

UNWTO Gets Set to Host First Global Youth Tourism Summit

Madrid, Spain, 22 June 2022 - *The first UNWTO Global Youth Tourism Summit will bring more than 130 young people from 60 countries to Sorrento, Italy, next week, giving them a unique platform to play a leading role in the future of the sector.*

The event, first of its kind, is organized by UNWTO and hosted in Italy in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism and the National Tourism Agency (ENIT). It will unite global youth aged between 12 and 18 with leaders from across the sector, including politicians and key figures from the worlds of sport, gastronomy, entertainment and innovation. The Summit has received the medal of the President of the Republic of Italy and patronage of the Department of Youth Policies and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili says: "The Global Youth Tourism will celebrate and empower the next generation of tourism leaders. It will help build a lasting legacy by providing young people with the skills and knowledge they need to transform tourism not only in their communities but everywhere".

Due to take place from 27 June to 3 July, the Summit will feature six Masterclasses, alongside two evening talks, as well as a simulation of the UNWTO General Assembly and interactive sessions where participants will be able to engage directly with UN and with Ministers of Tourism and other high level officials from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Croatia, Germany, Georgia, Albania, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Maldives, Spain, Montenegro, Sao Tome & Principe, Yemen and many other UNWTO Member States.

The Italian Minister of Tourism, Massimo Garavaglia, adds: "The Italian government is proud to host the first World Youth Tourism Congress in Sorrento. We are confident that ideas and proposals will emerge that can advise governments on how to improve the global tourism offer and make it closer to the needs of new tourists".

Alessandra Priante, UNWTO Director for Europe, added: "Tourism gives opportunities to young people. But young people give tourism the opportunity to become stronger and more resilient. We are extremely proud of the first generation of GYTS-ers, who are already showing their promise and commitment to transform tourism, starting from their local communities".

Roberta Garibaldi, CEO of ENIT, pointed out: "The synergy that can be created in the exchange among the under-19 generation and organizations on a level playing field cannot be anything but good for tourism, to look to the future with new eyes and forward-thinking ideas. We are even more excited than the young people we will be meeting".

Sustainability, rural development, gastronomy and innovation

The Summit will focus on some of the key challenges and opportunities facing global tourism right now, with an emphasis on the sector's role in achieving the UN 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This will include an in-depth look at biodiversity, to be organized in collaboration with Marevivo and the MSC Foundation. Participants will take an excursion to the Marine Protected Area of Punta Campanella, to see first-hand how tourism is helping protect coastal areas and biodiversity. This will be complemented by a deeper study of the techniques of the sea and navigation, with the MSC Foundation providing an overview of the important role of the cruise industry for local and national economies.

Reflecting UNWTO's wider focus on innovation and the digital transformation of tourism, the Summit will also feature a special session focused on online security, organized in collaboration with fellow UN agency the ITU (International Telecommunication Union), as well as a talk on virtual tourism and the Metaverse, organized in partnership with Meta. Alongside this, the World Food Forum (facilitated by the UN's agricultural organization, FAO) will host a debate on solutions to reduce food waste in tourism.

Among the international speakers due to take part in the GYTS are UN Youth Envoy Jayathma Wickramanayake, as well as UNWTO Ambassadors of Responsible Tourism Valeria Mazza, Didier Drogba, Gino Sorbillo, Pilar Rodriguez. Representing the private sector will be leading figures from Mastercard and the Hilton Group, sponsors of the event. Addressing participants virtually will be His Holiness Pope Francis, Sophia Loren, Eliza Jane Reid (First Lady of Iceland and UNWTO Ambassador), Diego Simeone, Fernando Hierro, the FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu, the President of the United Nations General Assembly, Abdulla Shahid and European Commissioner, Mariya Gabriel responsible for youth. Also joining virtually will be UNWTO Ambassador and entrepreneur Pansy Ho, who will share her personal experience in the world of travel and tourism and to discuss why innovation is a key part of the sustainable future of tourism.

Young people showing promise

Remarking the role of GYTS as a UNWTO permanent platform for youth and tourism, in the build-up to Sorrento, the participating youth were prepared through webinars that allowed them to explore, together with global influencers and leading experts, the principles of sustainability, tourism and multilateralism.

UNWTO expresses its deepest appreciation to the numerous sponsors and partners who make the event possible: Comune di Sorrento, Regione Campania, Mastercard, Qatar Foundation, Hilton Hotels & Resorts, Global Tourism Economy Research Centre, Aeroporti di Roma, Bella Vista Institute of Higher Education, Azerbaijan Tourism Board PLE, AirEuropa, and Ferrero.

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