UNWTO REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN TOURISM IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 16 – 17 November 2021
Gender inequality has been exacerbated by COVID-19 – the global crisis that has had the most devastating and unprecedented impact on the tourism industry. However, its catastrophic effect was felt more acutely by women than men who make up 54% of the tourism workforce. In addition, women in tourism are often concentrated in low-skilled or informal work, which affords them less access to social protection and puts them in a precarious position during a pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted women disproportionately – from loss of jobs to rise in violence against women and unpaid care work. While women are at the front line of COVID-19 response as healthcare workers, innovators and leaders, their contributions remain less visible and less valued.

As countries take tentative steps to restart tourism, UNWTO will jointly organize its first Regional Conference on the Empowerment of Women in Tourism in Asia and the Pacific with the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism of Malaysia. This event is sponsored by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of the Republic of Korea.
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<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 – 10:25</td>
<td>Opening Ceremony</td>
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<td>- Welcome remarks by YB Dato’ Sri Nancy Shukri, Minister, Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia (on-site)</td>
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<td>- Congratulatory remarks by Ms. Siriporn Rathie, Country Program Manager, UN Women We Empower Asia (live, virtual)</td>
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<td>- Opening remarks by Mr. Harry Hwang, Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, UNWTO (on-site)</td>
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<td>11:00 – 12:00</td>
<td>The Impact of Covid19 on Women in Tourism: Policies for Recovery through a Gendered Lens</td>
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<td>- Dato’ Sri Nancy Shukri, Minister, Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia (on-site)</td>
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<td>- Ms. Dawa Futi Sherpa, Former Ambassador of Nepal to Spain (on-site)</td>
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<td>- Ms. Pansy Ho, Vice-Chairperson and Secretary-General of Global Tourism Economy Forum, &amp; Chairperson of Hong Kong Federation of Women</td>
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<td>- Reverend Sonja Hunter, Anglican Priest, of the All saints Anglican Church in Samoa &amp; Former CEO, Samoa Tourism Office &amp; Chairperson of the South Pacific Tourism (live, virtual)</td>
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<td>Q&amp;A discussion</td>
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<td>12:00 – 12:30</td>
<td>Visual Story-telling: Tourism Recovery through a Gendered Lens Case studies and Best Practices</td>
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<td>- Ms. Mona Yang, a Korean doing her PhD on marginalised voices in tourism in Australia (live, virtual)</td>
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<td>- Ms. Prachi Thakur, an Indian postgraduate student working on her PhD on diversity in tourism (live, virtual)</td>
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<td>14:00 – 15:00</td>
<td>Fireside Chat on Women's Employment, Entrepreneurship and Leadership in Tourism</td>
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<td>- Ms. Aileen Clemente, President, Rajah Travel Corporation (live, virtual)</td>
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<td>- Ms. Mar Pages, Co-founder, Solo Female Travellers (live, virtual)</td>
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<td>- Ms. Sharihan Al Mashary, Expo2020 Commercial &amp; Hospitality Senior Management</td>
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<td>Q&amp;A discussion</td>
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<td>15:30 – 16:30</td>
<td>Invisible to Impact Workshop: Branding You for Work, Promotion and Business</td>
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<td>Facilitator: Dr Nisha Abu Bakar, co-founder World Women Tourism (live virtual)</td>
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<td>16:30 – 17:00</td>
<td>Powerful Partnerships Challenge</td>
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<td>Facilitator: Dr Catheryn Khoo, Expert on Gender and Tourism in Asia and the Pacific, UNWTO (live virtual)</td>
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<td>17:00 – 17:15</td>
<td>Conclusions Day 1</td>
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<td>- Dr. Catheryn Khoo, Expert on Gender and Tourism in Asia and the Pacific, UNWTO (live virtual)</td>
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## Programme

### Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia Time

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<td><strong>10:30 – 11:30</strong></td>
<td><strong>Data and Insights for an Inclusive Tourism Recovery</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Moderator:</strong> Ms. Jessy Chahal, Senior Anchor, Bernama News Channel (on-site)&lt;br&gt;- Ms. Dhammika Wijayasinghe, Director General of Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (live, virtual)&lt;br&gt;- Dr. Kumi Kato, Professor at Wakayama University, Japan (on-site)&lt;br&gt;- Ma. Christina Aquino, Chairperson, Tourism Industry Board Foundation, Philippines (live, virtual)&lt;br&gt;- Ms. Jacqueline Fong, CEO Tanoti Malaysia (live, virtual)</td>
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<td><strong>Trivia: Gender in Tourism Data</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Facilitator:</strong> Dr. Catheryn Khoo, Expert on Gender and Tourism in Asia and the Pacific, UNWTO (live, virtual)</td>
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<td><strong>14:00 – 15:00</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pecha Kucha: Education and Training for Women in Tourism</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Moderator:</strong> TBC (on-site)&lt;br&gt;- Ms. Alessandra Alonso, Founder, Women in Travel (live, virtual)&lt;br&gt;- Dr. Nisha Abu Bakar, Trainer, Singapore Tourism Board (live, virtual)&lt;br&gt;- Dr. Lucy Ferguson, Gender and Tourism Expert (live, virtual)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>15:30 – 16:30</strong></td>
<td><strong>HourClass: Co-create Unique Tourism Experiences</strong>&lt;br&gt;- Dr. Elaine Yang, Griffith University Australia (live, virtual)</td>
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<td><strong>16:30 – 16:45</strong></td>
<td><strong>Conference conclusions and recommendations</strong>&lt;br&gt;- Dr. Catheryn Khoo, Expert on Gender and Tourism in Asia and the Pacific, UNWTO (live, virtual)</td>
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<td><strong>16:45 – 17:00</strong></td>
<td><strong>Closing Ceremony</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Moderator:</strong> Joanne Ng, Professional Emcee, Mistress-of-Ceremony (on-site)&lt;br&gt;- Concluding remarks by Mr. Harry Hwang, Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, UNWTO (on-site)&lt;br&gt;- Closing remarks by Datuk Wira Dr Noor Zari Hamat, Secretary-General, Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, Malaysia (on-site)</td>
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Speakers

OPENING CEREMONY

YB Dato’ Sri Nancy Shukri
Minister, Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia

Ms. Siriporn Rathie
Country Program Manager, UN Women We Empower Asia

Mr. Harry Hwang
Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, UNWTO
Speakers and Moderator

The Impact of Covid19 on Women in Tourism: Policies for Recovery through a Gendered Lens

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Ms. Dawa Futi Sherpa
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Ms. Pansy Ho
Vice-Chairperson and Secretary-General of Global Tourism Economy Forum & Chairperson of Hong Kong Federation of Women

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Ms. Aileen Clemente
President, Rajah Travel Corporation

Ms. Mar Pages
Co-founder, Solo Female Travellers

Ms. Sharihan Al Mashary
Expo2020 Commercial & Hospitality Senior Management| First Female Emirati General Manager

Benjamin Owen
Ethics, Culture and Social Responsibility Department, UNWTO
Speakers and Moderator

Data and Insights for an Inclusive Tourism Recovery

Ms. Dhammika Wijayasinghe
Director General of Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority

Dr. Kumi Kato
Professor at Wakayama University, Japan

Ma. Christina Aquino
Chairperson, Tourism Industry Board Foundation, Philippines

Ms. Jacqueline Fong
CEO Tanoti Malaysia

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Pecha Kucha: Education and Training for Women in Tourism

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Trainer, Singapore Tourism Board

Dr. Lucy Ferguson
Gender and Tourism Expert

Dr. Kumi Kato
Professor at Wakayama University, Japan
Dr. Elaine Yang
Tourism researcher at Griffith University Australia
Ms. Joanne Ng  
Professional Emcee, Mistress-of-Ceremony

- Professional emcee with over 30 years’ experience in international conventions, regional conferences and major corporate events.


- Voice talent for corporate documentaries & Independent Event Organiser.
Ms. Jessy Chahal  
Senior Anchor, Bernama News Channel

Jessy Chahal is an established TV personality, broadcast journalist, emcee and moderator. As Senior TV Anchor on Malaysia’s national news agency channel Bernama TV, she covers breaking news, current affairs and panel discussions of national interest.

