International Women’s Day 2024 Online Webinar

‘Invest in women: Accelerate progress’

Friday, 8th of March 2024 11:00-12:05 (CET)

Introduction

With women comprising 54% of the tourism workforce around the world compared to 39% in the broader economy\(^1\), tourism serves as both a vehicle for progress and a source of wealth generation and income for the most vulnerable, including women.

In Africa, women make up to 69% of tourism employees. However, alongside these opportunities, women in tourism face not only economic hurdles accelerated by the negative impact of the global recession, regional conflicts, but also environmental challenges, particularly amidst the pressing issues of climate change. Despite their significant representation, women in tourism often find themselves confined to low-paid skill jobs, highlighting the urgent need to address systemic barriers and harness their full potential.

As we approach the UN International Women’s Day 2024 on the theme "Invest in Women: Accelerate progress," our forthcoming seminar emerges as a beacon of empowerment, offering a platform for women voices to converge and pathways to progress and materialize, while also addressing the intersectional challenges posed by climate change and environmental degradation. Recognizing the key role of entrepreneurship and capacity-building for women in Africa, the webinar will share success stories and provide opportunities for networking and collaboration. In alignment with the Sustainable Development Goal 5 to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls as well as the UN Tourism Agenda for Africa-Tourism for inclusive Growth, which recognizes women and youth empowerment as one of its priority areas, the webinar aims to equip participants with actionable insights to drive positive change and advance gender equality in the tourism sector.

To put things into context, it is important to note that tourism is well on track to return to pre-pandemic levels by 2024 with 88%. Within Africa, the region has been among the strongest performers, with 96% of pre-pandemic visitors expected to return. Despite these positive projections, it’s essential to recognize and address the unique challenges and opportunities faced by women in the tourism sector in Africa.

Objectives and Expected Results:

In light of this, the seminar's objectives and results will consist of the following:

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\(^1\) Women in Tourism, global report, second edition 2019
(i) **Knowledge Sharing**: Our goal is to deepen participants' understanding by shedding light on the subtleties of opportunities and problems faced by women in Africa's tourism industry. UN Tourism initiatives on gender equality in tourism will be shared and as a result, attendees will understand the need of promoting women's empowerment in order to transform the face of the industry while taking the urgent problem of climate change and environmental degradation into mind;

(ii) **Highlight** the work done by the Women in Tourism Leadership Africa Committee lead by the Regional Department for Africa (WITLAC) and encourage future events and training programs of the WITLAC as a result.

(iii) **Entrepreneurship and Capacity Building**: Our webinar will provide practical experiences on entrepreneurship and capacity-building to enrich the skills and knowledge of women in tourism, empowering them with tangible tools for success.

(iv) **Networking Opportunities**: In nurturing a conducive environment for connection and collaboration, we seek to foster robust networks among women in tourism.

(v) **Policy Advocacy**: Engaging conversations on gender-responsive policies and initiatives, our webinar aims to be a catalyst for change. Participants will be equipped with advocacy strategies and actionable steps to champion policy reforms that dismantle barriers and elevate women's participation and leadership in the sector.

**Key Takeaways**

The key takeaways of the online webinar will include:

(i) **Increased Awareness**: Participants will gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by women in the tourism sector, leading to heightened awareness and empathy towards gender disparities.

(ii) **Empowerment Through Knowledge Sharing**: Attendees will learn from best practices, initiatives, and success stories shared during the seminar, empowering them with practical insights and strategies to advance gender equality in tourism.

(iii) **Expanded Networks and Collaboration**: The seminar will provide valuable networking opportunities for women in tourism to connect, collaborate, and build meaningful relationships with women tourism stakeholders.

(iv) **Advocacy for Gender-Responsive Policies**: Participants will gain insights into advocacy strategies and actionable steps to promote gender-responsive policies and initiatives within the tourism sector, driving positive change and fostering inclusivity.
**Call to Action:** Conclude the seminar with a clear call to action, encouraging participants to commit to one specific action they can take to support women in tourism, whether it's advocating for gender-inclusive policies, entrepreneurship opportunities or human capital development.

These practical takeaways ensure that participants leave the seminar with actionable insights and tangible steps they can implement in their professional lives, despite the limited duration of the event.

**Provisional Programme**

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11:00-11:05</td>
<td>Welcome remarks by Ms Zoritsa Urosevic, Executive Director, UN Tourism</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:05-11:10</td>
<td>Introductory remarks by Ms Elcia Grandcourt, Director, Regional Department for Africa, UN Tourism</td>
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<td>11:10-11:20</td>
<td>Hon. Mrs Nabeela Farida Tunis, Minister of Tourism and Cultural Affairs of Sierra Leone and Chair of the Women in Tourism and Leadership Africa Committee (WITLAC)</td>
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<td>11:20-11:30</td>
<td>A case study on women entrepreneurship by Chef Fatmata Binta, Founder of Fulani Kitchen Foundation, UN Tourism Ambassador for responsible tourism and prize winner of the Basque Culinary World prize in 2022</td>
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<td>11:30-11:40</td>
<td>The role of academia in the tourism sector with a focus on women empowerment, Ms. Susana Garrido, Clinical Professor &amp; Senior Marketing Lecturer and Spark Director of Innovation, Les Roches, Spain</td>
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<td>11:40-11:50</td>
<td>Centre Stage programme, a women training project by Ben Owen, Senior Project Specialist, Ethics Culture and Social Responsibility Department, UN Tourism</td>
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<td>11:50-12:00</td>
<td>Questions and answers</td>
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<td>12:00-12:05</td>
<td>Closing Remarks by Elcia Grandcourt, Director, Regional Department for Africa, UN Tourism</td>
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Target Audience

In honor of International Women’s Day on 8th March 2024, we will be interacting with our Member States and Affiliate Members in the region through the online webinar. The primary audience is personnel from national tourism administrations, statistics authorities and national gender mechanisms, the content will also be suitable and of interest to the general public. The webinar will be publicly available on UN Tourism YouTube and promoted on UN Tourism social media in advance.

Moderator: Lydia Bebekum, Department Officer, Regional Department for Africa, UN Tourism

Registration link: https://unwto-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMkde-urDouH9apOmTs-z22ECU2GYObP75z

NB: This webinar will be conducted in English, with French interpretation.