



30 worldwide experts shape the future of tourism

World Tourism Forum Lucerne Think Tank, 11 March 2016

Solving for the global goals of security, sustainability, talent management and technology means there is a need to create a cohesive global community in the tourism industry where the governments, the corporate sector, academia and customers engage together on a common and holistic platform.

The movers and shakers from the world of tourism including international business leaders, top world politicians, academicians and influential journalists descended upon Baku the capital city of Azerbaijan between March 5 and March 6, to convene for an interactive two day Think Tank organised by the World Tourism Forum Lucerne.

Committed to furthering the development and establishment of tourism as a dynamic, social-ecological system as against simply viewing it as a commercial supply and demand business enterprise, the World Tourism Forum Lucerne invited 30 internationally acknowledged experts in the field, including Taleb Rifai (Secretary General of UNWTO), Gerald Lawless (Chairman elect of WTTC), Isabel Hill (Director U.S Department of Commerce) and Mario Hardy (CEO of PATA) to explore ways in which the impact of tourism on the world can be accelerated.

This year's Think Tank focussed on developing a holistic policy approach to tourism development. In our rapidly changing global environment, while tourism has been acknowledged as a tool for conservation and for creating local livelihoods, it is also widely debated that conflicting interests of multiple stakeholder groups can hinder tourism in achieving these objectives. To ensure tourism can assume the position of a transformative architect we need to break the silos and devise models that engage other sectors in the work we do. The topic was explored by various approaches; keynote speeches, scene setting presentations, and discussion sessions.

Keynote speaker Sean Cleary, Chairman of Strategic Concepts seeded the Think Tank with some of the global trends shaping the world in the next decade while stressing the need for the tourism and travel industry to remain agile and flexible to factors outside of the planning that can impact growth and opportunity. Helena Egan, based on her work as Global Head of industry relations at Tripadvisor shared how disruptive congruent technology is enabling and facilitating tourism but the real reasons for travel still remain learning and experiencing. Minister of Tourism and Culture of Azerbaijan Dr Abulfas Garayev, addressed the need for creating a mindful balance between people, planet, and profitability to create an optimal tourism experience.



UNWTO Secretary General Taleb Rifai, followed the discussion by stressing how the Tourism industry and its players need to assume assertive roles at the decision making tables and promote better understanding between different players be it public private partnerships or other interlinked industries by using an integrated and holistic governance approach.

Professor Martin Barth, CEO of World Tourism Forum Lucerne said, "Our conference attracted experts who share a common goal and prioritise a balance between growth and sustainability, so that the authenticity in world's tourism destinations and cultures can be preserved and protected."

Rather than simply reacting to problems as increasingly emerging nations take the leap towards tourism development, the Think Tank probed the attendees who were decision makers and executives from companies, governments and international organisations to better understand complex, interdependent risks, and to deliver something of use to those responsible for driving the development of tourism in emerging destinations.

Detailed summary of the Think Tank along with the list of participants will be made available on our website www.wtflucerne.org as of 15 March 2016.

About World Tourism Forum Lucerne and the Think Tank

The World Tourism Forum Lucerne (WTFL) is a Swiss non-profit foundation that organises a global summit on tourism and travel every other year alternating between the picturesque setting offered by the city of Lucerne in Switzerland and the emerging province of Guizhou/Gui'an in China. It has evolved from an organisation that convenes meetings to become a year-round network of leaders and leading thinkers tackling global problems in the tourism sector. It gets people acting constructively and also fills a special role in bringing together the leaders of the emerging countries into dialogue with those who have walked the path before from the rest of the world. The next World Tourism Forum Lucerne in China takes place from 23 – 24 September 2016, whereas Lucerne will be the venue offering this exceptional and unique platform from 4 – 5 May 2017. The Think Tank network is part of the World Tourism Forum Lucerne's goal to expand beyond a two-day talkathon once a year and move into an active partnership that "walks the talk". It is unique as a gathering bringing together political leadership, CEOs, financial experts as well as young industry movers & shakers to reflect on the big challenges facing the industry and to address them in out of the box "game-changing" ways to reshape the role of the sector.

Contact:

World Tourism Forum Lucerne
Professor Martin Barth, General Manager
T: +41 41 228 99 80
martin.barth@wtflucerne.org

Media Office:

PrimCom
Simon Benz
T: +41 44 421 41 28
s.benz@primcom.com