Jessy engages with leaders and captains of industry to speak on a variety of topics from politics, technology, community well-being, youth, women and other important headlining issues - as seen on her news and current affairs programme, The Brief with Jessy Chahal.

She holds an MBA and is the founder and director of her own boutique communications firm. An entrepreneur, she also dabbles in the F&B industry with her very own restaurant and artisan food delivery service.

In 2020, Jessy was selected as a Fellow of the Global Asian Women's Leaders Network by the Selangor State Government's Women's Empowerment Institute.
Dr. Catheryn Khoo, Expert on Gender and Tourism in Asia and the Pacific, UNWTO

Dr. Catheryn Khoo is a Gender Expert on the Global Report on Women in Tourism (UNWTO, UN Women, World Bank, GIS, Amadeus). She consults and trains for hospitality and tourism businesses and regional councils. She has delivered projects for state tourism organisations, hospitality councils, not-for-profits and private corporations. She also designed digital competency training to women entrepreneurs in Ecuador and Mexico with funding from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. She is founder of Women Academics in Tourism (WAiT) and Special Advisor to World Women Tourism. She is also Associate Professor at the Griffith Institute for Tourism, Australia; Editor-in-Chief of Tourism Management Perspectives; and Series Editor for the “Perspectives on Asian Tourism” published by Springer.

Catheryn has co-published two books on women in tourism (Asian Genders in Tourism and Women and Travel: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives) and is a formidable voice on women in tourism.
YB Dato’ Sri Nancy Shukri
Minister, Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia

YB Dato’ Sri Nancy Shukri was appointed as the Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture of Malaysia during the global onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, a position she embraced with compassion and leadership especially for those affected in the tourism economy.

Nancy Shukri is an advocate for new thinking in the areas of tourism, arts and culture development and promotions, pushing for innovation and technological adoptions in these challenging times. She is also very passionate about bringing Malaysia’s culture and heritage to the forefront, something close to her heart, coming from the rich and culturally diverse Sarawak, Land of Hornbills.

She holds a law degree from Hull University and an executive Master of Business Administration from Ohio University.

As a former chairperson of the Sarawak Federation of Women’s Institutes and the Women Parliamentary Caucus at the national level, she is actively involved in championing women’s issues and supports the empowerment of local entrepreneurs and artisans.
Opening Ceremony

Ms. Siriporn Rathie  
Country Program Manager, UN Women We Empower Asia

Siriporn (Bew) Rathie is with UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. She is the Programme Manager for WeEmpower Asia in Thailand, the EU-UNW partnership regional program aiming at creating a gender-inclusive policies and practices in the business community. Siriporn has been working in the development sector for over 15 years with solid experience in human rights and women’s rights.
The Impact of Covid19 on Women in Tourism: Policies for Recovery through a Gendered Lens

Ms. Pansy Ho
Vice-Chairperson and Secretary-General of Global Tourism Economy Forum & Chairperson of Hong Kong Federation of Women

Ms. Pansy Ho is Group Executive Chairman and Managing Director of Shun Tak Holdings Limited, a Greater Bay Area-based conglomerate listed in Hong Kong with businesses in property, transportation, hospitality and investment sectors. Ms. Ho also holds a respectable number of executive roles in various tourism-related enterprises in Hong Kong and Macau including Co-Chairperson and Executive Director of MGM China Holdings Limited, Director of Sociedade de Turismo e Diversoes de Macau, SA., Vice Chairman, Chief Executive Officer and a Director of the Board of Shun Tak – China Travel Shipping Investments Limited, a Director of Air Macau Company Limited, Vice-Chairman of the Board of Directors of Macau International Airport Company Limited, and the Chairman of Macau Tower Convention & Entertainment Centre.

