

Press Release

Kerala calls for adopting Gender inclusive, responsible tourism practices

- **‘Declaration’ marks finale of Gender Inclusive & Women Friendly Tourism conclave**

Idukki, Dec. 02: Kerala today made a trail-blazing call for building a tourism landscape that celebrates diversity, empowers women and protects the environment by adopting sustainable and gender-inclusive practices in all verticals of tourism across the world.

“The Kerala Declaration of Gender Inclusive and Women Friendly Tourism” was adopted as the three-day Global Women Conference on Gender Inclusive & Responsible Tourism concluded at the picturesque hill station Munnar in the district on Monday.

The conclave, which saw engaging conversations and presentations, that was organised by Kerala Responsible Tourism Mission Society on behalf of the state Tourism Department in partnership with UN Women, concluded at the picturesque hill station Munnar in the district on Monday.

The Declaration, signed by an entire spectrum of stakeholders including state agencies, also unveiled a four-point “Call to Action”, advocating collective efforts to secure the goals set out by the initiative.

The declaration pointed to an urgent need for fostering “gender inclusivity, accessibility, and climate-responsive practices” in tourism sector, while prioritising the safety, wellbeing and empowerment of women in tourism economy.

It emphasised the need to promote gender-sensitive practices across all areas of tourism to ensure fair representation of women, gender minorities, and other under-represented groups, guaranteeing equality in opportunities, leadership and decision-making.

It called for organising capacity-building programmes for women in entrepreneurship management, formulating and implementing robust policies to prevent harassment and exploitation of women and children by putting in place effective prevention and response mechanisms.

The declaration pitched for equitable pay and safe working conditions for women, reskilling and upskilling and leveraging of media and marketing campaigns to break stereotypes about gender roles in tourism.

The declaration underscored the critical role of women in protecting the environment, especially in promoting climate-responsive tourism practices, encouraging ecotourism and responsible tourism that supports the local community.

It noted that women can play a lead role in developing Responsible Tourism that aligns with local customs and practices, forging partnerships with local communities, reducing leakages in benefits, supporting medium and micro enterprises through equitable business practices.

The “Call to Action” pledged to take forward the gender-inclusive and responsible tourism model to make it a transformative force on the ground.

These include integration of gender inclusivity and RT practices as the core principles of tourism planning, with special focus on women-friendly initiatives, strengthening collaboration across sectors and stakeholders to share knowledge, resources and strategies, continuous monitoring and reporting to ensure gender inclusivity, transparency and accountability, advocacy of policies that protect women’s rights in tourism and addressing gender based challenges and enhancing safety and empowerment.

This action plan is aligned with the larger goal of fostering a sustainable and inclusive tourism model that benefits local communities, businesses, destinations, travellers and governments, and called for all stakeholders to embrace this vision.

The signatories to the historic Kerala Declaration include Hon’ble Minister for Tourism Shri PA Mohamed Riyas; Tourism Secretary Shri Biju K; Tourism Director Smt Sikha Surendran; UN Women India Country Representative Ms. Susan Ferguson; Chairman International Centre for Responsible Tourism Global, Dr. Harold Goodwin; Chairman Kerala Tourism Infrastructure Ltd (KTIL) Shri SK Sajeesh; Munnar Destination Makers President Shri Vimal Roy V; Tourism Advisory Board Member Shri Aneesh Kumar PK; KTM Society Managing Committee Member, Shri Vinod V; ATTOI President Shri Subhash Ghosh; SMART Munnar Showcase Secretary Shri Justin Jose; Kerala Adventure Tourism Promotion Society CEO Binu Kuriakose; Idukki DTPC Secretary Jithesh Jose and Dr. Peeja Rajan, State Coordinator – Kerala, UN Women.

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