



**COMMONWEALTH
SECRETARIAT**

**wtm world
responsible
tourism day**
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What is the Role of Government in Making Tourism More Sustainable?



Chairperson

Ransford Smith
Deputy Secretary General
Commonwealth Secretariat

Speaker(s)

Hon Richard Skerritt
Minister of Tourism
St Kitts & Nevis,
and Chairperson Caribbean
Tourism Organisation

Fiona Buchner
Regional Director for Europe,
South African Tourism

U.V. Jose
Department of Tourism,
Kerala, India

Deirdre Shurland
Project coordinator,
Global Partnership for
Sustainable Tourism, UNEP

Tourism takes place in destinations. Tourists, the tourism industry and local communities interact in places where local communities live out their lives, some working in tourism most earning their living in other ways. Governments have a role in managing destinations in ways that make tourism sustainable.

The Commonwealth Secretariat has been involved in organising this panel as part of World Travel Market's World Responsible Tourism Day and in chairing it. We hope that it will demonstrate what governments can do to make tourism more sustainable and encourage them to take responsibility for making better tourism. The panellists have a wealth of international and local experience. They bring some lessons and experience on what governments can do at regional, national and local level to make tourism more sustainable (*read inside for profile of speakers*).

The Responsible Tourism agenda at World Travel Market has demonstrated what the industry is doing to take responsibility for sustainability of tourism and their contribution is increasingly significant. In the Responsible Tourism Awards announced each year at World Travel Market on World Responsible Tourism Day, the achievements of businesses are recognised. There is also growing recognition of the efforts by national and local governments towards sustainable tourism. This is seen in the destination category awards made to tourism boards and governments. It is in the destination that tourism takes place, it is there that local people, tourists and tourism businesses interact and that the impacts of tourism, positive and negative, are felt. The management of the destination is the responsibility of the local authorities, whether a local government or a national park. Local communities look to government to manage the impacts of tourism on the environment and people living in the destination.

Governments need to take more responsibility for making tourism more sustainable. They are responsible for the legislative framework, and the planning system, within which tourism businesses operate, national parks and cultural heritage are conserved for future generations and through funding determine how the country should be marketed. And rightly so, the function of government is to enable communities to look after their places, and their natural and cultural environment, to ensure that tourism brings more benefits to local communities than harm.

In post-apartheid South Africa, tourism was identified as an important sector for the creation of livelihoods. In the 1996 White Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa. The country committed to the idea of Responsible Tourism, accepting responsibility to protect the environment, to respect, invest in and develop local cultures. In the Cape Town Declaration, passed by the 1st International Conference on Responsible Tourism in Destinations in 2002, Responsible Tourism was defined as making “better places for people to live, and better places for people to visit”. In that order, recognising the destination belongs to the people who live there and that attractive places to live in make attractive places to visit.



In Kerala, a state in India, the state government has worked with the local panchayat (elected village councils) to increase the benefits flowing to local communities, creating opportunities for farmers to sell fruits and vegetables to the hotels and resorts, to encourage tourists to buy local arts and crafts and to take guided excursions which create authentic experiences for the tourists and economic opportunities for the local communities.

In the Caribbean, the most tourism dependent region of the Commonwealth, the impacts of tourism on destinations have long been recognized. Through the leadership of the Caribbean Tourism Organization, a regional sustainable tourism policy framework was developed as a guide to enhancing member countries' tourism policies and strategic plans for a sustainable tourism. Annually a regional conference on sustainable tourism development is held to share good practices in addition to the annual Caribbean excellence in sustainable tourism awards programme. VisionExpressed is a newly launched quarterly sustainable tourism newswire to highlight the region's sustainable tourism initiatives and products. Its circulation includes 250,000 travel agents and tour operators.