Outside the boardroom, Ms. Ho actively serves her country and community through participation in a host of public and social services to foster the development in the Mainland China, Hong Kong and Macao. In the Mainland, she is the Standing Committee Member of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference of Beijing, Executive Committee Member of All-China Women’s Federation, Executive Committee Member of Beijing Women’s Federation, Vice President of China Women’s Chamber of Commerce. In Hong Kong, she is the Chairperson of Hong Kong Federation of Women, Life Honorary President of All-China Women’s Federation Hong Kong Delegates Association, Committee Member of the Chinese General Chamber of Commerce. In Macao, she serves as the Vice President of Macao Chamber of Commerce, Vice Chairperson of Macao Convention & Exhibition Association, the Vice President of Macao International Brand Association, and Honorary President of The Women’s General Association of Macau.

In 2019, Ms. Ho founded the Women Power Forum; an international platform aimed at bringing world female leaders from different sectors together for the promotion of women empowerment and development through international exchange and cooperation to catalyze women-driven social innovation, share game-changing ideas, and craft opportunities for positive changes.

Ms. Ho is also a firm believer in tourism’s impact on development and peace. She is dedicated to the promotion of cultural exchange and global tourism development, engaging in a number of the world’s leading tourism organizations. She is the Executive Chairman of China Chamber of Tourism and Executive Committee Member of WTTC, and was appointed as the first official PATA Foundation Ambassador, the first Ambassador for the Louvre in China, and a UNWTO Tourism Ambassador. In 2011, she founded the Global Tourism Economy Research Centre, which organizes the annual Global Tourism Economy Forum, an internationally renowned exchange and cooperation platform for the promotion of sustainable tourism development fully endorsed by the Central Government, the Macau SAR Government and some of the most prestigious international tourism organizations.

Over the years, Ms. Ho has received numerous honors from local and international governments and institutions in recognition of her efforts and contributions to the social and economic development of respective societies and the promotion of cultural exchange, including “March 8th Red Banner Holder 2020” by All-China Women’s Federation, Silver Bauhinia Star by the Hong Kong SAR Government, Medal of Merits – Tourism by the Macau SAR Government and decorations by the Governments of Italy and France.
Ms. Dawa Futi Sherpa
Former Ambassador of Nepal to Spain

Ms. Dawa Futi Sherpa just returned from Madrid, Spain, after completing her two year tenure as an ambassador of Nepal in Madrid, Spain. She was the first Nepali Permanent Representative at UNWTO. When the second wave of COVID 19 crippled Nepal’s medical infrastructure, she mobilized one of the first relief flights into the country, to bring desperately needed oxygen concentrators and cylinders, ventilators, and medical kits through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism.

Over the course of her career, Ms. Sherpa has held various positions in both non-profit and private sectors. Prior to her diplomatic appointment, she was the President of the non-profit Pasang Lhamu Foundation. She received her MA in International Education from New York University, in NY, USA, and has a sound knowledge of development, importance of cultural exchange, public diplomacy and comparative perspectives on race/ethnicity.

Ms. Sherpa’s has also worked with her family’s group of companies in Nepal, which owns and operates one of the largest domestic airlines and trekking companies, as well as a chain of hotels across Nepal.
Ms. Giri Adnyani  
Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy of Indonesia

**Working Experience**

- Director of International Relations, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Republic of Indonesia (2008-2014)
- Secretary of the Director General of Marketing, Ministry of Culture & Tourism, Republic of Indonesia (2014-2015)
- Secretary of Deputy Minister for Marketing II Development, Ministry of Tourism, Republic of Indonesia (January-July 2018)
- Senior Advisor to the Minister for Maritime Affairs, Ministry of Tourism, Republic of Indonesia (July-December 2018)
- Acting Deputy Minister for Marketing I Development, Ministry of Tourism, Republic of Indonesia (August-December 2018)
- Deputy Minister of Industry and Institutional Development, Ministry of Tourism, Republic of Indonesia (January 2019-February 2020)
- Acting Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Tourism, Republic of Indonesia (May-September 2019)
- Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy/ The Tourism and Creative Economy Agency (February 2020- now)

