Sustainable Tourism

INTERVIEW
Khaltmaagiin Battulga,
President of Mongolia

PHOTO FEATURE
Bridging differences in Myanmar with community-based tourism

ITC IN ACTION
Answering climate change with organic coconuts in the Caribbean
Help us improve International Trade Forum!

Scan the QR code and participate in a short survey. It will take only three minutes of your time!

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Trade-Forum
The road now less travelled

DOROTHY TEMBO, Executive Director a.i., International Trade Centre

The global spread of the coronavirus pandemic has hit us all with incredible speed – and the tourism and hospitality sector is one most impacted. Countries and territories are shutting their borders, airlines face bankruptcy, ports are refusing entry to cruise ships – and according to the World Travel and Tourism Council, a staggering one million jobs are being lost every day in the travel and tourism sector. And most of these jobs have been traditionally undertaken by women and young people. In addition, a ‘domino effect’ is hitting huge numbers of suppliers worldwide. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) is estimating that five- to seven-years’ worth of growth will be lost to COVID-19.

Once the storm passes, can we – should we – go back to business as usual?

The truth is, travel as usual is not sustainable. Now more than ever, we see a link between mass travel and impacts on the environment. Therefore, it is likely that the post-coronavirus traveller will choose more sustainable paths to enjoy what the world has to offer. Even before COVID-19, the industry was witnessing a shift in preference to certified eco-hotels and toward more local and authentic experiences. Increasingly people are supporting tourism that supports communities.

This shift is what concerns this edition of International Trade Forum. A rise in sustainable tourism was already underway but it can also help us rebuild after the crisis. The pandemic is challenging us to think about what comes next.

We need smart solutions. The articles you will find in this issue show the efforts many partners in the relevant industries are undertaking:

In view of achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outlined in the 2030 Agenda in this next ‘Decade of Action’, UNWTO sees tourism emerging from the current crisis as an even more important contributor to the SDGs, if managed responsibly. And ITC could not agree more with sustainability being at the heart of UNWTO’s plan for tourism’s post-COVID-19 recovery.

Beyond that, the aviation industry remains one of the biggest environmental challenges. How can sustainability go hand in hand with flying if you want to visit the remote islands of Indonesia? Flight shame will not fix airline emissions. But on the positive side, we will see how the aviation industry is working hard to reduce its CO2 footprint and to support a more carbon-neutral world by 2030.

Sustainability concerns, however, extend far beyond carbon emissions and the airlines. In many places, tourism has grown beyond its sustainable limits, to the detriment of local communities. So-called ‘overtourism’ in places like Venice, Barcelona and Reykjavik is one obvious result. Cruise ships disgorge thousands of people for half-day visits that overwhelm the destination but often may leave little economic benefit. The Cruise Line Industry Association is working with sensitive ports to avoid these negative impacts.

The cultural ideology of how Generations X, Y and Z are consuming travel plays another important role in positioning destinations as authentic experiences, not as a mere check on your ‘20 places you must see before you die’ list on Instagram. Brilliant examples are a renowned eco-lodge in Kenya, owned and fully run by the Maasai; a truly unique project in Myanmar that is bringing peace; or the #FeelMongolia campaign, which plays a key role in accelerating Mongolia’s rural economic development, increasing employment, ensuring environmental balance, and protecting its historical and cultural heritage. Here, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the President of Mongolia for contributing to this edition.

You will find many more pioneers in this edition. They, and sustainable tourism providers like them, remain ready to welcome visitors in the post-pandemic era.
ITC EMPLOYMENT

ITC is recruiting qualified professionals within different areas of expertise. If you would like to contribute your skills to increasing export competitiveness for developing economies, and are motivated to work in an international environment that promotes diversity, please check our jobs website, which is updated weekly:

www.intracen.org/about/jobs

Editor-in-Chief
Vittorio Cammarota

Managing editor
Evelyn Seltier

Contributors
Khatimaghan Batulga
Larisa Birthright
Aziz Boolani
Sarah Charles
Johnson Gilisho
Michael Gill
James Gitonga
Aman Goel
Katie Hall
Andy Harmer
Jarl Hetland
Suwendrani Jayaratne
Rika Jean-François
Sibylle Neuhaus
Zurab Pololikashvili
Antonina Popova
Waqas Rafique
Valentina Rollo
Jeanette Scherpenzeel

Special Thanks
Marie-Claude Frauenrath
Michelle Kristy
Giulia Macola
Phyllis Mwangi
Christine Ochoro
Marcelo Risi
Zoritsa Urosevic

Copy editors
Matt Brown
Evelyn Seltier

Proofreader
Elizabeth Martinez

Photography, art direction and design
Laurena Arribat
Iva Stastny Brosig

Printer
ITC Digital Printing

Disclaimer
Views expressed in Trade Forum are the contributors’ and do not necessarily coincide with those of ITC, UN or WTO. Designations employed do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of ITC concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities or boundaries; or the endorsement of any firm or product.

International Trade Forum focuses on trade promotion and export development as part of ITC’s technical cooperation programme with developing countries and economies in transition.

Published quarterly since 1964 in English.

See the online version at tradeforum.org

Sign up for e-mail headline alerts at tradeforum.org/alerts

Subscriptions
forum@intracen.org

Print subscription
US$ 60/year (free to trade support institutions and firms in developing countries)

ISSN: 0020-8957

Address
International Trade Centre
Palais des Nations
1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

t +41 22 730 0111
f +41 22 733 4439
intracen.org

Reprints
Articles from this magazine may be freely reprinted, with attribution to the author and to International Trade Forum, ITC. A copy of the reproduced article would be appreciated. Copyrighted photos may not be reproduced.

Publisher
The International Trade Centre is the joint agency of the World Trade Organization and the United Nations.

Cover photo: © Shutterstock

Contents

NEWS

NEWS BRIEF ........................................................................................................... 6

FAST FACTS

TOURISM AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DATA AND DEFINITIONS ... 8

SPECIAL REPORT

MAKING COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM SHINE WHERE IT MATTERS .................................................................................. 14

Interview with Jeanette Scherpenzeel, Senior Programme Manager, the Centre for the Promotion of Imports from developing countries, the Netherlands

TOURISM AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA: SEIZING OPPORTUNITY IN CRISIS ............................................. 16

Zurab Pololikashvili, Secretary-General, UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

CERTIFICATION CAN GO A LONG WAY ...................................................... 20

Larisa Birthright, Business Development Manager, Travelife

LEADING A RETHINK OF TOURISM ............................................................ 21

Interview with Rika Jean-François, Commissioner, Corporate Social Responsibility, ITB, the World’s Leading Travel Trade Show®

MAASAI ECO-LODGE CREATES WIN-WIN FOR HUMANS AND ANIMALS ALIKE ........................................................................... 22

Johnson Gilisho, Tourism Committee Chairman, Il Ngwesi Board, Kenya

CULTURAL RESTORATION AS A CATALYST FOR DEVELOPMENT .... 24

Aziz Boolani, Chief Executive South and Central Asia, Serena Hotels

WITH FLYING COMES GREAT RESPONSIBILITY ..................................... 26

Michael Gill, Executive Director, Air Transport Action Group (ATAG)

MATCHING GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES WITH SUSTAINABILITY .. 28

Andy Harmer, Director, United Kingdom and Ireland, Cruise Lines International Association
A new project funded by the European Union to strengthen Nepal’s path towards more inclusive economic growth and greater integration into regional and global value chains has been launched in Kathmandu.

