

World Tourism Day 2020: COVID 19 – Now is the time to transform tourism!

Vienna, 25 September 2020

Transforming tourism is the demand of the day - this is what the "Transforming Tourism Initiative" is calling for from the World Tourism Organisation UNWTO on the occasion of World Tourism Day on 27 September. The global network of NGOs, tourism professionals and academia identifies concrete measures on how the tourism industry can emerge from the current COVID-19 crisis in a more sustainable and strengthened way. It calls for rapid and committed action on the part of UNWTO - and the involvement of all stakeholders in a spirit of partnership. Only in this way can tourism emerge stronger from the global crisis and contribute to achieving the common vision of Agenda 2030 for a good life for all. Here is an extract from the Open Letter to UNWTO:

The COVID-19 crisis serves as a burning lens and shows that the current tourism model is also in economic terms neither resilient nor sustainable. It is far away from being a key contribution to the future we all need and want.

Transforming tourism is the demand of the hour. It is more than fixing the old, unsustainable growth-based tourism model. It requires a systematic approach to analyze, understand, and address the consequences that unsustainable tourism practices have on people and our planet.

Addressing the challenges of tourism in the context of COVID-19 means:

- Upholding the “leave no one behind”-principle in recovery plans: Governments are requested to provide urgent and efficient support to the most vulnerable groups in the tourism sector, who are the workers in the formal and informal economy.
- Encourage destinations, tourism planners and companies to develop concepts to define local carrying capacities in a participatory way, in order to avoid a repetition of the over-tourism crisis. On the contrary, support tourism strategies that contribute to inclusive economic and social development.
- The recession is likely to lead to new investments in tourism. Guarantees in contracts and planning permissions should ensure that social and environmental sustainability and disaster preparedness are at the core of any new investments and that they do not harm traditional land use patterns.
- Support destinations to implement truly resilient tourism models that serve people in host communities and destinations. Thousands of communities active in tourism have proved, even in a deep crisis such as COVID-19, that their model is more resilient to external shocks and so better equipped for a world characterized by more and more uncertainties.

Achieving our joint vision of the 2030 Agenda and overcoming the incomparable global crisis that COVID-19 causes need the support of every stakeholder. Only inclusive institutions will be able to navigate us all through the crisis and provide the essential vision and principles to enable us to transform tourism together.

In this regard, we urge the UNWTO to open its doors for representatives of people’s movements and members of the informal sector as well as independent NGOs and academic institutions that decide not to become affiliate members of UNWTO.

Read the full letter:

<http://www.transforming-tourism.org/activities/news.html>

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respect_NFI | Naturefriends International aims to contribute to ecologically, socially and economically sustainable tourism which contributes to sustainable global development as defined in the Agenda 2030 of the United Nations.

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*respect_NFI is member of the **Transforming Tourism Initiative** – an open global network of NGOs, tourism practioniers and academia that demands a transformation of tourism in line with the Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development.*

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