

International Seminar on Women's Empowerment in the Tourism Sector

Asunción, Paraguay, 12 April 2018

Conclusions

Panel 1: Tourism policies to enable gender equality

- The issue of gender takes on special relevance in tourism since it is one of the sectors that employ the highest percentage of women.
- Therefore, public institutions and ministries must respond to these figures and support gender equality policies through various tools such as: tourism development plans, national and local budgets, the creation of incentives to increase budget allocations, with a focus on gender.
- The presence of women ministers of tourism in the Seminar shows that the representation and leadership of women in local governments can be very significant and exemplary.

Panel 2: Education as a tool for women's socio-economic advancement in Tourism

- Access to education is essential in order for women to achieve leadership positions in the tourism industry in all its areas: whether it be in the public and private sectors or in community management.
- Training in the use of technology is especially important at present in order to work in tourism. It is necessary to enhance the access of women to this type of training, which is still considered stereotypically male.
- It is necessary to invest in policies and training programmes that promote the advancement of women in the tourism sector, through work in local communities and entrepreneurship initiatives and access to credit.

Panel 3: Entrepreneurship in tourism, an effective means for women to lead in the tourism sector

- Tourism offers women great opportunities to create their own businesses and in turn create jobs for other women and benefits for the community in which they operate.

- Therefore, initiatives and the creation of small local businesses should be encouraged and facilitated through micro-credits and grants or tax breaks for entrepreneurship.
- Furthermore, tourism enterprises and family businesses tend to rely mostly on women.

Panel 4: Funding and development opportunities

- Lack of investment in gender equality is costly both for the attainment of the political, economic and social rights of women and for achieving inclusive economic growth for society as a whole.
- There are traditional and non-traditional funding sources available for women who are willing to start businesses and these must be made known in a transparent and accessible way in order to generate the maximum possible impact, in the form of grants, credits and incentives.

General Conclusion

- The empowerment of women is vital for sustainable development and for the full exercise of human rights for all. In addition, the evidence shows that promoting equality will accelerate progress towards the achievement of the SDGs and should be a central part of any strategy to create more sustainable and inclusive economies and societies.
- The challenges facing tourism are numerous:
 - The participation of women in the labour market compared to that of men is unequal (including wage inequality).
 - The most vulnerable jobs are occupied mainly by women.
 - Women still face barriers to access to leadership positions.
 - Harassment, violence and social stereotypes against women continue to cause serious problems.
 - The low level of economic investment to alleviate inequality is insufficient.
- Undoubtedly, gender equality and the empowerment of women constitute the great pending issue of our time and the main challenge of human rights throughout the world. We need inclusive cooperation in order to achieve an equitable society.