The International Trade Centre (ITC) will implement the project, which focuses on Nepal’s pashmina fine wool and specialty coffee sectors, in partnership with Nepal’s Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies.

Building on ITC’s long experience in providing trade-related technical assistance in Nepal, the project will be a contribution towards the country’s efforts to achieve higher sustainable economic growth and development, and its goal of graduating from the least developed country category. An objective of the project will be to increase trade and the participation of Nepal’s enterprises in regional and global value chains. Key to achieving this will be to strengthen the capacities of the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies and the Trade and Export Promotion Center, enabling their staff to formulate trade policies better, and negotiate and implement trade agreements. As part of this, a trade facilitation and export policies toolbox will be developed. The project also emphasizes increasing the capacities throughout Nepal’s coffee and pashmina value chain, to connect coffee smallholders and farmers to international markets.
Afghanistan launches national trade policy

The Government of Afghanistan launched a new initiative to spur growth and create jobs by boosting the export capacities of the country’s private sector, to trade with regional and global markets.

Afghanistan’s Minister of Industry and Commerce Ajmal Ahmady said: ‘This national trade policy takes centre stage in transforming the direction of the economy’s productive sectors toward producing and exporting high value-added products so that the country can realize its full export potential. The policy document outlines the key principles and strategies that will guide Afghanistan’s strategic integration into global markets.’

The Government anticipates that the policy will support the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework – the country’s overarching policy strategy – and implementation of its World Trade Organization (WTO) commitments, national export strategy, National Priority Programme on Private Sector Development, and national export targets.

The launch marks a milestone in the development of Afghanistan’s economy. It is the result of a comprehensive design process, led by the International Trade Centre (ITC) with input from public and private stakeholders, intended to capitalize on the access to international markets enabled by Afghanistan’s July 2016 accession to WTO.

Coalition of private and public sector to accelerate progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals

A coalition of private and public sector organizations, including United Nations entities, non-governmental organizations and a private equity firm have announced the launch of SDG500 – a new investment platform to help achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This $500 million investment platform is the first-of-its-kind dedicated to helping achieve the SDGs. SDG500 will offer exposure to six different underlying funds, each managed by impact asset manager Bamboo Capital Partners.

The funds aim to address the ‘missing middle’ financing gap that affects entrepreneurs in markets where growth is constrained by a lack of access to follow-on financing. The funds will target businesses in the agriculture, finance, energy, education and healthcare sectors across Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean and Pacific regions. There will also be a gender focus with some of the funds investing in businesses that empower and provide jobs for women.

ITC and European Commission launch second award for EU cities supporting fair and ethical trade

To promote awareness about fair and ethical trade, the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Trade have launched the European Union (EU) Cities for Fair and Ethical Trade Award 2021. The award aims to highlight the role that European Union cities and their citizens can play in supporting sustainable trade.

EU cities with more than 20,000 inhabitants are eligible to apply for the award. In their submission, EU cities should share their achievements across the social, economic and environmental pillars of international trade. They will be judged on their vision, relevant policies and the impact of their activities and initiatives. Along with an overall winner – to be awarded in October 2020 – several cities will receive special mentions for outstanding achievements in areas such as innovation or education initiatives.

For more information about the award, please contact: fairandethical@trade-city-award.eu or visit www.trade-city-award.eu
**Fast Facts**

### TOURISM

The travel and tourism sector supports **319 million** jobs worldwide. This is **10% of total employment** and generates **10.4% of global gross domestic product**.

Tourism contributes to around **5%** of global greenhouse gas emissions. These emissions are **set to grow by 130% by 2035**.

More than **53%** of 1000 accommodation and travel agencies in Benin, Botswana and Zambia **have reduced their environmental footprint** in the last three years.

### WOMEN IN TOURISM TRADE

Women make up a larger share of the services workforce than in any other sector.

What’s more, **51%** of staff in accommodation companies are women, more than the **42%** of share of women employees in the services sector on average.

Source: ITC
SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

70% of global travellers would be more likely to book accommodation knowing it was eco-friendly. 37% say that an international standard to identify eco-friendly accommodations would encourage them to travel more sustainably.

72% are not aware of the existence of eco-labels for vacation accommodation. 62% would feel better about staying in accommodation that had an eco-label.

Source: booking.com 2019 report

WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE TOURISM?

Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, meeting the needs of visitors, professionals, the environment and host communities.

Sustainable tourism is not a TYPE of tourism. It has a fundamental objective: to make all forms of tourism more sustainable, including mass tourism.

It should:

Make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity.

Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance.

Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contribute to poverty alleviation.

Source: UN World Tourism Organization and UN Environment
When you think of Myanmar, you might picture rich fauna, tropical forests, sparkling beaches, and a dramatic silhouette of temples and pagodas against a mountainous backdrop. It is undeniable that Myanmar, with its beautifully diverse landscape and rich cultural history, has a lot to offer. And tourism is set to pave the way for economic development in this often less-travelled Asian land in the years ahead.

Through inclusive and sustainable tourism development, a Netherlands-funded International Trade Centre project contributes to creating income and jobs, particularly for women and young people.

This community-based tourism project connects stakeholders along the whole tourism value chain, involving locals to create meaningful exchanges and ensure long-lasting benefits for all involved: from developing innovative and sustainable services and strengthening local tourism associations, to destination marketing and branding and encouraging business linkages at national or regional levels. To achieve sustainability that lasts, the International
Trade Centre also works with national partners to ensure the project is in line with the country’s tourism agenda.

**A successful model: From Kayah to Tanintharyi**

Only recently did it become possible to visit Kayah state and its villages. After years of armed conflict, and with the new prospect of income through tourism, many Kayan refugees started returning. The International Trade Centre has now extended the ‘Kayah model’ to Dawei in the Tanintharyi region in southern Myanmar.

A natural place where forest rivers meet tropical beaches along the Indian ocean, Tanintharyi offers new community-based tours in the fishing and orchard communities of Tizit and Ka Lone Htar — and soon in the old colonial town of Dawei.

Project leaders have trained local community members in villages around Dawei to develop fun, creative, cultural tourism for themselves. These tours build local skills and empower local people to include, participate in and benefit from tourism.

It does not stop there: one of the biggest challenges in development projects remains transferring knowledge to stakeholders in the field. In response, the International Trade Centre formed groups of local trainers in both Tanintharyi and Kayah to create a learning centre. The centre now welcomes international travel journalists and study tours from other Myanmar regions interested in developing responsible tourism.
1. Sunset Beach picnic by Tzit cooking group.
2. Daweian snacks by Tzit Cooking Group.
3. Community medicinal garden in Ka Lone Htar village.
4. Welcome drink at the Barefoot Forest SPA in Ka Lone Htar.
5. Experiencing the fisherman life at Tzit beach.
7. CBT introduction for tourists at Tzit village.
8. Forest picnic by Ka Lone Htar cooking group.
10. Fishing boats at Tzit beach.
The Centre for the Promotion of Imports from developing countries of the Netherlands, or CBI for short, is working in several Asian and African countries to increase sustainable tourism and connect tour operators to the European market. CBI and the International Trade Centre are no strangers to working with each other – since 2014, the two organizations have been reinforcing Myanmar’s sustainable tourism market under the Netherlands Trust Fund. They now collaborate on the Inclusive Myanmar Tourism Project 2018-2021.