**Education Background**

She has completed the GSTC Sustainable Tourism Auditor Course training and has been assessed as "Competent" in the competency technical scope of GSTC Criteria for Destinations (September, 2021). She earned her Certified Hospitality Educator (CHE) from the AHLEI (American Hotel & Lodging Association) on July 2019. Her Master’s degree (M.Sc.) was earned from the Black Hills State University, South Dakota (USA, 1996), and she obtained her Bachelor’s degree of Teacher Training (Dra.) from the Udayana University, Bali, in 1988.
Reverend Sonja Hunter
Anglican Priest, of the All saints Anglican Church in Samoa & Former CEO, Samoa Tourism Office & Chairperson of the South Pacific Tourism

Reverend Sonja Hunter is an Anglican Priest who serves her community at the All Saints Anglican Parish in Samoa with four other Priests representing the Apia Urban Clergy. She also represents the Church on the Samoa Council of Churches.

Reverend Sonja serves on the Board of the Samoa Quality Broadcasting Limited with interests in Television and Radio Broadcasting. She is the Managing Director of a Tourism and Business Management Consultancy Firm, SMART Investments.

In her former life, Sonja was the Chief Executive Officer of the Samoa Tourism Office for 12 years and the Chairperson of the South Pacific Tourism Organisation for 10 years. She had also served in different committees representing Samoa on PATA and the UNWTO.

She is happily married with two daughters and a son.
Ms. Mona Yang  
A Korean doing her PhD on marginalised voices in tourism in Australia

Mona Ji Hyun Yang is a researcher empowering marginalized people and protecting their rights. She uses interactive qualitative research to inform policy formation and evaluation for marginalized people. Currently, Mona is actively searching for ways to redevelop and refurbish tourism to benefit women and children in developing countries. With her work, she aims to help build a resilient social structure aiding in recovery after the pandemic, which includes safer environments for employment and engagement in the tourism industry. She ignites conversations among global groups to bring a spotlight to the socially isolated groups through keynote addresses, workshops and lectures.

With her vast experience working in intercultural environments from developing and underdeveloped countries, Mona aims to remodel the tourism industry for the benefit of traditionally marginalized groups.
Ms. Prachi Thakur
An Indian postgraduate student working on her PhD on diversity in tourism

Prachi Thakur is a TEDx speaker and diversity trainer who focuses on building inclusive workspaces for women in the tourism and hospitality industry. Using training as her tool, Prachi has been actively working with tourism and hospitality staff in equipping them with inclusive skills and competencies. She frequently engages with a global audience via different mediums, including lectures at international universities, podcasts, and articles. She is a sought-after speaker and has been invited at multiple international conferences to share her views on women in the tourism industry.

An avid solo traveller who uses her experience to fuel the discussion on diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Prachi aims to develop actionable strategies that help women advance in tourism and hospitality.
Ms. Aileen Clemente  
President, Rajah Travel Corporation

Aileen C. Clemente is the President and Chairman of Rajah Travel Corporation which has evolved from a travel agency to a travel corporation over the years. It has added the Tourism Knowledge Center, Tourism Site Management, and Meetings & Events, to its roster of departments, among others. Recently, Aileen, along with her team at Rajah Travel, launched the Travel Academy which addresses the on-the-job training needs of college students through its Online Practicum Program. The Program provides an alternative to the physical on-the-job training in the fulfilment of a student's practicum in a service-oriented business through online sessions that aim to help trainees become familiar with real-life aspects of travel agency operations through a combination of short educational briefers and a variety of practical exercises.

Aileen has received several awards like the Global Peace Awards for Empowered Women in Tourism organized by the International Institute for Peace through Tourism India in partnership with the UNWTO received in 2016. She has been president of the ASEAN Tourism Association (ASEANTA), the Philippine Travel Agencies Association (PTAA), Philippine IATA Agents Travel Association (PIATA) and IATA Agency Programme Joint Council (APJC).
Ms. Mar Pages
Co-founder, Solo Female Travellers

