



AVIATION TAKING IY2017 UP TO 35,000 FEET

DATE : APRIL 2017

When the United Nations declared 2017 the UN's *International Year of Sustainable Tourism For Development* (IY2017), it was not purely for the purposes of messaging the value of the tourism sector across the global UN system. Awareness was but a small part of the objective.

365 days of focus was also about mobilising 360 degree action across the sector's value chain – ensuring not a day is wasted in the quest to strengthen tourism's ability to support global development.

The IY2017 message from HE United Nations Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres was clear:

“Every day, more than three million tourists cross international borders. Every year, almost 1.2 billion people travel abroad. Tourism has become a pillar of economies, a passport to prosperity, and a transformative force for improving millions of lives. The world can and must harness the power of tourism as we strive to carry out the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”

Immediately recognising their role and responsibility in mobilising their link in the chain in IY2017, the aviation industry – the major artery of global tourism and trade – stepped forward, committing to IY2017 from ground level to 35,000ft.

THE POWER OF AVIATION IN, AND FOR, IY2017

When it comes to global travel & tourism, it is aviation that keeps us looking up. As stated by Alexandre de Juniac, IATA Director General and CEO,:

“Each day some 10 million passengers board planes. And 100,000 flights will take them safely to wherever they are going. Aviation has a big impact on our world. This year will see four billion people and 55 million tonnes of cargo transported safely. Global air transport is so reliable that its positive impact on our daily lives can become invisible—connecting people over great distances, linking businesses to global markets, adding real world experiences to the education of our youth, creating opportunities for jobs that welcome tourists and availing the planet to journeys of exploration.”

Actively supporting IY2017, through ATAG – the Air Transport Action Group (www.atag.org/ - 'the only global industry-wide body to bring together all aviation industry players so that they can speak with one voice), the aviation sector is aligning itself to the UNWTO's global campaign, magnifying core messaging around IY2017 to ensure that the global aviation industry is on board.

Why? Because, in the words of Haldane Dodd, ATAG's Head of Communications,:

“ATAG's support for the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development will help ensure that the careful sustainability and climate change plan we have put in place for aviation can be aligned with the need to think about these issues across the sector.”

Ultimately, whatever one's position in the sector, connectivity of all stakeholders is vital if travel and tourism is to fully play its part in ensuring IY2017 maximises its opportunity to make travel & tourism more meaningful in, and impactful towards, the greater global development agenda – the SDGs.

Whether it is connectivity of efforts, or connectivity of air routes, making IY2017 work harder for the sector is a non-negotiable. Dodd continues:

“Aviation is one of the driving forces of our global world. Improved connectivity is a vital requirement for greater understanding, enhanced business relationships and more directly, it provides millions of livelihoods. Air travel helps 54% of tourists get to their destinations and at the same time supports nearly 63 million jobs. But there is a more fundamental role we can play in helping economic development and social mobility for people everywhere: showing whole of industry leadership on sustainable development.”

PARTNERING FOR HEIGHTENED PERFORMANCE

While IY2017 is focused on sustainable tourism for development, there is no reason to limit the year's opportunity for impact to only the tourism sector. Aviation allows the IY2017 message to take flight in new territories, creating a network of awareness and advocacy in other different yet inter-related sectors.

ATAG immediately recognised this opportunity, and is proactively applying its prowess to carry the UNWTO's IY2017 further afield. From Dodd's point of view,:

“Not all parts of the world can have massive tourism sectors, but all people of the world can benefit from well thought-out connections to their neighbours, their business partners and friends and family wherever they live. Aviation is here to help make that a reality.”

It is the creation and mobilisation of partnerships such as these that will ensure the benefits of IY2017 go far, far beyond when the clock strikes midnight on December 31st, bringing the calendar year to an end.

Even more reason to keep looking up!

- ENDS -