions that rely heavily on natural attractions as global temperatures and weather patterns are becoming gradually unpredictable due to climate change.

Coastal and mountain tourism, one of the most popular tourism sectors, are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Rising sea levels and increasing frequency of extreme weather circumstances such as hurricanes and storms pose significant threats to coastal destinations. Beaches, coral reefs, and marine ecosystems are witnessing erosion, bleaching, and habitat loss, not only having

a significant effect on the environment but lowering their appeal to tourists and threatening the livelihoods of local residents dependent on tourism as well.

Regions with mountains are similarly affected by climate change. Melting glaciers and reduced snowfall impact winter tourism. The shrinking of glaciers, such as those in the Alps or the Andes, reduces the opportunity of leisure activities including snowboarding and skiing and affects summer tourism as well, as these landscapes attract such travellers as hikers.

### **Current and Future Prospects of Tourism**

Since the tourism trend tends to change quickly, it faces both promising opportunities and significant challenges. The future of tourism will be determined by emerging fashions, technological advancements, and the ongoing need to address negative impacts.

The integration of technology in tourism, known as smart tourism, is enhancing the travel experience. Technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), and virtual reality (VR), are being used to provide tailored recommendations, virtual tours, and interactive experiences. This helps the user of such technologies to determine the destination or plan a travelling schedule more specifically.

Furthermore, nowadays, destinations often gain in popularity due to Health and Wellness infrastructures. Hence, a growing demand for those, driven by an increasing focus on personal well-being. Destinations offering spa treatments, yoga retreats, and holistic health experiences and beauty services as cosmetic surgery have been more desirable and these kinds of industries in destinations are growing.

## Possible solutions

### **Promoting the usage of sustainable transportation**

As mentioned above, tourism generates up to 8% of greenhouse gas globally, which is primarily generated by transportation. Furthermore, many vessels including cargo ships and cruise liners deposit significant amounts of oil in the sea, destroying marine biology and undersea ecosystems.

Thus, nations should advocate the usage of sustainable transportation such as public transportation, electronic vehicles and cycles, as well as regulate pollutants created by vessels by restricting sea laws and creating clear standards for them.

### **Securing social values and rights of local residents in destination**

Economic iniquity and disputes among the locals and travellers are gradually increasing due to several unexpected over-tourism and outbreaks of diseases such as Covid-19. Local residents of the destinations are suffering from tourists in many different ways. Some tourists cause stressful noise pollution and show disrespectful attitudes toward the locals. Locals cannot even use public utilities due to the excessive influx of tourists.

On top of that, there is an imbalance between the economic earnings of relevant stakeholders in the tourism industry, as stated above. In this regard, nations should be accountable for building more infrastructures for the locals and settling disputes between travellers and residents.

### **Global and Regional Cooperation**

There exist several bodies that are responsible for achieving sustainable tourism such as the UNWTO, ECOSOC, and UNEP. Urging these committees or organisations will definitely help the global society solve this issue in a more efficient manner.

Furthermore, discussing examples of regional cooperation and partnerships aimed at addressing tourism-related issues, such as collaborative marketing initiatives and joint conservation efforts among nations or bodies, will promote the accomplishment of sustainable tourism.

## Major parties involved

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

UNWTO is a leading international organisation in the field of tourism. UNWTO promotes responsible, sustainable, and universally accessible tourism. UNWTO plays a role in promoting the potential of tourism in fighting poverty and achieving the SDGs, the UN General Assembly declared in 2017. Also, it provides guidelines of sustainable tourism, conducts research, and facilitates cooperation among member states and stakeholders to enhance sustainable tourism.

### **EU(European Union)**

Europe stands as the top global destination for tourists. At the beginning of the 21st century, the continent received nearly 55% of all international travellers, totalling 461 million visitors. Popular destinations are Southern Europe and the Mediterranean regions, which drew no less than 165 million visitors in the same year.

Most of the present summer tourism in Europe involves holidaymakers' journeys from the northern regions to the southern coast. However, coastal and mountain tourism face a significant risk from climate change. The Mediterranean region, known as one of the most popular vacation places worldwide, attracts approximately 120 million visitors annually from northern Europe. This tourist surge generates over EUR 100 billion in expenditures, making it the largest international tourist flow globally.