Mar Pages is a former strategy consultant and Googler turned online and travel entrepreneur. She is the Co-Founder of Solo Female Travelers, a platform that empowers women to travel the world solo, safely and on their own terms via online courses, expert advise and resources, a community with over 120,000 women who travel on their own and intimate group tours led by women. Through its tour arm, Solo Female Travelers supports local female guides and businesses by providing employment opportunities, particularly in destinations where leadership positions are mostly held by men, and helps create more female role models in tourism. Mar is passionate about travel, both as an industry and as a passport towards a more equitable and tolerant world.
Ms. Sharihan Al Mashary
Expo2020 Commercial & Hospitality Senior Management| First Female Emirati General Manager

Sharihan Al Mashary started her career at Burj Al Arab, followed by, Madinat Jumeirah, and subsequently moved to the pre-opening of two luxury properties; Palazzo Versace Dubai and Address Boulevard Dubai. She has a proven track record of operational strength, performance excellence, financial & commercial acumen, people development, and Food & Beverage concept creation. She has a passion for humanity and she prioritizes her nation by actively working with different stakeholders.

In 2018, she became the first female Emirati General Manager in Hospitality. She has won several awards such as, 'Best General Manager for UAE', 'The Continent 2019', 'The Young Arab Leader Award for Hospitality Impact' at AHIC 2019, and 'The Emirates Woman Award-Achiever category 2019'. Her achievements were recognised by 'The David Rockefeller Bridging Leadership Award' for her long-term commitment towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.
Dr. Kumi Kato
Professor at Wakayama University, Japan

Dr. Kumi Kato (PhD, Queensland, MEd, Griffith, BA, Tohoku) is a professor at the Faculty of Tourism, Wakayama University, and Happiness Institute, Musashino University, Japan. She is a member of Board of Directors, Global Sustainable Tourism Council, and advisory role at organizations including the Sustainable Tourism Promotion Center, APTEC (UNWTO Japan), Osaka University and Global Himalayan Expeditions, a recipient of UNFCCC Climate Action Award 2020. She led a national project to develop a sustainable tourism standard, JSTS-D, and advice a number of destinations and communities on sustainability.

Ms. Dhammika Wijayasinghe
Director General of Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority

Graduating from the University of Peradeniya with Bsc. (Hons.) in Zoology in 1996, she received a scholarship from Netherlands and completed her Masters in Urban Management and Development with a Distinction in 2009. She also has a Master’s Degree in Environment Science from the University of Colombo in 2013.

Having joined the Government sector as an officer in the Sri Lanka Administrative Service in 2000, she has over 19 years of experience in the government service in the fields of Urban Development, Housing, Education and Environment. She served as the Secretary General of the Sri Lanka National Commission for UNESCO for five years before joining the Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment in 2018.

She has served as the Director of Environment Planning and Economics as well as the Director of Environment Pollution Control and Chemical Management. She has also been the Project Director of several vital Environmental related projects.
Ma. Christina Aquino
Chairperson, Tourism Industry Board Foundation, Philippines

Ma. Christina G. Aquino is the Chair of the Tourism Industry Board Foundation Inc, (TIBFI), the designated National Tourism Professional Board in the implementation of the ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement for Tourism Professionals. She is an Associate Board Member of the Hotel and Restaurant Association of the Philippines (HRAP). Ms Aquino is a member of CHED Technical Committee of Tourism and Hospitality and a member of the NCR Regional Quality Assurance Team (RQAT); a resource person for TESDA specifically in the Tourism sector; an ASEAN Master Tourism Assessor for Housekeeping and a DTI Philippine Quality Award (PQA) Assessor.

She is a Past President of the Council of Hotel and Restaurant Educators of the Philippines (COHREP), Asia Pacific Council of Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Education (APacCHRIE), and a former Board & Corporate Secretary of International Center for Excellence in Tourism and Hospitality Education (THE-ICE).
Ms. Jacqueline Fong  
CEO Tanoti Malaysia

After having practised investment banking for 18 years over different locations – Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta and East Malaysia – Jackie retired from her career to focus on entrepreneurship in her home state of Sarawak.

