UNWTO at ITB Berlin: Setting Priorities for Tourism

Berlin, Germany, 10 March 2023 - UNWTO returned to ITB Berlin with a clear message: Tourism is back and committed to delivering positive change that goes beyond the sector itself.

Tourism returns – why ITB matters

ITB Berlin is the world's biggest tourism and travel trade fair. This week's event was the first in-person ITB for four years and comes as the sector’s recovery is well underway. According to UNWTO, international tourism could reach 80 to 95% of pre-pandemic numbers by the end of the year, with 70 million international arrivals recorded in January alone (more than double the number of January 2022).

The return of ITB was heralded by UNWTO as proof of strong confidence in travel as “the ultimate barometer of trust”. UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili was invited to officially open the event, alongside Germany’s Vice-Chancellor Robert Habeck, Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili, Berlin Mayor Franziska Giffey, and public and private sector leaders.

Education and Investment: Key Priorities for Tourism

At the official ITB opening, UNWTO reinforced the importance of education, training and investments for tourism’s ability to deliver on its potential.

In Berlin, UNWTO announced a new partnership that will see the Organization work with Saudi Arabia to promote education and professional development in tourism. Alongside this, UNWTO also signed a new agreement with the Business School of Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts to partner towards the creation of a new Bachelor of Science degree in International Sustainable Tourism.

The key message of investing in people was also stressed as UNWTO took part in a special Industry Roundtable. The event built on UNWTO’s status as the bridge between the public and private sectors. Recognizing the vital need for more and better-targeted investments to put transformative plans into action, UNWTO also confirmed that World Tourism Day 2023 will be celebrated around the theme of “Tourism and Green Investments”.
Accelerating tourism climate action

Against the backdrop of ITB Berlin, UNWTO released a new report highlighting the progress that global tourism has made in measuring greenhouse gas emissions. “Climate Action in the Tourism Sector” was developed by UNWTO with support from the German Government and in collaboration with UN Climate Change (UNFCCC). The recommendations will help ensure more reliable measurements of GHG emissions towards fulfilling the commitments of the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism.

Tourism for all

ITB 2023 coincided with International Women’s Day. To mark the occasion, UNWTO was joined by UN Women to present a summary of the achievements of the “Centre Stage: Women’s empowerment during the COVID-19 recovery” project. The initiative made clear the extent to which women working in tourism were particularly impacted by the pandemic. And while tourism remains a leading employer of women, UNWTO and UN Women jointly stress that the sector is still to deliver on its women’s empowerment potential.

Finally, to further advance the diversification of the sector and the growth of areas that can deliver new benefits, a special UNWTO Roundtable Discussion on “Connecting Sports Tourism to Health” was held at ITB ahead of the 2nd World Congress Tourism Congress in Zadar, Croatia (26-27 April).

Related Links

World Tourism Day 2023

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