Jeanette, what is CBI’s approach to sustainable tourism?
Just like ITC, CBI focuses on small business tour operators and enabling a good business environment for them. More specifically, we train them to improve their business practices and meet European Union (EU) market trends and requirements. We are specialized in the EU tourism market and have an extensive network of sector and institutional experts. Moreover, we believe that you need the country’s commitment to achieving sustainable tourism that lasts. That is why we also work with governmental institutions such as ministries to improve service delivery, reduce export obstacles, and encourage public-private dialogue for better coordination, alignment and cooperation between actors in the tourism sector.

You are focusing on community-based tourism. Why?
It leads to more significant social and cultural insights. It also helps local communities become aware of the commercial and
How does ITC’s work complement yours?

The beauty of our cooperation lies in how we complement each other. CBI reinforces ITC on the national level with digital marketing and strengthening associations, while ITC reinforces CBI on the regional level. More specifically, ITC is the expert in developing new community products and services across the whole supply chain, down to the local fisher on the beach. At the same time, CBI offers access to the European market to sell these new products. We both are flexible and go for the most effective solution, which is essential to have an impact. You miss opportunities if you do not work together.

For example, at a recent roadshow in Stockholm, CBI had 14 Myanmar tour operators show the products ITC developed, followed by meetings with Swedish tour operators. All participating tour operators own the Travelife label, which is a reliable marketing tool in the Swedish niche market. CBI needs the new products developed by ITC to attract the Swedish buyers, and ITC needs the CBI roadshow to market those products. Win-win.

You mentioned digital marketing. How important is it?

The key to developing any tourism sector is online and digital marketing. CBI provides training, guidance and implementation support. Indeed, niche marketing is essential as it leads to differentiation. Otherwise, there would be numerous tour operators selling the same experience and thus overcrowding the market. See, for instance, our Gems of Kenya strategy.

Another example is our support to Nepal after the earthquakes in 2015, which led to a decrease in tourist visits. To reverse the idea of Nepal no longer being safe, we supported the Nepal Tourism Board and national tour operators in setting up NepalNOW.org along with a social media campaign.

What are the main challenges when working in this field?

First, tour operators lack market information and analytical skills to find their competitive edge. The critical question is: what makes you special? Many find it hard to identify their unique selling point. As this should be the basis of their strategy, CBI provides advice during this critical phase.

Second, linking their business to markets in Europe. This is something we help with, for example, by providing online fact sheets to find buyers, organizing roadshows in Europe, and inviting them to tourism fairs. We also use the certification system Travelife to offer sustainable tourist packages (see page 20). We learned to focus on a limited number of selected companies instead of big numbers to make sure we make a difference.

Third, an enabling business environment. Tourism associations lack organization among themselves. That is why we support business support organizations to improve the quality of their services and extend those more broadly among companies and members. We assist them in creating digital marketing, a national marketing strategy, a system for market information dissemination and peer-coaching as well as training tour operators.

How does ITC’s work complement yours?

The beauty of our cooperation lies in how we complement each other. CBI reinforces ITC on the national level with digital marketing and strengthening associations, while ITC reinforces CBI on the regional level. More specifically, ITC is the expert in developing new community products and services across the whole supply chain, down to the local fisher on the beach. At the same time, CBI offers access to the European market to sell these new products. We both are flexible and go for the most effective solution, which is essential to have an impact. You miss opportunities if you do not work together.

For example, at a recent roadshow in Stockholm, CBI had 14 Myanmar tour operators show the products ITC developed, followed by meetings with Swedish

1. A unique selling point is key for successful tourism packages like specialized photography tours.
2. 3 Sisters Adventures learned EU requirements such as travel insurance and safety equipment for hard adventure activities.
3. CBI supported the Tourism Council Bhutan to develop an improved training system for tourism services.
4. ‘I am in Nepal Now’ photo campaign with the Dutch Ambassador of Nepal.
5. CBI supported companies to receive on the spot coaching during the ITB Berlin trade fair.
COVID-19 has brought global tourism to a standstill as countries impose full or partial travel restrictions and consumers stay home. Prior to 2020 international arrivals had been rising by an average of 4% a year. While it is too early to quantify the full cost of the pandemic, it is clear that this sudden fall in demand will have a significant impact, hampering economic development throughout the entire tourism value chain and its SMEs and placing millions of jobs at risk, most notably those held by the most vulnerable members of our societies.

An expected fall of between 20-30% could translate into a decline in international tourism receipts (exports) of between $300-450 billion, almost one third of the $1.5 trillion generated in 2019. Taking into account past market trends, this would mean that between five- and seven-years’ worth of growth will be lost to COVID-19.

As the United Nations specialized agency for driving sustainable development through tourism, UNWTO will support the sector in the difficult months and years ahead, bringing together key global players and forging strategic partnerships. While appreciating the severity of the crisis, this may also be seen as an unexpected opportunity to position firmly tourism in the economy and in the trade agenda, and to rethink and recalibrate tourism as a global phenomenon.
The sector has proven its resilience before: in the wake of the SARS health crisis and then the Global Economic Crisis of 2008, international tourist numbers and revenues dropped only to rise again the following years. We can be confident, therefore, that tourism can bounce back from this adversity. But the sector, with the support of governments and private enterprises, must be committed to growing not only stronger but better, with sustainability and inclusiveness as a key priority for every stakeholder.²

Supporting travel and tourism is supporting jobs and livelihoods

The global community now has just ten years to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outlined in the 2030 Agenda – we have started the Decade of Action. Managed responsibly, tourism can emerge from the current crisis as an even more important contributor to the SDGs, supporting livelihoods and creating opportunities for millions of people around the world and leaving nobody behind.

Having reached 1.5 billion border crossings by tourists in 2019 alone, tourism has a profound and wide-ranging impact on societies, the environment and the economy. As of the end of last year, tourism, as a services trade represents 7% of total world exports and 30% of total exports in services, and in 2018 was the third export earning category after fuels and chemicals. On average, tourism accounts for 10% of World GDP and provides one out of 10 jobs worldwide.

Last year was the ninth consecutive year of sustained tourism growth following the 2009 global economic and financial crisis. But with growth comes responsibility, which is paired with immense opportunities for socio-economic welfare, poverty alleviation, low carbon growth and the overall advancement on the 17 SDGs.

The explicit mention of tourism in the SDGs - as a target in Goal 8, 12 and 14 – is a clear recognition of its potential to contribute to sustainable development. However, tourism’s cross-cutting nature and its broad value chain can have an impact on the advancement of all SDGs. The current SDGs paved the way for integrating/strengthening delivery of broad dimensions of development, with a real value addition to entrepreneurship, trade and jobs (including youth and women) to have meaningful impact on both society and environments. The UNWTO Global Report on Women in Tourism illustrates how, as well as contributing to the above goals, by being a leading employer of women, tourism is also an unparalleled contributor to SDG5, the goal to achieve gender equality (54% of the tourism workforce is female, compared to 39% across the wider economy).³ At the same time, tourism is also a leading promoter of innovation and entrepreneurship, as small enterprises disrupt the sector and make an impact at the grassroots level, for instance through providing non-traditional livelihoods, particularly outside of major cities and urban centres.