In 2012, Jackie founded Tanoti with the objectives to preserve heritage craft, empower women and build rural communities. Tanoti’s artisans community today comprises 480 ladies residing in 30 rural and remote villages across Sarawak. Tanoti is winner of World Crafts Council Award of Excellence for Handicraft 2014 and 2016, recipient of MaGIC Amplify Award 2015 and British Council-Arthur Guinness Entrepreneur for Good People’s Choice Award 2014. This social impact venture has also received accreditation as a social enterprise by the Malaysian Ministry of Entrepreneur Development, awarded SE.A Plus status from the Ministry of Finance, and its communities of artisans have been acknowledged as Emerging Craft Communities by the Sarawak State Government.

Jackie is also the current President of Society Atelier Sarawak. Through her work with Tanoti and the Society, she advocates for traditional crafts and the communities that produce them.
Ms. Alessandra Alonso  
Founder, Women in Travel

Alessandra Alonso is the pluri-nominated, award-winning founder and MD of Women in Travel cic and a professional with 20 years of experience in travel and tourism. Alessandra started her career as a trainee in Tourism at the European Commission and later gained senior roles in companies including The World Travel & Tourism Council and KPMG. She subsequently pursued her passion for supporting women and diversity more generally by setting up consultancy Shine and co-founding the Shine Awards for Women’s Achievement in Travel, Tourism and Hospitality in 2004. Recognised as a trailblazer in the sector and an expert in gender empowerment and mentoring, Alessandra is also a keynote speaker and regular contributor to publications. She was awarded the JourneyWoman Award in 2021 for her lifetime dedication to gender empowerment.

She has been named one of 9 women transforming travel by the Matador Network; one of 50 ‘most important women in travel’ by Wonderlust Travel and recently completed the Certificate in Diversity and Inclusion from the University of South Florida.
Dr. Nisha Abu Bakar  
Trainer, Singapore Tourism Board

Dr. Nisha Abu Bakar is a management consultant, corporate trainer and academic with more than 25 years of extensive management experience in the Tourism, Hospitality and Events industry. She is regional and international destination management consultant with proven decades of experience. A spirited campaigner and strong advocate of women’s empowerment, gender diversity and equality, Nisha has organised and steered several women-centric webinars, summits and conferences to enhance women’s empowerment and socio-economic status. She has a credible track record in training and coaching women across various industries and in developing their skills and competencies.

Nisha is the host of Women We Watch in Tourism podcast, featuring women leaders and their achievements. She developed the Asian WomenLeadership Program, which aims to empower Asian women leaders and unleash their knowledge and competencies./Nisha is an academic at higher education institutions and has published several tourism scholarly research. Capitalizing on her experience and knowledge, she is an established global keynote speaker, subject matter expert and panellist at major events. In recognition of her professionalism and expertise, Nisha has been bestowed with several national and international accolades.
Dr. Lucy Ferguson  
Gender and Tourism Expert

Lucy Ferguson is a trainer and consultant in gender equality, specialising in the tourism sector. She was the Lead Consultant for the Global Report on Women in Tourism, 2nd Edition. She is currently collaborating with the UNWTO Centre Stage project, developing gender mainstreaming guidelines and training for the public and private tourism sector.

Lucy has also worked extensively as a trainer and researcher for the UN Women Training Centre, and produced the Working Paper Series. She has collaborated with a range of international organisations on gender equality, including UN Women, Asian Development Bank, Commonwealth Secretariat, European Commission and UNDP. She is the author of "Gender Training: A Transformative Tool for Gender Equality", along with a range of academic publications in the field of feminist knowledge transfer and feminist pedagogies.
Dr. Elaine Yang
Tourism researcher, Griffith University Australia

Elaine’s research investigated various issues pertinent to women in tourism as workers, entrepreneurs, and travelers. She has also undertaken research on the social impact of tourism, Asian tourism, and solo consumers.

Elaine’s goal is to work on projects that bring positive changes to women and marginalized groups in tourism and hospitality. She has worked with Tourism Australia, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Asian Development Bank and other organizations on consultancy and funded projects. Elaine has published 22 journals articles and 3 books, and she serves as an editorial board member of Tourism Management Perspectives and Annals of Leisure Research.

Elaine has been identified as an Emerging Tourism Scholar and she won the Early Researcher Award from the Critical Tourism Studies Asia-Pacific Network in 2020.