

The Recommendations from the Second International Conference on Accessible Tourism held November 22 - 24, 2007 at the United Nations in Bangkok, Thailand.

Bangkok Recommendations on Accessible Tourism in Asia and the Pacific

We, the representatives of Governments, tourism business sector and tourism-related professional organizations, accessibility experts, disabled people's organizations and other civil society organizations, met in Bangkok, Thailand from 22 - 24 November 2007 at the Second International Conference on Accessible Tourism,

Appreciate the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security of Royal Government of Thailand, Bangkok Metropolitan Administration for their hospitality and support for the Conference, which was jointly organized with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Disabled Peoples' International Asia-Pacific (DPI);

Acknowledge the commitment made by the Royal Government of Thailand as well as the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) civil society, in particular, Disabled People's International – Asia Pacific (DPI-AP) and the Asia and Pacific Disability Forum (APDF) for their leadership in promoting accessible tourism;

Recognize the significance of all international and regional documents on disability, in particular, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CPRD), the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action towards an Inclusive, Barrier-free and Rights-based Society for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific (BMF) and the Biwako Plus Five, the supplement to the BMF;

Also welcome that accessibility to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public is a right articulated in CRPD Article 9.

Note the Plan of Action for Sustainable Tourism Development in Asia and the Pacific Phase II (2006-2012), launched by ESCAP, which pays due attention to the needs of improving accessibility for travelers with disabilities;

Recognize further the Bali Declaration on Barrier-free Tourism for People with Disabilities in 2000 and the Sanya Declaration on Accessible Tourism in Asia and the Pacific in 2006 both of which affirmed our commitment to promote accessible tourism;

Affirm our shared belief in the full social inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities;

Recognize persons with disabilities, older persons and cross-generational families as an increasingly important tourism and travel market segment;

Recognize further that inclusive accessible tourism entails removal of attitudinal and institutional barriers in society, and encompasses accessibility in the physical environment, in transportation, information and communications and other facilities and services that consequently benefit not only persons with different disabilities, but also older persons, families with young children and all other travelers.

To achieve the goal of creating an inclusive, barrier-free, and rights-based society for all;

We recommend that:

- 1) Governments sign and ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Optional Protocol and implement the provisions therein;
- 2) Those, who are responsible for tourism promotion and disability matters at all levels in government, take legislative and administrative measures to promote accessible tourism, in particular by, including relevant provisions and/actions on it in overall economic/social development policies and plans and in tourism development policies and plans;
- 3) Government focal points on disability and tourism policy, tourism industry, accessibility experts, disabled persons' organizations and other civil society organizations build partnerships for effective study, promotion, implementation, and monitoring of accessible tourism;
- 4) Governments as well as business, academia, disabled people's organizations and the media make use of research to promote awareness of the importance of accessible tourism and knowledge of the travel needs of persons with different disabilities and cross-generational travelers;
- 5) Governments, business, and academia collaborate effectively with disabled people's organizations to establish, and where necessary amend, standards and practices to assure uniform international minimum standards and promote innovation in best practices through application of the principles of Universal Design ;
- 6) Governments create a national committee on inclusive accessible tourism to coordinate the effective implementation of measures to promote inclusion of persons with disabilities in tourism and monitor related progress. The committee should consist of representatives from ministries responsible for tourism, social and infrastructure development, building, and transport, associations representing travel agents, hotels and restaurants, organizations and individuals representing

persons with disabilities and tourism education and training institutes;

7) The following measures be taken by the travel and hospitality industry;
Introduce accessibility as a criterion in the rating of hotels and restaurants;
Present awards for outstanding achievements relating to accessible tourism;

8) The travel industry ensures that its employees and staff are properly trained to communicate with and provide services to travelers with disabilities and older travelers;

9) Accessible tourism caters to the needs of persons with different disabilities;

10) Governments and employers take affirmative actions to increase number of persons with disabilities working in the tourism industry;

11) Governments provide economic and other types of incentives to promote accessible tourism for the industry;

12) Governments as well as other stakeholders acknowledge the following seven elements as essential components of effective accessible tourism and take measures for each element, as recommended hereafter;

- a) Travel planning;
- b) Access to information;
- c) Inclusive transportation;
- d) Accessible tourism attractions;
- e) Accessible accommodation;
- f) Mainstream services for all tourists;
- g) Destination experiences;

a) Travel planning

The travel and hospitality industry should include data relevant to travel with disabilities in travel planning materials;

Travel planning professionals should equip themselves with knowledge and resources on the needs of travelers with disabilities;

b) Access to information;

Information should be provided in accessible format;

c) Inclusive transportation;

Governments need to establish and enforce accessibility policy on various modes of transportation (air, sea and land) and make it mandatory;

The transportation industry must take responsibility for the provision of high-quality services equal to or above that of industry norm;

Transport operators are responsible for the provision of seamless connectivity between different types of transportation and this needs to be monitored by the transportation authorities.

d) Accessible tourist attractions;

Governments ensure facilities and services are accessible;

Tourism providers ensure accessible information at points of services;

Government, travel and hospitality industry, disabled persons organizations, and experts develop and disseminate of technical guidelines on improving accessibility of historical attractions;

e) Accessible accommodation;

The principles of Universal Design are to be used in the construction of all accommodations;

International/ regional standards on accommodations applying universal design so that all facilities and rooms in accommodations are accessible for all;

Accessible accommodation should cater to the needs of persons with different disabilities and levels of functionality;

f) Mainstream services for all tourists;

Governments, travel and hospitality industry and the civil society should promote the understanding on mainstreaming, which means that persons with disabilities are included as a norm that the built environment and technology is usable by the widest range of people operating in the widest range of situations without special or separate design, and that all staff must be competent to accommodate persons with disabilities;

Accessible tourism information should be an integral part of mainstream tourism information;

g) Destination experiences;

The travel and hospitality industry should ensure the positive destination experiences of persons with disabilities through the application of Universal Design in the creation of place, products, and policies;

The travel and hospitality industry should ensure the positive destination experiences of persons with disabilities through the regular training for all employees on the needs of persons with disabilities;

Involve Governments, tourism authorities, and consumer /human rights advocates to monitor and evaluate the quality of accessible tourism;

13) Educational Institutions develop and improve on curriculum to include subjects related to accessible tourism in travel-related training and education;

14) All relevant stakeholders mentioned in these recommendations utilize appropriate technology to improve on accessible tourism;

15) All relevant stakeholders collaborate to provide innovative and affordable solutions to promote accessible tourism in rural context;

16) UN ESCAP provides regional policy and technical guidelines and appropriate expertise to accelerate the growth of accessible tourism.

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<http://www.accessibletourism.org/admin?i=enat.en.news.346>