Research on tourism and SDGs shows that, for the private sector, competitiveness is now bound to sustainability (SDG12) contributing to low carbon growth models. For tourism policymakers, Job creation and Economic growth (SDG8) is key for economic diversification. Innovation (SDG9), Urban Development (SDG11), Education (SDG 4), Poverty Reduction (SDG1) and Climate (SDG13) are the other SDGs of most interest for tourism stakeholders. There is also an increasingly strong business case, as well as an environmental imperative, for moving towards a circular economy. Major players from across the sector have committed to the Global Tourism Plastics Initiative, for instance, pledging to eliminate unnecessary waste within the sector and adopting circular business models by 2025.⁴

Promoting and protecting heritage

The benefits of tourism go beyond economic growth and jobs, however. One of the most notable trends of recent years has been the growing demand for unique and authentic travel experiences. Consumers are increasingly demanding experiences that allow them to really appreciate and understand a destination, for instance through its unique gastronomy, its culture or its nature. And this has a corollary through its direct impact at the community level, catalysing social inclusion, with the potential to give an active role to many of those who otherwise are left outside of formal economic development cycles. Furthermore, this not only provides new business opportunities for people living in these destinations, particularly in rural communities, but is also helping protect cultural and natural heritage the world over. If managed responsibly, the revenues generated through tourism can be used to safeguard wildlife and give new life to traditions that may otherwise die out altogether.

Leaving nobody behind

Sustainability is at the heart of our plan for tourism’s post-COVID-19 recovery. Again, UNWTO seeks to guide tourism as it not only grows back stronger but grows back better. The spirit of solidarity and international cooperation that has characterized the global response to the biggest challenge of a generation must be carried over into the future. In this regard, the sector has a responsibility to ensure the economic and social benefits of tourism are spread as widely as possible rather than concentrated in small areas.

Now is not the time for ‘business as usual’. Rather, this is tourism’s time to realize its potential as a major driver of fair, equal and sustainable economic development, and both businesses and governments – as well as individual tourists – have a role to play in delivering this, leaving no one behind. ²

---

1. The Secretary-General of the UNWTO.

---

Khaltmaagiin Battulga was born in 1963 in the Mongolian capital Ulaanbaatar. In early life, the president was both an artist and an athlete before turning to business and politics. He served in several ministries before being sworn in as president of Mongolia in July 2017. The president took time out of his busy schedule to talk about Mongolia’s truly unique offering to global tourists, the Nomadic by Nature lifestyle – and what it means for the nation’s economy.

Your Excellency, Mongolia is known for exporting mineral commodities such as copper and coal. How does Mongolia plan to diversify the economy, and what role does sustainable tourism play?

Although the mining industry is the main export sector in Mongolia, we are aiming to diversify the economy and accelerate further the development of non-resource sectors. We believe that focusing on the sustainable development of tourism and agriculture will contribute to sound economic expansion in our country.

Statistics show that the tourism sector has been developing rapidly in recent years. International tourist arrivals worldwide reached 1.4 billion in 2019, with earnings growing to $1.7 trillion. Mongolia, as a sparsely populated land with untouched nature, a traditional nomadic lifestyle and culture, unique history, geography and biodiversity, and even as a cradle of paleontological and archaeological finds, has great potential for tourism development. Therefore, we are directing our state policy to utilize our resources and develop dynamically sustainable tourism to the full.

The development of sustainable tourism will also play a key role in accelerating rural economic development, increasing employment, reducing poverty, improving the living standards of women and people with special needs, ensuring environmental balance, and protecting and promoting historical and cultural heritage.

What spillover effects and linkages could tourism value chains bring to Mongolia? Is there a regional dimension?

A special feature of Mongolia is that it borders the two countries with the highest growth in tourism, leading in the number of sent and received tourists in the Asia-Pacific region and leading in the number of sent tourists in the world.

Just two hours’ flight away from Beijing and less than five hours’ flight from major cities in China and Russia, as well as such countries as the Republic of Korea, Japan, Thailand and Kazakhstan, Mongolia’s location is geographically convenient for receiving tourists from these countries, as well as for developing into a hub connecting Asia and Europe. This is a great advantage.

Also, due to the preserved nomadic culture and low population density, citizens of developed countries are increasingly interested in Mongolia to temporarily stray from their daily lifestyle, get closer to nature and seek adventure.

Therefore, we are cooperating with neighbouring and regional countries in launching and developing products that
Festival, the Golden Eagle Festival, and the Winter Horse Festival.

In recent years, there have been regularly organized mountain-sports events on snow-capped mountains, fishing and hunting trips, off-road auto races and marathon running events in the steppe and desert areas.

In addition to traditional folk art, Mongolia is also developing modern music, dance, film, and classical arts. A recent popular example - not only in Mongolia, but also around the world - is The Hu band, which created a new genre of ‘Hunnu rock’ integrating traditional art components such as horse-head fiddle and ‘throat singing’ with modern rock music. This is just one example of how Mongolian art and culture is developing at a competitive level in the world.

Beyond its unique heritage, what does modern Mongolia offer tourists who want to travel sustainably?

Although Ulaanbaatar, home to about half of Mongolia’s population, is a fast-growing modern city, most tourists in Mongolia choose to visit its natural environment.

Mongolia, with its vast territory, offers tourists a unique travel experience in every corner of the country. In different regions, you can participate in different travel experiences: watch wildlife and have mountain hiking adventures in the Western region; join sand dune hikes following dinosaurs’ footprints in the Gobi; walk through historical sites associated with Genghis Khan in the East, and experience the beauty of nature in the Khangai mountains.

Tourists say that staying in a Mongolian ger (yurt), which is a main component of the nomadic lifestyle that tourists experience during their journey through the natural sights of Mongolia, left them with fond memories, not of a five-star trip, but of a five-million star trip!

In recent years, tourists are choosing more local tours with a low-impact influence on nature and the environment, as well as new destinations that are not yet familiar to many tourists, which makes Mongolia undoubtedly one of the destinations for sustainable ecotourism. On this note, I would like to welcome your readers to visit Mongolia: Nomadic by Nature.

What in Mongolia’s sporting and artistic culture should visitors experience?

Mongolia offers tourists the opportunity to truly experience the nomadic lifestyle and culture of living in harmony with nature and the environment, leaving no trace, inherited for thousands and thousands of years.

Visitors to Mongolia can experience nomadic life by travelling on horseback, hunting with eagles and falcons, moving with yaks and camels, reindeer riding and being served with traditional dairy products and beverages. This is an exceptional cultural tourism product that is unique throughout the world.

In mid-July, all over Mongolia, visitors can enjoy the traditional ‘Three Manly Games,’ which include national sports such as wrestling, archery and horseracing. In addition, many tourists are attracted by annual events such as the Ice Festival, the Eagle Festival, the Ten Thousand Camels Festival, the Golden Eagle Festival, and the Winter Horse Festival.

1. Mongolia’s capital, Ulaanbaatar
2. The President of Mongolia, His Excellency Khaltmaagiin Battulga.
3. Mongolia’s 4,000-year-old tradition of hunting with eagles is endangered.
4. Equestrian statue of Genghis Khan.
Certification can go a long way

LARISA BIRTHRIGHT, Business Development Manager, Travelife

Travellife advises tour operators on certified hotels to build their sustainable, green business portfolio

Since 2016, the travel industry is seeing more travellers around the world demanding tourism experiences that have better environmental and social impacts. A recent report by UK-based ABTA, a travel association, states for example, that for 50% of Britons travelling on ABTA-approved trips, a travel company’s green credentials are important or essential when choosing a holiday, its highest level ever.

Many tourism businesses are rising to this challenge with responsible and sustainable measures, yet it is difficult for travellers and travel agents alike to find these businesses, let alone to be sure that their sustainability claims are reliable.

This is where certification programmes, such as Travelife for Accommodation, provide a vital role: they independently verify a business’ green practices and then promote it to the travel industry and consumers.

