

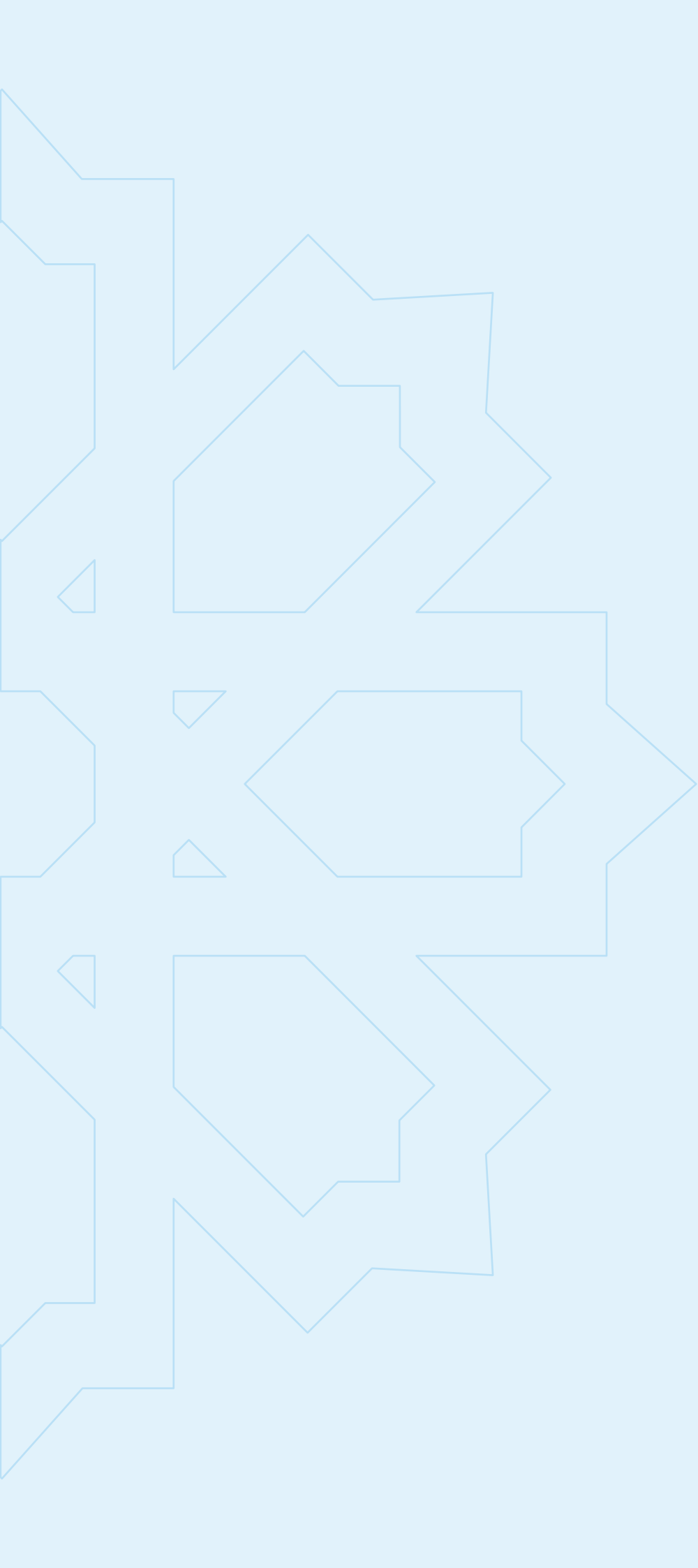
THE MOROCCAN CHARTER OF RESPONSIBLE TOURISM



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SHEM'S





This Charter draws its inspiration from the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (GCET) published by the World Tourism Organization and validated by the United Nations on December 21st 2001.

The World Tourism Organization

In its capacity as the only intergovernmental organization serving as a world forum on tourism policies and related subjects, the World Tourism Organization's mission statement is to promote and develop tourism as a tool for peace and international understanding, thereby fostering economic development and international trade.

The Moroccan Committee of Responsible Tourism

The Moroccan Committee of Responsible Tourism is the national body in charge of turning tourism into a major source of sustainable development, while at the same time looking after the conservation of social and cultural values, the environmental heritage and the protection of the Moroccan identity. The Moroccan Committee of Responsible Tourism is chaired by the Minister of Tourism. It is comprised of members representing all the federations of the tourism sector. The responsibilities of the General Secretariat of the MCRT are carried out by the Director General of the Moroccan Tourist Office. Several other ministerial departments are also members in this Committee according to the topics at hand.

Tourism as an enabler for socio-economic development

In view of the direct and spontaneous links which it contributes to create between people of different cultures and various lifestyles, tourism is a true dynamic force for the promotion of closer ties, peace and mutual understanding among peoples of the world. It assumes a strategic role in fostering cohesiveness and synergy between different world cultures; hence becoming an invaluable mean of exchange and sharing. In this framework, and while further promoting this deeply human role of tourism, the World Tourism Community seeks to foster a market-based environment, free enterprise and freedom of trade. This new trend optimizes the beneficial effects of tourism in terms of employment generation and wealth creation, while at the same time further highlighting its role as the life blood for socioeconomic development.

