

Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) 2018 – Geneva

Oral Statement
Agenda Item 7

Prepared and Presented
by the
World Indigenous Tourism Alliance (WINTA)
Ben Sherman, Chairman

UNDRIP: Good Practices and Lessons Learned

Dear Chair,

The World Indigenous Tourism Alliance (WINTA) is an Indigenous NGO working in the international tourism industry to support the participation and advancement of Indigenous peoples in the tourism industry.

Tourism is the world's largest service sector industry, and ranks 5th among all global industry sectors.

Tourism is considered by WINTA to offer the greatest opportunity for Indigenous peoples to participate in a world-wide industry in ways that support community economic improvement, social unity, cultural revitalization, natural resource stewardship and entrepreneurial success.

However, the barriers to entry into the tourism industry facing Indigenous populations can often be daunting. The 2017 EMRIP study and report on Good Practices addresses those barriers, and we will not repeat them here.

While we have occasion to mourn the deficit of Indigenous peoples' participation in the tourism industry, we are heartened by the presence of a number of success stories around the globe. Those success stories form the basis of what are called Good Practices in Indigenous tourism, often called Best Practices or Lessons Learned.

These Good Practices are frequently examined for the characteristics that contribute to their successes such as cultural authenticity, quality of tourism product, community support, marketing skills, ecological standards and sustainability features.

EMRIP's 2017 report on Good Practices points out that "Indigenous peoples' ways of understanding business do not necessarily define success by the amount of profit made, but rather by the benefits that a business can provide to their families and communities." That is so very true. We have seen this principle expressed time after time.

We heard one elderly Indigenous artist say this about the *real*/beneficial returns of business ventures, "It's our true form of wealth. It has nothing to do with money. It has nothing to do with riches. It's the knowledge of our culture...of our laws...of the importance of color...of the names of our ancestors back to the beginning of time."

So, when Good Practice characteristics are examined and understood, do not be surprised when cultural and social benefits are placed before monetary returns.

WINTA has had frequent occasions to present Indigenous Good Practices to non-Indigenous audiences in workshops, seminars and conference, or in some written forms. We never fail to present the importance of cultural and social benefits when delivering Indigenous tourism teaching programs to non-Indigenous audiences. We never fail to speak of the importance of Indigenous cultural values in all business relations.

These cultural value systems are found throughout the world's Indigenous societies, and can be largely absent in the dominant western models of business. The EMRIP report describes this as follows, "The mainstream globalization-guided business model, which is often criticized for lacking social dimensions, could learn from indigenous peoples' understanding of businesses grounded in community values and human rights principles."

My belief is that EMRIP and the Human Rights Council could better serve Indigenous societies and the health of the planet by constantly and vigorously stressing the importance of cultural values at the highest levels of government and industry.

Thank you Chair.