Travelife strives to provide a robust yet affordable option for tourists in search of all types and sizes of accommodation and now has a membership of over 1,500 hotels in more than 50 countries. From small safari camps in Africa to mega-resorts in Turkey, each must undergo an independent on-site audit that looks for evidence in complying with Travelife’s strict criteria related to environmental management, human and labour rights, and community support. Once each of the 163 criteria in the Travelife Standard is met, the accommodation provider receives the Travelife Gold Certification and logo.

Travelife works with around 25 tour operators in the United Kingdom, Europe and North America. Most tour operators have a sustainability strategy that might include increasing the number of sustainable accommodations. They can download a weekly report that lists each accommodation provider and their certification status, making it easier for sales staff and their customers to identify sustainable accommodation options. A special business-to-consumer portal on travelifecollection.com lists all of Travelife’s certified businesses for any vacationers that may want to book at a certified property and offers as well an active social media strategy for their members.

In addition to improving market access for businesses, Travelife reduces risks for both travel companies and accommodation suppliers by re-certifying each business every two years. While the standards may seem stringent, the company makes sure no one is left behind: each business has six months to complete post-audit improvements and has access to over 60 online guides and templates that help accommodation providers comply with the Travelife Standard.

For more information about Travelife, visit www.travelifestaybetter.com.

The Legian Beach Hotel in Bali celebrates after receiving Travelife certification.

The Legian Beach Hotel

© Legian Beach Hotel

Gold Certified for Accommodation Sustainability
Mainstreaming sustainable travel means working together globally on all levels

How does ITB promote sustainable tourism among different stakeholders?

ITB, the world’s biggest tourism fair, has an extensive portfolio. As such, we have the opportunity to bring sustainable thinking into the tourism industry and raise awareness among all relevant stakeholders, especially tour operators, carriers, policymakers and the public.

As we bear some responsibility, we dedicate an entire hall to responsible tourism at the fair. Additionally, we address sustainable topics at our ITB Convention with special dedicated formats, for example, the Corporate Social Responsibility Day, the Responsible Destination Day, the Tourism for Sustainable Development Day plus three Empowerment Days. We also push topics such as social entrepreneurship or gender equality in tourism and subjects such as indigenous cultures and animal welfare.

Moreover, throughout the year, we participate in events around the globe and work with international associations to ensure a broad approach to tourism that benefits everyone – people, nature, business.

Our commitment to the United Nations World Tourism Organization’s Global Code of Conduct, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism and our cooperation with governments, non-governmental organizations and universities make our approach holistic.

How can overcrowded tourist destinations go the sustainable way?

What we need is to rethink destination management. How can you achieve constant growth in a limited space? Social accounting should be part of any destination: based on measuring how much damage you cause and how much the community really benefits, each destination can make new decisions for their own good.

Defining these changes benefits a participatory approach, bringing together the communities and host governments in the planning phase. Smart digital visitor management, including pre-registration as well as seasonal or dynamic pricing or exploring lesser-known neighbourhoods, help along the way. Travellers should learn to avoid peak seasons if possible and look for real encounters rather than mere sightseeing. Moreover, aviation fuel is not yet subject to tax and cheap flights are accounting for rising tourism numbers and ‘over-tourism’. Destinations should show leadership and control all necessary decisions.
Maasai eco-lodge creates win-win for humans and animals alike

JOHNSON GILISHO, Tourism Committee Chairman, Il Ngwesi Board, Kenya

For the past 23 years, Kenya’s Il Ngwesi II Group Ranch has been a model of community-based tourism and sustainable wildlife conservation.

Tourists who visit the Laikipia district north of Mount Kenya, between fertile highlands to the south and vast arid plains stretching north, do not only come to experience our eco-lodge, the Maasai hospitality and the stunning scenery they also come to see its wildlife.

Il Ngwesi II Group Ranch is a Maasai-owned and run ranch covering almost 9,000 hectares and one of the 13 group ranches in the area. In the early 1990s, following an offer by the neighbouring Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, Il Ngwesi became the first Maasai Group Ranch of its kind to join the organization on a journey of conservation and community development. The Conversancy argued that by setting aside some of their land for wildlife conservation and tourism-related business ventures, the Maasai could raise income for the community.

Community elders agreed to set aside 80% of their grazing land for conservation because the 8,000-strong Il Ngwesi population only practiced a limited amount of agriculture in the highlands. Six years later, with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through the Kenya Wildlife Service, the community built the Il Ngwesi Eco Lodge, fully managed and run by the local community.
Community-based tourism is significant to us because we earn income as service and product providers as well as employers. We were able to create jobs to provide an alternative source of income besides livestock keeping for over 40 local women and men (with more than 90% from the community) working at the lodge and in security. Women from the community sell handicrafts to our guests and the revenue we make from the lodge goes back to the community in terms of much-needed school bursaries, building water projects, clinics and school infrastructure.

School attendance and education levels in the area are low compared to other parts of the district and to Kenya generally. Improving access to quality education is critical to enable the Il Ngwesi Maasai to engage on an equal footing in local, national and international debates that affect them. Being very traditional means that the Maasai’s attitudes towards the value of education are mixed, and specific cultural practices such as early marriages for girls, Moranism (warrior initiation rites for boys) and a nomadic way of life do not easily make room for education. However, this is changing, and many community leaders now wish to see their children properly educated.

Donations from individual well-wishers and partnerships with national and international non-governmental organizations have also provided some funds for community projects, particularly for education, health, access to water and generating community-based incomes. The funds are used to promote community buy-in and are essential for the long-term sustainability of our products.

A model leading to worldwide recognition

Over the past 23 years, we have witnessed an increasing interest in Laikipia beyond wildlife conservation. We have seen how tourism can serve as a sustainable means to manage the land and protect its wildlife, as well as to build a sustainable future for its resident communities.

Our products have improved, and occupancy rates have increased. Visitors can visit the nearby cultural Maasai huts, called boma, as well as access information on camping and other local activities, such as camel rides. Staying at the lodge not only provides guests with stunning views of the landscape and wildlife, it also opens a unique window into Maasai life that is neither contrived nor over-commercialized.

Il Ngwesi is recognized both nationally and internationally as a rare example of a venture genuinely run by the community that makes a real contribution to wildlife conservation. Part of the area set aside for conservation has been fenced for the protection of endangered species and currently holds two white rhinos. Our ranch continues to enjoy visibly increased numbers of animals, including elephants, giraffe, impala and the endangered Grevy Zebra. Predators include lions, leopards, cheetahs, hyenas, wild dogs, and jackals – all of which are central to the ranch as a tourist attraction and for the ecosystem.

We have hosted many famous people including members of the United Kingdom’s royal family. We have served as a model to our neighbours who help foster communities that value wildlife and see a purpose in acting as custodians of the land. This managed landmass is particularly essential for the conservation of habitat, humans and wildlife. And we are happy to be able to contribute to that.

1. The Maasai lead tourists through a bush walk.
2. The traditional dance of Morans (Maasai warriors).
3. Giraffes in their natural habitat on the Ranch.
Cultural restoration as a catalyst for development

AZIZ BOOLANI, Chief Executive South and Central Asia, Serena Hotels

Reviving ancient mountain communities offers a model of how to pursue sustainable tourism through the prism of heritage conservation

In the wake of the Industrial Revolution, the rise of capitalism and rapid urban expansion, many ancient mountain cultures worldwide were threatened with oblivion.