The Commonwealth is an association of 54 countries including some of the world's richest and largest countries and some of our planet's smallest and poorest. The Commonwealth has two billion citizens. In many Commonwealth countries in Africa, Caribbean and Pacific, tourism is fundamental to the destination. In others tourism is significant, although in a few countries, it is less important as a source of livelihoods and as a proportion of national income. Within the Commonwealth there are some of the world's leading traditional source markets, but there are powerful new originating markets too. The Commonwealth Secretariat as one of three intergovernmental organizations serving the Commonwealth association provides technical assistance and advisory services to member countries in different areas of development including tourism.

Speaker Profiles

Ransford Smith is Deputy Secretary-General of the Commonwealth appointed in August 2006, where he is responsible for the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC). The Commonwealth Secretariat's work in the area of tourism falls under the CFTC. Mr Smith is the first Jamaican to serve as a Commonwealth Deputy-Secretary General. Prior to this appointment, he was the Permanent Representative of Jamaica to the Office of the United Nations and its specialised agencies in Geneva, Rome and Vienna. Mr Smith was also Ambassador of Jamaica to the World Trade Organisation (WTO), and served as Ambassador to a number of European countries. Mr Smith previously served as Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Commerce and Technology, and also to the Ministry of Industry and Investment. His diplomatic career has included postings at the Jamaican Embassy in Washington DC, as well as the Jamaican Mission to the United Nations in New York. He has extensive experience of participation in multilateral economic and development bodies. He was Chairman of the WTO Committee on Trade and Development (2000-01), Chairman of the Commonwealth Group of Developing Countries in Geneva (2001-02), and President of the Trade and Development Board of UNCTAD (2005-06). He has led Jamaican delegations to international conferences, including the Doha Ministerial Conference of the WTO. He was also Chief Negotiator and Spokesperson for the Group of 77 and China at UNCTAD XI in June 2004.

Hon Richard Skerritt is Minister of Tourism for St Kitts & Nevis and current Chairperson for the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO). He was first appointed to the position of Minister of State in the Ministry of Tourism, Sports and Culture in 2004. Hon Skerritt is charged with leading the island's tourism efforts. His involvement in tourism goes back to a time before he was appointed Minister of Tourism. He has held top positions with Blue Water Safaris, the Ocean Terrace Inn Group of Companies and the St. Kitts-Nevis Chamber of Commerce. Hon Skerritt is currently a member of the St. Christopher Heritage Society and Royal St. Kitts Golf Club. His long history of community service extends to serving as a committee member of the St. Kitts Music Festival and, the St. Kitts-Nevis Carnival Committee.

Fiona Buchner is Regional Director for Europe at South African Tourism, she was previously Global eBusiness Manager at South African Tourism. South Africa was the first country in the world to commit to Responsible Tourism in its 1996 White Paper and in 2011 passed into legal force a national standard on Responsible Tourism.

U.V. Jose is Director, Kerala Institute of Tourism and Travel Studies (KITTS), Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala in India. He is responsible for the development of HR in tourism in Kerala. KITTS have MBA courses in Travel and Tourism, many diploma and certificate courses to support the tourism industry. U.V. Jose has played a leading role in implementing the Responsible Tourism initiative in the state of Kerala on behalf of the state government. U.V. Jose has private sector experience, he was previously Director and COO of Green Gateway Leisure Ltd and GITPAC International.

Deirdre Shurland is a senior professional with 25 years' experience in tourism sustainability and industry affairs. She has developed and implemented business support tools, management solutions and training programs and networked across industry promoting sustainability through partnerships and alliances. Among her employment experiences, she has worked as the Coordinator of Caribbean Initiative for the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and as the Director of the Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism.

Commonwealth Secretariat Tourism Related Technical Assistance

The Commonwealth Secretariat assists Commonwealth member countries design and implement strategies and policies that improve the enabling environment and build institutional capacity required for development of competitive and sustainable tourism. Areas in which the Commonwealth Secretariat offers assistance are:

- Product development and marketing strategies
- Institutional review
- Tourism legislation review
- Service quality through development of standards and good practices guidelines
- Value chain analysis and linkages strategies
- Human resources strategies
- Tourism sector strategies



Technical assistance is provided on a demand driven basis initiated by a requesting member country. For further information please contact:

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