

Press Release

“Youth at the Crossroads: Catalysing Climate Action through Sustainable and Cultural Tourism”



20 November 2024: The Association of Professional Social Workers and Development Practitioners (APSWDP), India, in collaboration with global partner organizations, successfully hosted a dynamic session at COP29 titled **“Youth at the Crossroads: Catalysing Climate Action through Sustainable and Cultural Tourism.”** The session focused on the critical role of youth in addressing the intersecting challenges of urbanization, transportation, and energy within the tourism sector, offering innovative solutions for aligning tourism with global climate goals.

The event highlighted how youth, as change-makers, are uniquely positioned to drive climate-conscious and culturally enriched tourism practices. With urbanization accelerating, transportation systems evolving, and energy transitions becoming imperative, the session explored ways to transform tourism into a sustainable force that preserves cultural heritage while combating environmental challenges.

Key Discussions and Insights

Urbanization and Sustainable Tourism

Speakers emphasized how unchecked urban growth risks over-tourism and environmental degradation. Practical solutions such as integrating renewable energy in tourism infrastructure, creating urban green spaces, and adopting zero-waste models were discussed. Participants shared examples of youth-led initiatives that align urbanization with climate resilience and cultural preservation.

Transforming Transportation for Climate-Friendly Tourism

The session explored the pivotal role of transportation in tourism’s carbon footprint. Speakers highlighted youth-driven efforts to promote electric and hydrogen-powered mobility, expand pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, and leverage digital platforms for virtual tourism. Discussions also included the integration of solar-powered charging stations to reduce tourism-related emissions.



Energy Transition in Tourism

The need for renewable energy adoption in the tourism sector was underscored, with examples of youth initiatives promoting solar, wind, and geothermal energy. Solutions such as energy-efficient buildings, smart grid systems, and solar-powered lighting at heritage sites were highlighted as ways to achieve both environmental and economic sustainability.

Youth as Agents of Cultural Preservation and Climate Action

The session underscored how youth are bridging cultural tourism and climate action. By reviving traditional eco-friendly practices and promoting community-based tourism, young leaders are ensuring that tourism development remains inclusive and sustainable. Collaborative efforts with local communities and energy providers were presented as effective models for equitable tourism.

Speakers and Dialogue

Moderated by Dr. Gurpreet Choudhary of APSWDP, India, the panel featured insightful contributions from Shaun Karakkattu, Irfan Pullani, Manish Kumar, Chengkuac Awan and Liang Jiawei. Topics ranged from AI-powered cultural preservation to peace tourism as a catalyst for climate action. The role of carbon credits in incentivizing sustainable practices was also discussed, alongside innovative examples of youth-driven green tourism solutions.

Networking and Collaboration

The session concluded with vibrant discussions on fostering partnerships between youth organizations, tourism agencies, and climate action groups. Participants shared actionable strategies to accelerate the implementation of sustainable tourism initiatives worldwide.

Conclusion

The event reaffirmed the pivotal role of youth in transforming tourism into a driver of climate action and cultural preservation. By embracing renewable energy, promoting sustainable urbanization, and innovating eco-friendly transportation, young leaders are shaping a future where tourism contributes to a sustainable and culturally enriched world. The session at COP29 served as a testament to the power of youth-led initiatives and their potential to catalyse meaningful climate action