### **The French Republic**

France, part of the European Union, has been the world's leading tourist destination for more than 30 years. In 2019, despite the presence of COVID-19, 90 million international tourists visited France to discover its natural and architectural heritage. According to the OECD report, tourism created more than 2 million openings for French individuals, making up 7.5% of its population and 8% of GDP.

Tourism does indeed help the French economy. However, it also poses negative impacts on the environment and cultural heritage. These are typically caused by the construction of buildings such as hotels and sewage dumped by tourists. Moreover, overtourism within the nation is a huge issue. Olivia

Grégoire, French minister for tourism, suggested that the induced influx of excessive tourists made tourism have harmful impacts. In reality, in many regions in France, the number of visitors is exceeding that of the residents, surpassing their population capacity.

## **Republic of Korea**

The Republic of Korea is one of the most popular destinations today, being visited by 17.5 million tourists yearly. The Republic of Korea was less attractive than it is nowadays in the past. It started to gain popularity after its economic boom in the 1980s. South Korea's rapid industrialisation and economic growth led to better infrastructure and increased international awareness. The rise of Korean culture also came true with its industrialization. K-pop, K-dramas, K-movies attracted fans worldwide, increasing inbound tourism.

In 2019 and the following years, the global pandemic significantly impacted tourism worldwide, including in South Korea. The country implemented strict measures to control the spread of the virus. These strict measures made it impossible for tourists to visit the Republic of Korea. However, in late 2022, the Korean government initiated the "with corona" policy, enabling tourists to visit the Republic of Korea, and partially recovering its tourism industry.

## **The Commonwealth of Australia**

Australia is known for its vibrant tourism industry and sites, attracting millions of visitors annually. Its unique landscapes, rich cultural heritage, and diverse wildlife make it possible to be a popular destination for travellers worldwide. According to a recent report, tourism accounts for at least 5% of job occupations of the nation, providing more than 6 million openings for Australian citizens.

However, these massive employment opportunities are not always beneficial for the tourism sector in Australia. Currently, in Australia, there are no clear required certificates or educational experience for tour guides, and many enter the profession later in life, considering it a secondary job, which makes these guides show a lack of information and knowledge about tour sites, due to little training. What is more serious is the concern that improperly trained site guides might pose inappropriate behaviour and safety risks to tourists. These improper behaviours include blackmail, violent attitude, such as verbal abuse, physical threats and to an extreme degree, attempted murder or actual murder.

## Timeline Of Events

Date	Description of event
<i>Establishment of the UN World Tourism Organization, November 1975</i>	UNWTO was organised based on the concept of sustainable tourism, promoting its practice worldwide.
<i>Brundtland Report Published, October 1987</i>	The United Nations' report named "Our Common Future" suggests the notion of sustainable development, laying the foundation of sustainable tourism principles.
<i>Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, June 1992</i>	The proposition in the Rio De Janeiro and its article 21 highlights the profoundness of sustainable tourism, considering it a broader part of Sustainable Development Goals(SDGs).
<i>International year of ecotourism, 2002</i>	The United Nations declared 2002 as an international year of ecotourism, raising awareness and promoting sustainable tourism.
<i>Cape Town Declaration on responsible tourism, August 2002</i>	The cape town Declaration emphasised sustainable tourism and suggested ways to minimise negative impacts, implement sustainable tourism.
<i>International year of the sustainable tourism development, 2017</i>	The UN designates the year 2017 to highlight the role of sustainable tourism in advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals(SDGs)
<i>UNWTO's One Planet Vision for a Responsible Recovery of the Tourism Sector, May 2020</i>	The UNWTO calls for a responsible recovery of the tourism sector from the COVID-19 crisis which is founded on sustainability, balancing the needs of people, planet and prosperity.
<i>Adoption of the Global Roadmap for Food Waste Reduction in Tourism, 2022</i>	UNWTO provides the framework within which tourism organisations can play their part while bringing benefits to their own operations, guests, the environment, and the sector as a whole.



## UN Involvement, Resolutions, Treaties and Events

- CSD-7 Report on Tourism and Sustainable Development
- Global Code of Ethics for Tourism
- Cape Town Declaration
- Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (with specific reference to Goal 8.9)
- Promotion of sustainable and resilient tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environmental protection, 14 December 2022 (A/RES/77/178)
- Promotion of sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environment protection, 14 December 2020 (A/77/447, para. 13)
- Report of the Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization on the promotion of sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environment protection (A/75/267)
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