



PRESS RELEASE

Kerala world leader in Responsible Tourism: ICRT founder

Thiruvananthapuram, Jan 28: Albeit major business progress and changes are happening across the world in Responsible Tourism (RT) sector, at the destination level Kerala is now long way ahead and has emerged the world leader in RT, said Dr Harold Goodwin, Founder and Director, International Centre for Responsible Tourism (ICRT), here on Monday.

“Places like South Africa, Gambia and Barcelona are doing a great deal in the sector. But the community participation in the state is a unique element,” Dr Harold noted while speaking at the International symposium on “PEPPER Project and Experiential Tourism Packages,” organized by the State Responsible Tourism Mission and Department of Tourism at Mascot Hotel here.

People’s Participation for Participatory Planning and Empowerment through Responsible Tourism (PEPPER) was launched in November 2017.

“RT provides access for people with disabilities and socially disadvantaged people. It transforms negative elements into beneficial factors that elevate the lives of local population. The aspiration of RT is to use tourism rather than to be used by it,” the British national said.

He also stressed the need for strong private sector engagement and multi-stakeholder partnerships for the growth of RT. According to him, experience for money is becoming more important than value for money in the present.

“Kerala offers authenticity, which is a powerful stream in consumer desire, at a higher degree in RT sector. Quality and depth of the experiences create memories that lead to viral marketing,” he remarked.

Dr Goodwin reminded that sustainability and responsibility are not the same things. “RT is about taking responsibility for achieving sustainable development through tourism. It is characterized by transparency, which is the heart of it. Kerala involves local people in decision making process than in any other part of the world,” he explained.

Commenting on the threats to the sector, Dr Harold said the integrity and quality of RT products need to be maintained. “The products need to be bandaged, “trade marked” and



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annually inspected. Exploitation by tour operators need to be countered. Panchayats need to step up control to this. Water pollution and traffic congestion in small streets are also need to be addressed,” the expert added.

Noting that RT is a business strategy, Mr P. Bala Kiran IAS, Director, Tourism, said that the current 13,500 RT units will be increased to one lakh before 2021. “It will create 2.5 lakh direct and indirect beneficiaries.”

Mr Rupeshkumar. K, Coordinator of the Kerala RT Mission, in his presentation on the concept of PEPPER, highlighted the four key intervention areas which are quality of experience to the traveler thru innovative products; destination development, quality of life of local people and local economic development.

Mr Manesh Bhaskar, CEO, Adventure Tourism; and Mr Anishkumar, P.K, Member, State Tourism Advisory Board, were also present at the function.

Mr Ravisankar. KV, Member, State Tourism Advisory Board; Mr Siby. K.R; Nila’s Heritage Homestay; Mr Thomas Palakkan, Vembanad Lake Villa; Mr Thomas. J. Cherukara, Cherukara Farm Stay; Mr Babu Paul, Pranayakulam Yoga Centre; Smt. Biji Xavier, Mission Co-coordinator, RT Mission; Mr Sarath Sarma, Theyaattu and Kalamezhuthum Pattum; and Mr Nizamudeen. K.S, Backwater Kayakers participated in the panel discussions held on various topics at the event.

ENDS



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