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Press Release

Kerala sets global model in Responsible Tourism, say experts at WTM London



- RT to be a major vehicle for economic empowerment of people: Kerala Tourism Minister
 - The Gambia's Tourism Minister to visit Kerala to study RT model

Thiruvananthapuram, Nov. 10: Kerala's Responsible Tourism (RT) initiative has set a global model in sustainable destination development by creating better places for people to live in and visit, according to speakers at a special seminar at World Travel Mart (WTM), London.

Participating in the seminar held on Wednesday to celebrate 15 years of Kerala's experience in taking forward the community-based RT initiative and half-a-decade of the state RT Mission, the experts drawn from different countries said it was the effective involvement of the community in all RT activities in the state that has resulted in the evolution of a successful model in the post-Covid world.



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Minister for Tourism, Mr P.A. Mohamed Riyas, who inaugurated the seminar on “Looking Back, Moving Ahead: 15 Years of Kerala’s Responsible Tourism Journey,” said RT will be a major vehicle for economic empowerment of people across the state.

The activities of state’s RT Mission have achieved far-reaching results for the benefit of the local community and the tourism industry in Kerala, the Minister pointed out at the seminar held on the concluding day of the 43rd edition of WTM at ExCeL London (Exhibition Centre London).

The Minister said Kerala’s experience has proved that RT can play a decisive role in taking forward sustainable tourism development as envisioned by the United Nations.

“We have created more than 25,000 units under the state RT Mission. These units are of small-scale entrepreneurs, artists, craftsmen, traditional workers, farmers and other service providers from the grassroot level of local community,” Shri Riyas said.

The Minister said Kerala’s success has created huge impact on other Indian states as well and some of them have signed MoUs with the state.

Shri Riyas, who led the Kerala delegation to the three-day event, said the Global Award bestowed by WTM 2022 for the ‘Water Conservation’ initiative the RT Mission carried out at Maravanthuruthu panchayat in Kottayam district is a big endorsement on the successful implementation of RT projects by the state.

Noting that tourism has no future without people’s participation and generating jobs for local community, The Gambia’s Minister of Tourism and Culture, Mr Hamat Bah, said he plans to visit Kerala soon as his country is keen to learn from the south Indian state’s experience in sustainable tourism development through the RT initiative.

As Mr Riyas welcomed him to Kerala, Mr Bah said he would visit places and study the model in detail for replicating it in his country.

On the occasion, Shri Riyas released the brochure “15 Years of Kerala’s Responsible Tourism Journey” by handing over it to Mr Bah.

Dr Harold Goodwin, Advisor to WTM on RT London and Founder of International Centre for Responsible Tourism (ICRT), said Kerala and Barcelona are the best RT models in the world.

Mr Glynn O’ Leary, Chief Executive, Transfrontier Parks Destinations (TFPD) and Founder of ICRT South Africa, said periodic review and upgradation of activities to come out with more novel products and experiences for visitors has been the highlights of Kerala’s RT Mission.

Mr Adama Bah, RT Consultant and Founder, ICRT International-West Africa, said Kerala’s initiatives like STREET-- which stands for Sustainable, Tangible, Responsible, Experiential,



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Ethnic Tourism-- and PEPPER (People's Participation for Participatory Planning and Empowerment Through Responsible Tourism) that ensure community participation are really innovative and beautiful.

Mr KS Srinivas IAS, Principal Secretary, Tourism, moderated the session while Mr P.B. Nooh, Director, Tourism, welcomed the gathering.

Mr Rupeshkumar. K, State Coordinator, Kerala RT Mission, in his presentation on "Community Empowerment Through Responsible Tourism — Kerala Model," explained about how the 15 years of RT activities became a key component of local development.

ICRT India Director Ms Manisha Pande proposed a vote of thanks. Delegates from India and abroad also attended the seminar.

WTM London 2022 is a meeting place for the global travel trade that attracts top travel destinations and tourism buyers and sellers from all over the world.

Ends