

UNWTO Calls for a More Equal and Sustainable Future for Tourism at ITB Berlin Now

Madrid, Spain/Berlin, Germany, 12 March 2021 - *The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has returned to ITB Berlin to lead the conversation on the current challenges facing the sector, and the opportunities to be seized in the future.*

As the United Nations specialized agency leads the restart of global tourism following the unprecedented crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, **three virtual events** brought together voices from across the sector at the leading trade fair. Against a backdrop of ongoing uncertainty, UNWTO outlined a **positive narrative for tourism**, stressing its historic ability to lead from the front and adapt to new challenges.

Less Waste, More Opportunity

On the opening day of ITB Berlin Now, UNWTO ensured sustainability was high on the agenda, leading efforts to ensure the sector lives up to its responsibilities for planet as well as people. “Eliminate. Innovate. Circulate: Strategies from the Global Tourism Plastics Initiative”, hosted jointly by UNWTO, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, featured key insights from both public and private sectors. The event showcased how **addressing plastic waste and pollution within tourism can support the sustainable recovery** of the sector in the aftermath of the pandemic, noting both the progress that has been made and the challenges still to face.

Alongside UNWTO’s commitment to greater sustainability, a commitment to gender equality is a key priority. On the second day of ITB Berlin, and against the backdrop of Women’s History Month, UNWTO hosted a special panel on “Gamechangers” and **female entrepreneurs within tourism**. The event featured presentations by the five female winners of the UNWTO SDGs Startup Competition, outlining how their enterprises can contribute to addressing key issues such as gender equality, poverty alleviation and providing decent work for all.

Communications for Tourism’s Recovery

Also at ITB Berlin, UNWTO looked ahead to tourism’s restart, bringing together leading voices from across the media to explore **the need for a new narrative to fit the rethink and restart of tourism with sustainability as the driving goal**. The “Communications for Recovery” event featured expert participants from Google Arts & Culture, the BBC,

Euronews and Voyages Afrique, alongside high-level private sector participants from Expedia and Stark Communications. The panel identified how the pandemic has changed the way the media present tourism and promote destinations, with members universally expressing their **optimism in tourism not only returning to growth** but also both tourists themselves as well as stakeholders across the sector taking a greater interest in the impact of tourism on communities and people and planet.

Alongside hosting events, UNWTO also contributed expert insights to a discussion on Tourism for Sustainable Development. The event was organized by the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the German Corporation for International Development (GIZ).

Related Links:

["Eliminate. Innovate. Circulate: Strategies from the Global Tourism Plastics Initiative"](#)

[UNWTO Changemakers: Female Entrepreneurs Driving the SDGs](#)

[UNWTO: Communications for Recovery](#)