Development agencies, working to reduce poverty, have tried various approaches, from top-down and donation models to participatory approaches, with varying success.

A unique model adopted by the Aga Khan Development Network, working for sustainable development in the Gilgit-Baltistan region of Northern Pakistan, has proven to be a story of triumph and reclamation by using cultural restoration as a catalyst for social and economic development.

Gilgit-Baltistan is separated from the rest of Pakistan by a chasm formed by two high-altitude mountain ranges, the Himalayas and Karakoram. The mountains geographically isolated local communities and created a unique cultural context. Gradually, once-thriving cultures with imposing palaces and forts boasting masterfully intricate woodwork, rich cuisines, and a unique artistic and musical heritage – possibly the long-lost kingdoms of legend, or even Shangri-La – deteriorated and were threatened with obsolescence and extinction. In 1979, the region, long ago connected by the ancient Silk Road, was again brought into contact with the outside world with the opening of the Karakoram Highway, linking Pakistan to China.
Restoring heritage sites for community impact

The Aga Khan Trust for Culture intervened in the region in the early 1990s with a concept for sustainable heritage conservation management, and economic development. The approach was to restore heritage sites and revive dying arts, crafts and traditions by actively engaging local communities. The Aga Khan Development Network contends that conservation projects have a positive impact well beyond physical heritage sites; they promote good governance, a growing civil society, rising incomes and economic opportunities for local communities, greater respect for human rights and better stewardship of the environment.

In Hunza, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture restored Karimabad village and turned the 700-year-old Baltit fort into a public museum—a process that took six years of careful planning and meticulous execution. The project won several heritage conservation awards, including the 2004 UNESCO Award of Excellence for Cultural Conservation in the Asia-Pacific region.

Simultaneously, funds allowed for the revival of crafts and musical instruments, and patronage was given to master craftsmen and women to train the new generation in the dying arts.

The Trust carried out similar heritage restoration programmes at a 1,100-year-old Altit fort and several sites in the mountainous Baltistan region. The revenue generated from the museum and café makes these restorations sustainable while positively impacting the local community by encouraging tourists to spend money and supporting local jobs. All these developments paved the way for the opening of Serena Hotels, a hotel chain operated by Tourism Promotion Services Pakistan, which converted some of these renovated sites in the region into heritage lodging facilities.

How hotels can ensure sustainability and form part of local supply chains

The arrival of a hotel chain in pristine locations can often have a detrimental impact on the local ecology and economy. The ethos employed by Serena Hotels supports the development of local communities and culture, and works towards the restoration and maintenance of cultural assets. The hotels add value in the community at various stages: from employing local artisans to build and decorate the hotels, to employing local people and developing skills in all aspects of tourism and hospitality, to reaping the economic dividends of the resulting tourist boom.

Under the hotel’s ‘cultural diplomacy’ banner, local festivals, cuisines, music and art contribute significantly to mainstreaming these cultures. The Serena heritage lodgings at the 200-year-old Khaplu Palace and 400-year-old Shigar Fort in Baltistan have become wonderful symbols of local heritage and act as modern tourism magnets, attracting visitors from all over the region. The heritage properties ensure training and employ members of the local community to help create a sustainable supply chain system.

More than this, Serena Hotels engage in sustainable corporate social responsibility initiatives such as the Karighar (meaning ‘house of artisans’ in Urdu) project that empowers women by teaching them skills like beekeeping, stitching, finishing linen, embroidery and apparel production. These goods then form part of the hotel value chain. Serena Hotels are thus actively contributing to the social development of the region by using local resources in their commercial operations while enabling the long-term economic empowerment of women.

As well as operating in the Gilgit-Baltistan region, Serena also operates a heritage hotel in Swat—another mountainous region with Buddhist origins. The historic state guestroom Vazir House offers heritage suites while the hotel décor and cuisine conserve local heritage and crafts.

With these interventions, the communities of these once isolated mountain regions are finding a renewed sense of pride and belonging. Their expert artisans are paving the way for economic prosperity rather than being swept up in the tide of modernization—and applying sustainable tourism practices that can be replicated in other mountainous regions of Central and South Asia.

1. Serena Shigar Fort.  
With flying comes great responsibility

MICHAEL GILL, Executive Director, Air Transport Action Group (ATAG)

The economic and social benefits of aviation are clear, but these come with a climate cost that the sector is stepping up to address.

Aviation provides the world’s only global rapid transportation network. That makes it essential for global business. Air transport helps countries contribute to the global economy by increasing access to international markets and allowing the globalization of production. Without it, world trade would struggle.

As a significant employer with 65.5 million jobs supported by air transport worldwide and a global economic impact of $2.7 billion (3.6% of the global economy) – similar to the gross domestic product of Switzerland or Argentina – the aviation sector plays a vital role in enabling economic growth, particularly in developing countries.

An industry that relies heavily on aviation is tourism. Globally, 58% of international tourists travel by air. Without the connectivity provided by flight, developing countries in regions remote from their source tourism markets would not be able to enjoy their present levels of economic growth. By providing air links for tourism, international air transport supports 36.7 million jobs and $897 billion of global gross domestic product in tourism.

Aviation accounts for roughly 2% of manmade CO₂ emissions. For aviation to grow sustainably, the industry must balance the advantages of growth in air travel with the responsibility to pursue climate action.

© Shutterstock.com
An environmental responsibility

The economic and social benefits of aviation are clear, with the growth of the sector being essential for all countries, both developed and developing. However, these benefits also come with an environmental cost.

Aviation accounts for roughly 2% of manmade CO₂ emissions. For aviation to grow sustainably, the industry must balance the advantages of growth in air travel with the responsibility to pursue climate action. It is a responsibility that the global aviation sector takes very seriously.

Thanks to new technology and innovations—with $15 billion spent annually on efficiency research—the efficiency of aircraft has improved continuously. A flight taken today produces half the CO₂ that the same flight would have in the 1990s.

At the same time, the industry is growing at a tremendous rate to meet the needs of citizens around the world who wish to travel—with some of the fastest growth in emerging economies in Asia-Pacific. That growth is often more rapid than efficiency improvements.

But to tackle this challenge, aviation industry leaders agreed a global, sector-wide climate action framework in 2008—a world first. As of 2021, the industry will stabilize net CO₂ emissions thanks to the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA): a global scheme under which airlines offset any growth in CO₂ emissions above 2020 levels.

Next to these stabilization measures, the aviation industry will pursue other emission reduction measures such as developing new technology, and in the long term halve net CO₂ emissions by 2050, compared to what they were in 2005.

Many airlines have shown leadership in advancing the production and deployment of sustainable aviation fuels, which could reduce CO₂ emissions by around 80% compared to fossil fuels. They do this by signing multi-million dollar forward purchasing agreements, investing in start-up support and promoting sustainable aviation fuels through test flights, research, and investigation of local opportunities. Five airports now also have a regular supply of these sustainable fuels—in Bergen, Los Angeles, Oslo, San Francisco and Stockholm.

However, bringing sustainable aviation fuels to global markets remains challenging. It requires substantial investment. Positive policy options are now more critical than ever to support sustainable aviation. The industry has called on governments to assist potential suppliers of sustainable fuels in developing the necessary feedstock and refining systems—at least until the fledgling industry has achieved the required critical mass and prices drop thanks to economies of scale.

