

**Response to the UNWTO World Tourism Day, 27th September, 2022:
'Rethinking Tourism'**

By Equality in Tourism and its Associates

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) is holding a World Tourism Day Celebration in Bali on 27th September, 2022 with the title, '[Rethinking Tourism](#)'. According to the UNWTO website 'it aims to inspire the debate around rethinking tourism for development, including through education and jobs, and tourism's impact on the planet and opportunities to grow more sustainably', including a discussion on 'The tourism we want'. 'Rethinking tourism' requires a concerted effort to put structural transformation of gender equality in tourism at the top of the agenda. Equality in Tourism (EiT) and its global network of Associates welcome the current UNWTO initiative on '[Centre Stage: Women's empowerment during the COVID-19 recovery](#)', which supports Jordan, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic and Mexico in implementing a one-year action plan for women's empowerment, ending in November 2022. We equally welcome the declaration of the recent [11th Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation \(APEC\) Tourism Ministerial Meeting on August 19](#), which recognises the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on women in the tourism workforce and emphasises the need for a strategy to achieve gender equality and gender mainstreaming in tourism policies. We look forward to learning about practical measures of the implementation of this goal.

EiT and its Associates recognise the importance of tourism entrepreneurship in women's empowerment, which the UNWTO seeks to promote. In addition, we support a thriving alternative social and solidarity economy with a feminist perspective, which fosters social enterprise with social and ecological benefits as a seedbed for gender equality and solidarity in practice. We further support a Human Rights Based Economy, with feminist, decolonised values at its core, which includes corporate compliance on pay and labour rights, social, cultural and economic rights, and land and water rights for women in tourism.

EiT and its Associates suggest that it is not enough to insert gender equality policies into existing tourism structures, which do not challenge historical, patriarchal, neo-colonial values, and exploitative, discriminatory labour patterns. Covid-19 has forced millions of women, particularly marginalised women, with disabilities, Indigenous and migrant women, back into poverty and back into the home. The losses made by the pandemic to the achievement of gender equality and the Sustainable Development Goals must be addressed by

UNWTO and national government policies to speed up the process, which was already lagging behind [before the pandemic by hundreds of years](#). Therefore, Rethinking Tourism discussions in any celebration on World Tourism Day should make transformation of the interconnected systems of discrimination of women in tourism a top priority. The UNWTO should hold governments to account for developing relevant policies and, transparently, providing evidence of implementation.

Equality in Tourism and its Associates want a tourism recovery that

- decolonises individual and institutional worldviews;
- eliminates patriarchal systems of domination and exploitative work practices;
- recognises caregiving for people and planet the responsibility of society as a whole, not just women;
- includes social reproduction and community as integral components of economic analysis;
- ensures that economic analysis is based on women's place-based, lived experiences.

We urge the UNWTO to foster tourism that puts gender equality at the centre stage of tourism policies and promotes tourism that integrates decolonised, feminist perspectives in its operations and practices at all levels of the industry. We emphasize the importance of gender equality in tourism planning and implementation to ensure that women are not mere recipients but equal partners in tourism decision-making.