

## **G20 Tourism Working Group Meetings' organized under India's G20 Presidency.**

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The G20 Presidency focused on positioning India as a sought after destination and a concomitant to the objective laid a strong voice, message and action towards Sustainability, Responsible Tourism and Inclusive Growth. The strategic facets addressed here are not far to seek Green Field Projects leading to Green Tourism became the corner stone of discussions at the Siliguri and Kashmir Meet. Post Covid with the emphasis of Health and Hygiene this aspect catered to **Good Health, Wellbeing**, Fresh Air and an embodiment of Experiential Tourism. The Statue of Unity has created a Green Tourism Zone around it and a model to follow

Discussions at the meets revolved around reducing carbon footprints and here the digital transformation in the tourism industry became a cognizable tool. It meant adapting modern solutions to the daily tasks of organizing travel – from choosing a destination and planning an itinerary to booking flights and other modes of transportation, as well as hotels or generating offers that are maximally tailored to customers' needs. The Roadmap at the meets thus envisaged clear the wide-ranging benefits of supporting businesses and destinations embrace digitalization, including enhanced productivity, improved infrastructure management and delivering a safer and more efficient visitor experience.

The meets emphasised that Skilling the MSME and Destination Development. Technology will drive tourism in future. With Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) accounting for 80% of all tourism businesses worldwide, the the G20 CWG Roadmap emphasized the importance of public policies and public-private partnerships in addressing key challenges, including financing, marketing and skills gaps and market access to support MSMEs through the digital and sustainable transitions.

With a stress on Capacity Building in congruence with the anticipated increase in inflow, groundwork for policy alignment, infrastructure development and skilling needs to be expedited in order to be future-ready. **Quality Education** to the local youths at the destination echoed the sentiments of Inclusive growth.

The G20 presidency aimed at the States highlighting their USPs to the world and here came the notion of Destination Development and Management offering **sustainable cities and communities**. The Meeting at Kutch put the World Heritage Sites to the fore and the Rann to provide **clean water and sanitation** to the tourists. Further seamless travel and last mile

connectivity to be given a higher priority in future tourism policies as they contribute to the accessibility of the destination and offering a memorable experience.

Niche Tourism areas came into focus at the Srinagar and Goa meets. Film Tourism Units exploring the charm of Kashmir to understand the carrying capacity of the destination, requiring the service of the local populace, engage in **Responsible Consumption and Production** that shall leave a notable impact on that place catering to **Decent Work and Economic Growth**.

The Goa meet brought Cruise Tourism as the main objective of the discussion. Here the dialouge revolved around Waste management by the Cruise Liners to keep the **life below water** healthy and adaptable. Use of sustainable items on the cruise ships was noted as an imperative. Developing Cruise Tourism in the country following the principles of sustainability. Multiple facets of Cruise Tourism (Coastal, Island, Regional and Yachting), perspectives from Coastal States, private and public stakeholders in inland waterways, perspectives from riverine States were the focus areas

In India's vision for sustainable tourism we saw the policies framed by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India encompassing the National Tourism Board in the process, focus on Marketing and Promotion and the National Tourism Advisory Council.

The Meets also pondered on

- Off Beat Destinations so that footprints decrease on the already crowded popular destinations and offer a larger tourism canvas and the subsequent dvelopment **sustainable infrastructure**
- Slow Tourism that will reduce mobility and travel as tourists stay longer at a destination will aid Eco and Rural Tourism and a closer interaction with the local people in the area leading to the development of that **place**.
- Staycations will lead to **Industry Innovations**, new ideas, so that tourist engage in a stay that may be for a diverse reason as well as enjoy a vacation.

The G20 CWG recognised the critical need to work towards climate action and environmental protection and related international cooperation, on issues such as financing, sustainable infrastructure and resource management, integrating circular approaches in the tourism value chain and engaging visitors as key actors in sustainability.