Governments can also support the aviation industry by introducing environment and fuel quality legislation to promote developing markets for sustainable aviation fuels. Policy options include:

- Enacting commercial risk-reduction policies
- Ensuring that aviation has access to the same alternative fuel policies as other transport modes
- Prioritizing aviation as a user of liquid-alternative fuels, alongside other hard-to-abate sectors (such as shipping and cement production)
- Feeding research and technology into production processes and feedstocks
- Providing access to more cost-effective debt, debt guarantees and capital grants for production facility construction
- Supporting technical fuels approval processes at the ASTM (formerly known as the American Society for Testing and Materials), an international standardization organization
- Diverting economic support from fossil fuels towards renewable and sustainable aviation fuels
- Ensuring that any government support is contingent on adherence to global sustainability standards

United industry efforts to reduce CO₂ emissions and government support combined will contribute to more sustainable tourism and more sustainable travel options for us all.

United industry efforts to reduce CO₂ emissions and government support combined will contribute to more sustainable tourism and more sustainable travel options for us all.
Matching growth opportunities with sustainability

ANDY HARMER, Director, United Kingdom and Ireland, Cruise Lines International Association

The global cruise industry is ready to take the lead when it comes to moving millions of tourists across the seas sustainably and responsibly

The water around and below us, the air above us, the communities around us, the people who work for us: all are critical factors when it comes to planning a sustainable growth strategy for the cruise industry based on leadership, stewardship and partnership.

The cruise sector represents 2% of the overall travel industry with more than 2,000 ports-of-call globally, including in such sensitive waters as the Baltic Sea and the Alaskan coast. We are a small part of the 1.5 billion leisure trips made each year, but our industry is ready to play a leadership role when it comes to sustainable tourism.

Leadership for fewer emissions

While cruise ships comprise less than 1% of the global maritime community, we are pioneers in new sustainable technologies and practices from which the entire shipping sector benefits. We have invested more than £17 billion ($20 billion) in developing new energy-efficient technologies and cleaner fuels.

At the end of 2018, the cruise industry made a first-ever, industry-wide emission commitment to reduce the rate of carbon emissions across the fleet by 40% by 2030. And, as of 2020 and in line with new International Maritime Organization regulations which affect the whole maritime industry, ships will have to use fuel with a maximum sulphur content of 0.5% compared with the previous limit of 3.5%. Other innovations include shore-side power, liquefied natural gas and exhaust gas-cleaning systems.

Waste stewardship and gender equality

There are many examples of our stewardship role, such as on-board wastewater and sulphur treatment plants, pioneering hull coatings and design, and air lubrication systems. Thanks to our waste management and recycling systems, there is zero waste-to-landfill from some of the biggest cruise ships in the world.

Beyond the pure environmental concerns, the cruise sector is also leading the way on labour conventions and being aggressive in gender diversity in the marine division of our ships – which accounts for 15% of the people working on the ships – up to and including women who are ship captains.

Partnerships for communities

Forging meaningful partnerships is vital for success, and we are working with leading non-governmental organizations and sensitive destination ports such as Dubrovnik in Croatia, Santorini in Greece and Barcelona in Spain to ensure that cruise tourism works for resident communities, destinations and visitors.

For example, in Dubrovnik in 2019, we signed a long-term partnership to help manage the flow of visitors to the city. We are working together with the mayor to sensitize visitors so that they respect the city’s unique culture and heritage, as well as those of its surrounding areas.

We believe that with opportunity comes responsibility, and we are working as an industry to meet those responsibilities with numerous such models and initiatives.
Paul de Rooij, an investor in Tanzania’s spice sector, has an expansive knowledge of cinnamon.

‘The variety of cinnamon grown in Tanzania is called Cinamomum Zylanicum,’ Paul says. ‘It is also grown in Sri Lanka and in small quantities in Madagascar and Seychelles.’

Cinamomum Zylanicum or True Ceylon Cinnamon is a coveted aromatic variety of cinnamon, indigenous to Sri Lanka, but which grows well in Tanzania.

However, to unlock potential trade in this spice, the Tanzanian sector needed to adopt new techniques of handling and marketing it. Hailing from the Netherlands, Paul has his finger on the pulse of export opportunities for Tanzania.

‘If Tanzanian exporters can produce according to European Union market standards, they can get their market share,’ he says. ‘The demand for the product is huge.’

His Dutch-Tanzanian joint venture, formed in late 2019, is now helping to improve cinnamon exports from Tanzania.

It all began when ITC’s Market Access Upgrade Programme (MARKUP) asked Paul to pass on his expertise and train Tanzanian spice producers and exporters. He travelled around the country and gained a deep understanding of the opportunities and challenges that lie in the Tanzanian spices sector.

The overall lack of technology and equipment for post-harvest processes struck him. He realized that was why Tanzanian cinnamon, despite the quality of the trees, struggled to meet the quality requirements to access other markets, such as the European Union.

Tanzanian spice exporter Edward Rukaka was part of the training sessions at which both exchanged ideas. Together they dreamt of pioneering new techniques to improve the quality of Tanzanian spices, making them globally renowned and exportable throughout the world.

This meeting was the turning point for Paul. He decided to invest in his ideas: He brought together his company BAPA Trading and Edward’s company, Companero Farmers, to form Trianon Investments. Together, Paul and Edward hope Trianon will have a positive impact on communities in Tanzania – and the spices industry as a whole.

Paul has already invested $100,000 to upgrade the infrastructure and equipment for processing spices and meeting immediate working capital needs. The company aims to achieve $800,000 in revenues in 2020.

The founders hope that Trianon will emerge as an international spice processing company and contribute to improving the livelihoods of smallholder farmers in Tanzania.
Blazing trails in the Gambia

WAQAS RAFIQUE, Public Information Officer, International Trade Centre

Young tour guides are showing visitors the mystic beauties of the Gambia while contributing to sustainable development

Isatou Foon is a trailblazer. If you were to ask the first young woman to train in community-based tourism in the Gambia what she would like to achieve in life, her reply would be ‘the unachievable’! Her confidence appears unshakable when she describes a great source of joy in her life.

‘We achieved something that has never been accomplished, which is having girls being tour guides!’ she says.

At just 23 years, Isatou is sure of a few things about herself. One of them is the love for her country, the Gambia. Her creativity and passion in inviting the world to experience the country’s undiscovered beauties have sparked a wish to steer young people toward new careers in sustainable and inclusive tourism.

The burgeoning tourism industry in the Gambia and a youth-empowerment campaign provided her with the opportunities she was looking for. With a background in computer science and communications, her passion for telling stories brought her closer to becoming a professional tour guide and youth trainer in community-based tourism.

Among other activities, Isatou and her community are all set to contribute to promoting the popular Ninki Nanka Trail. Available as day-long or week-long.
We achieved something that has never been accomplished before, which is having girls as tour guides!

Isatou connects communities of youngsters to create awareness of how tourism can become an agent of sustainable development in the Gambia, leading the way for young women, in particular, to take part in the movement.

‘I will continue to inspire young women to take on such roles and lead communities by example,’ she says.

1. Isatou Foon.
2. Visitors can see wildlife on their tours.
3. Aerial view of mangrove forest in the Gambia.
5. Boats to the beach on Tanji in the Gambia.
Farmers in the Dominican Republic have found a smart solution to respond sensitively to natural disasters – and secure their incomes

Maria is the lead farmer of Bananos Ecológicos de la Línea Noroeste, or BANELINO for short, in the northwestern province of Monte Cristi in the Dominican Republic. Since 2000, BANELINO has been a dynamic and successful organization of family farmers that produces Fairtrade organic bananas primarily for the export market.

