



The Climate for Collaboration: first ever Future of Tourism Summit calls on businesses and destinations to partner-up for change ahead.

On 29 September the inaugural Future of Tourism Summit, held in Athens and livestreamed globally, brought together NGOs, businesses and destination organisations to demonstrate the need for “radical collaboration” to adapt to future needs. The focus of the day was climate action, within the framework of the Glasgow Declaration. This year the [Future of Tourism Coalition](#) event was part of the [Green Destinations 2022 Conference](#), hosted by the City of Athens at the iconic Technopolis venue, with Beyond Green as sponsor.

Highlights from the day included:

- Nadine Pinto, Sustainability Manager for **The Travel Corporation**, called for stronger partnerships with destinations, with metrics to measure their effectiveness. “We won’t have all the solutions overnight”, she added, “but we need to show the difference being made through partnerships toward the right direction”.
- Janie Neumann, Sustainable Tourism Manager for **Visit Scotland**, hailed the [Glasgow Declaration](#) as an important shared commitment to align stakeholders and which will keep them to account. Acknowledging they don’t have all the answers, they move forward through “learning by doing” and are supported by the Travel Foundation.
- Anthony Everett, President & CEO of **4VI** (formerly Visit Vancouver Island, now a social enterprise) announced [a multi-year partnership with the Travel Foundation](#). “We realised very quickly we needed a global partner,” he said. The partnership includes developing new KPIs for Vancouver Island which will draw from, and be shared with, the global community. Greg Takehara and Paula Vlamings from **Tourism Cares** were on Vancouver Island, and joined virtually from its [Meaningful Travel Summit](#) which was running in parallel.
- Liisa Kokkarinen, Head of Sustainable Development, explained how **Visit Finland** signed the Glasgow Declaration [along with 60 Finnish organisations](#) who were inspired to stop emissions, not tourism
- Virginia Fernandez-Trapa, Programme Officer, Sustainable Development of Tourism, **UNWTO** acknowledged the success so far of the Glasgow Declaration for Climate Action in Tourism, which UNWTO leads on, but called for many more organisations to sign up. She said: “Our unique planet depends on whether we transform or not, so let’s do it together.”
- Martin Thomas, Vice President of [Beyond Green](#), a global portfolio of “planet earth’s most sustainable hotels, resorts, and lodges”, shared details on the brand’s commitment to deliver on the three pillars of sustainable tourism, and how member properties are working to protect biodiversity, celebrate cultural heritage, and improve local people’s livelihoods in destinations around the world.

- Jonathan Tourtellot, founder of the **Destination Stewardship Center** and the [Destination Stewardship Report](#), was recognised by the **Centre for Responsible Travel (CREST)** with this year's [Martha Honey Legacy in Responsible Travel Award](#).
- Paloma Zapata from **Sustainable Travel International** introduced its [responsible travel documentary series](#) that showcases real-life examples of sustainability in action from destinations and travel companies around the world.
- Jeremy Sampson, CEO of **The Travel Foundation** outlined the number one future goal for the Future of Tourism Coalition is to continue to build and strengthen communities, particularly in the Global South.
- Sofya Muhrer-Muromets, Sustainability Coordinator, **TourRadar** said that mindset change is all about storytelling and communication, so the industry needs to share best practices, raise awareness of sustainable tourism and highlight what good things people are already doing with regards to innovation and transformation of the current system.
- Kristen Bertuglia, Environmental Sustainability Director, **Town of Vail, Colorado** also commented on changing mindsets, saying that travel and immersion in a place can change attitudes, so visitor experiences should be a catalyst for changing people's hearts and connections with a destination. She said: 'You can put policy in place but if there is nothing to back it up, it may not be sustainable.'
- Alexia Panagiotopoulou, Head of Strategy, **Athens Development and Destination Management Agency (City of Athens)** highlighted that cities can be mobilisers for climate action as they have the ability to bring different stakeholders together, so it's important for them to provide the relevant communication and resources on climate action in tourism.
- Evita Kalogiorga, Brand Director, **This is Athens** highlighted that communities often have solutions, so organisations shouldn't fear reaching out for wider consultation. Climate action is more successful if a bottom up approach is taken.
- Candace Strauss, VP, Partnerships & Community Engagement, **WANDER** commented on why the climate crisis had not been responded to as rapidly as the COVID crisis, saying that 'solutions needed are long-term because they are so infrastructure intensive as well as the fundamental changes required in government policy, which is impacted by politics. The current energy crisis is currently shining a spotlight on this at the moment.'
- Hugh Felton, Sustainable Tourism Manager, **ABTA** reinforced the message that individuals do not have to be experts to take the first step in climate action in tourism. Decisions can be small, but just start somewhere.

To conclude the event, members of the audience from organisations that had signed the Glasgow Declaration were invited on stage and applauded, while **Preferred Travel Group** (parent company of Beyond Green) and the **City of Athens** became the latest to sign – committing to publish their climate action plans and report on progress annually. Vasilis-Foivos Axiotis, Vice Mayor for City Planning of the City of Athens, said: "We want tourism that helps us to reach our goal of reducing carbon emissions by 61% by 2030. We are signing the Glasgow Declaration because we want to share our commitments with the world, and because we are optimistic that these goals can be achieved in the City of Athens."

You can watch recordings of the event here: www.youtube.com/c/GreendestinationsInfo/videos

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