Free economy and ethics, fully coexisting concepts

Whilst tourism allows individuals to use their free time for the purposes of travel and leisure activities; the responsible and sustainable tourism seeks to respect a set of principles, rules and values, which in no way are inconsistent with the free-enterprise economy and the service trade. A fully emerging country, open and mindful of preserving its individual identity, Morocco fully subscribes to the necessity to defend ethics in tourism, whose aim is to create value-added tourism activity, fostering openness, tolerance, socioeconomic development through responsible and sustainable tourism wherein economic activity and development would coexist with environment friendliness, and wherein international exchanges would coexist with the protection of social and cultural identity. The Moroccan Charter of Responsible Tourism has therefore set out the following principles :

Article 1

Contribution of tourism in furthering the understanding and the mutual respect among peoples and societies

- 1) The principal actors in the field of tourism and the tourists themselves should consider it their duty to give the necessary attention to the traditions and culture of Moroccan regions as a way of recognizing their rich value and heritage.
- 2) Tourist activities must be in line with the specific characters and traditions of Morocco and in compliance with the laws, habits and customs of the country.
- 3) During their travels, tourists and visitors shall refrain from doing any known or suspected criminal offence or felony in the eyes of the Moroccan legislation as well as from any offensive, shocking or hurtful behavior for the Moroccan peoples, or likely to be prejudicial to the local environment (trafficking in drugs, illegal firearms, antiques and other art objects, protected species, dangerous and banned substances).
- 4) Prior to their trip, visitors are expected to seek information from tourism and tour operators, on the country they are visiting. Such information is made available by tour operators and can further be gained on the Internet site of the Moroccan Tourist Office (ONMT).

Article 2

Tourism, a means of self and collective development

- 1) Tourism operators shall respect the gender equity and promote human rights in general, especially those rights of individuals belonging to the most vulnerable segments of the population ; particularly children, senior citizens and persons with disability.
- 2) The exploitation of human beings in all its forms, in particular sexual exploitation, especially when it is applied to children, interferes with the fundamental objectives of tourism and makes it rather counterproductive. Pursuant to international law, such inimical actions to the interest of tourism are severely combated and heavily punished by the Moroccan legislation.
- 3) The inclusion in the vocational training curricula of courses on the importance of tourism interchanges, their economic, social and cultural benefits should be encouraged. The stakeholders in tourism development must train their teams and fit them with adequate knowledge of Morocco and its special features.

Article 3

Tourism, a factor of sustainable development and environmental friendliness

- 1) It is the duty of all tourism development stakeholders to protect the environment and the natural resources, with the aim to foster a sound economic growth, both ongoing and sustainable, likely to meet equitably the needs and aspirations of present and future generations.

2) Several policies leading to the development of tourism and conducive to the rational use of natural, scarce and precious resources, especially water and energy and the reduction of waste production, will be given special weight and fostered by both private and public members of the tourism industry.

3) The rational spread over time and space of tourist and visitors flows, coupled with a better balance of guest occupancy through the year should be sought with an eye to reduce the pressure and impact of the travel trade on environment and increase its beneficial impact on the tourism industry and the local economy.

4) The infrastructures must be designed and the tourist activities planned so as to protect the natural heritage, the ecosystems and the biodiversity together with the endangered species of wild flora and fauna.

Article 4

Tourism, a user and promoter of the world cultural heritage

- 1) The tourist resources belong to the common heritage of mankind. Host communities living on these territories have responsibilities and rights towards these.
- 2) Tourist strategies and activities must be implemented in compliance with the artistic, archeological and cultural heritage, and seek to protect and preserve for the future generations.
- 3) The tourism industry must be designed in such a way as to promote the survival and thriving of cultural, handicraft and traditional cultures and refrain from standardizing and depletion.

Article 5

Tourism : a positive impact for the host communities and areas

- 1) The host communities and regions must be involved actively in tourist activities and should be allowed to share equitably in the economic, social and cultural benefits as well as the direct and indirect employments generated by these activities.
- 2) Tourist strategies and policies should be adopted with a view to contribute to the improvement of living standard and to the meeting of the needs of the host communities. When offering equal competence, local labor shall be sought and offered priority.
- 3) Special attention shall be given to the specific problems of coastal areas and island territories, as well as to rural and sensitive mountainous areas, for which tourism represents sometimes one of the rare opportunities for development in the face of declining conventional economic activities.
- 4) As part of the regulations set out by Moroccan public authorities, tourism practitioners, especially investors, must conduct environmental impact assessments for their development projects and account for the results of such studies in the project development.

Article 6

Obligations of the stakeholders in tourism development

- 1) Tourism practitioners are required to make available to tourists all objective information about the terms of travel, arrangements and accommodation.
- 2) Tourism practitioners must also be concerned with the safety and accident prevention of international visitors. They must see to the existence of adequate and adapted insurance and assistance policies.
- 3) Tour operators and travel agents must also see to it that the media, including modern electronic communication means, provide honest and accurate information on the events and situations likely to have a bearing on guest occupancy in hotels.

Article 7

Rights vested in the workers and contractors of the tourism industry

- 1) Dependent labor force and self-employed workers in the travel trade and related activities are entitled to and have the duty to receive adequate orientation, induction and further training, together with appropriate industrial welfare.
- 2) Transnational companies operating in the tourism industry must abstain from maintaining dominant market positions which they sometimes hold. They shall avoid becoming purveyors of cultural patterns and social models. In return for their legitimate right to invest and transact freely, they must involve themselves actively in the local development and avoid the excessive repatriation of profits notably through induced imports, thus reducing their contribution in the economy of those regions where they do business.
- 3) Entering into partnerships and establishing close relations between tourism operators and host communities must support the attainment of sustainable tourism development goals and hence to equitable distribution of the benefits induced by the responsible tourism.

Article 8

Application of the principles of the Code of Ethics for Tourism

- 1) Public and private stakeholders in tourism development will cooperate in the application of these principles and will be required to oversee the proper implementation of these principles.
- 2) The stakeholders in the tourism development in Morocco acknowledge the role played by the Moroccan Committee of Responsible Tourism as a custodian for sustainable and responsible tourism, while complying with the general legal international principles.