



Department of Tourism

Park View Thiruvananthapuram 695 033

Kerala India Fax: +91-471-2322279

Tel: +91-471-2326579 2321132

Email: info@keralatourism.org

marketing@keralatourism.org

www.keralatourism.org

Press Release

Governmental support to Kerala's Responsible Tourism, a model to world: Global summit



- *State's eco-friendly measures in travel wins appreciation of foreign delegates*

Kottayam, Feb. 27: Kerala's imaginative initiatives in Responsible Tourism (RT) enjoy governmental support in ways that make it a model for the rest of the world, according to experts at the pioneering Global Responsible Tourism Summit.

Even as South Africa was the first to come up with RT two decades ago with a plan that required stakeholders to be responsible in their actions towards sustainable tourism, Kerala has been best practising the concept in its true spirit, speakers noted at the February 25-28 conclave at Kumarakom near this city.

Foreign delegates in particular lauded the measures by the 2017-founded Kerala RT Mission that has been working on tourism as a tool for rural development with focus on local communities, thus improving the lives of farmers and artisans amid promoting ecological conservation. Addressing delegates totaling 280, speakers totalling 70 expressed their views and shared experiences across a dozen sessions that discussed RT models of international repute.



Department of Tourism

Park View Thiruvananthapuram 695 033

Kerala India Fax: +91-471-2322279

Tel: +91-471-2326579 2321132

Email: info@keralatourism.org

marketing@keralatourism.org

www.keralatourism.org

South Africa's Transfrontier Parks Destinations Co-founder Glynn O'Leary regretted a lack of administrative support that prevented RT from gaining steam in his country. The initial vivacity gradually waned and the movement practically failed, he noted in a session on 'Responsible Tourism is Diverse. How Do We Set Priorities?'. "Here in Kerala, you succeeded in winning the confidence of the residents and are going ahead with eco-friendly tourism initiatives," the speaker noted at the summit being hosted at Lakesong resort.

Taking cue, Dr Adama Bah of ICRT Gambia said earning governmental support has been a big challenge that RT stakeholders face in his tiny West African nation. "Kerala has made major strides in the field, but elimination of plastic waste continues to pose a major challenge for the state," he observed.

Australia ICRT Director Dr Christopher Warren, who is founder-CEO of solutions provider My Green Butler based in Canberra, stressed on the need for use of modern technology in RT.

Speakers from within India hailed Kerala's recent moves to ensure women's security in tourism and improve the female presence in the sector. Bhopal-based Swati Parmar, who is associated with the Social Management Framework and Gender, spoke of the women-friendly measures being carried out in tourism by the Madhya Pradesh government. Geethu Mohandas, who is founder of Let's Go for A Camp, said the Bangalore-based online group for eco conservation has been capable of rectifying wrong notions prevailing in society about women.

Speakers at 'Gender-Inclusive Tourism and Women-Friendly Initiatives' noted that the travel and hospitality industry must enable local communities to sell their own products beyond generation of good business overall.

Another session, on 'The Indian RT Movement', saw experts from across the country highlighting the need to institutionalize tourism in society by roping in local communities and serving travel experiences that are high on regional flavour. Speakers emphasized the special care that waste management and recycling of materials required in tourism. All the same, RT must be money-earning; else the stakeholders will lapse back to conventional methods of hospitality, they added. Facilitating interaction with the local population adds to visitors' pleasure, but preaching about the necessity to be responsible as tourists will dissuade prospective travellers, the speakers noted.

Kerala RT Mission Coordinator K. Rupeshkumar said the conclave pooled in an array of ideas that can help strengthen Responsible Tourism in the state. "We could learn about a range of RT models being conceived elsewhere and implemented effectively," he noted. "Some of them can contribute to Kerala's renewed policy on RT."



Department of Tourism

Park View Thiruvananthapuram 695 033

Kerala India Fax: +91-471-2322279

Tel: +91-471-2326579 2321132

Email: info@keralatourism.org

marketing@keralatourism.org

www.keralatourism.org

The sessions won in lending Kerala's RT movement, broader and deeper knowledge about RT from across the globe, organisers said.

ENDS