Their success, however, had its fair share of challenges in recent years due to a changing climate: more flooding, droughts and hurricanes have caused extensive damage to the banana plantations. Addressing climate change and its impacts are high on the new sustainable development agenda of small island developing states. They are the most exposed and vulnerable to climate change effects, with people and communities experiencing dramatic repercussions. Taking urgent action that leaves no one behind is a priority.

Witnessing these impacts first-hand, the cooperative was ready for a sustainable solution. Maria Genao’s gaze is hopeful while scanning her four acres of fields, covered in banana and coconut palm trees.

‘When my farm was flooded, the coconut trees survived. For two successive years, our plantations were devastated by the strong winds and flooding due to the hurricanes that passed over the Dominican Republic. But coconuts have thrown us a lifeline,’ she says.

Maria is the lead farmer of Bananos Ecológicos de la Línea Noroeste, or BANELINO for short, in the northwestern province of Monte Cristi in the Dominican Republic. Since 2000, BANELINO has been a dynamic and successful organization of family farmers that produces Fairtrade organic bananas primarily for the export market.

Their success, however, had its fair share of challenges in recent years due to a changing climate: more flooding, droughts and hurricanes have caused extensive damage to the banana plantations. Addressing climate change and its impacts are high on the new sustainable development agenda of small island developing states. They are the most exposed and vulnerable to climate change effects, with people and communities experiencing dramatic repercussions. Taking urgent action that leaves no one behind is a priority.

Witnessing these impacts first-hand, the cooperative was ready for a sustainable solution. Maria Genao’s gaze is hopeful while scanning her four acres of fields, covered in banana and coconut palm trees.

‘When my farm was flooded, the coconut trees survived. For two successive years, our plantations were devastated by the strong winds and flooding due to the hurricanes that passed over the Dominican Republic. But coconuts have thrown us a lifeline,’ she says.
Small island developing states are the most exposed and vulnerable to climate change effects, with people and communities experiencing dramatic repercussions. Taking urgent action that leaves no one behind is a priority.

answer to adapt to these climate risks — first step: diversifying crops by adding coconuts to mitigate risks and increase resilience.

‘Producing coconuts is not only improving our cash flow. It also supports the health of our soil and the biodiversity on our farms’, says Maria.

Using the lead-farmer approach, BANELINO met its target of 50% of members growing coconuts by the end of 2018, with unseen benefits: the training courses also included women and young people, who are often left out of skills development exercises because they are burdened with household chores or childcare duties.

But what is a lead-farmer approach? This participatory training and capacity-building method is based on peer learning and community-based knowledge sharing. The trained lead farmers, in turn, train other farmers in their communities, ensuring a domino effect to mainstream quality and improve agricultural skills across the sector.

‘As a lead farmer, I am especially eager to share my knowledge with other women in the community. This way they can embrace coconut production and participate in adding value to our products, such as handicrafts,’ explains Maria.

Ramon, a 78-year-old second-generation banana farmer, shares this enthusiasm: by adopting a mixed farming system, he feels comforted knowing that the three generations of his family working on the farm will have a stable, improved standard of living.

Investing in organic coconut production and value-added product manufacturing next to their traditional banana exports means an additional source of income for the farmers. Thanks to the diversification, they have the opportunity to produce multiple products and serve numerous markets. Market opportunities in the Dominican Republic are vast, as international markets increasingly demand fresh and value-added coconut products.

And BANELINO has shown it can seize these opportunities. As part of the International Trade Centre’s Alliances for Action network, the cooperative successfully received $125,000 to invest in productive capacities, including in building a coconut sugar-processing factory and purchasing more than 30,000 coconut seedlings from other Alliances partners. The loan came from the European Commission’s Banana Accompanying Measures, a support package for banana-exporting countries in the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States region.

As a result, BANELINO’s coconut production has been growing steadily since it kicked off in April 2018. A role model for the country and the Caribbean region, it has shown how to form productive, commercial and financial alliances that boost income and resilience by linking banana and coconut value chains.

Alliances for Action stands for strategic alliances between farmers and stakeholders across the coconut value chain — strategic both in terms of technical support and in terms of market linkages.

By joining the Alliances for Action network, BANELINO benefited from technical assistance — including coconut G.A.P. (Good Agricultural Practices certification) and seed multiplication — as well as market and business support to engage in diversification strategies while strengthening the farmers’ resilience to climate change effects.

The initiative is part of the second phase of the Coconut Industry Development for the Caribbean project launched in 2015 and funded by the European Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States— and now also CARIFORUM for Phase II of the project. The International Trade Centre implements this project jointly with the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute.

1. Coconut nursery of the Ministry of Agriculture, Nagua, Dominican Republic.
2. Training on value-added coconut products, Guyana.
3. Coconut nursery, lead farmer demonstration plot.
4. Lead farmer Maria Genao, BANELINO.
Giving back to society: A recycling business venture

WAQAS RAFIQUE, Public Information Officer, and SUWENDRANI JAYARATNE, National Project Adviser, International Trade Centre

Henry and Susi work together to improve the livelihoods of communities reeling from conflict

Henry and Susi belong to the new breed of entrepreneurs emerging all over the world. Like their counterparts elsewhere, they, too, have their cursor on the right spots: environmental, economic and social sustainability aspects of their business venture.

The couple – partners in life as well as business – founded Rice & Carry in Sri Lanka in 2012. Not happy with large plastic sacks used for rice, sugar and turmeric packaging being thrown away, their small enterprise got into the business of recycling these bags and turning them into handy, trendy satchels and accessories.
Not happy with large plastic sacks used for rice, sugar and turmeric packaging being thrown away, Rice & Carry got into the business of recycling these bags and turning them into handy, trendy satchels and accessories.

Located in Arugam Bay, on the sandy east coast of Sri Lanka – with its picturesque beaches and dreamy white sand – Rice & Carry employs women affected by conflicts and natural disasters that have hit the region.

‘We are a social enterprise that aims at empowering and improving the livelihoods of communities on Sri Lanka’s east coast,’ said Henry.

Rice & Carry is creating a space for women to overcome barriers in leaving home to work. All women employees of Rice & Carry can simply work on their sewing machines at home at flexible hours to contribute to their household income.

Henry and Susi had a dream of sharing the creativity of their workers with the rest of the world.

However, increasing exports was not an easy feat, they realized. With just 30% of their buyers from abroad, previous attempts at exporting to Australia, Germany and Spain had not been successful because of high logistics and transport costs.

Henry enrolled in a coaching programme for small enterprises where he received advice about switching from airfreight to sea freight for transporting and delivering products.

‘We learnt, for example, how to fill in the forms, and how to deal with insurance issues and shipping timetables to deliver to customers on time,’ he said. ‘As a result, we are much more confident in what we are doing. It would have taken at least two years on our own to get to the same level.’

Henry and Susi are now confident that reduced transport costs will boost their exports with competitive pricing, and will soon be able to ship a €9,000 ($9,700) order. The business has already made several shipments by sea for the European market after working closely with a fair trade distributor.

Similar training courses to the one Henry took are helping small businesses in Sri Lanka improve their export competitiveness as part of the International Trade Centre’s EU-Sri Lanka Trade-Related Assistance Project.

The four-year EU-funded project, worth €8 million ($8.5 million), contributes to Sri Lanka’s inclusive trade-led growth and regional integration. It supports the export competitiveness of small firms and helps them move up the value chain in sectors with high potential for economic growth and development.

For Rice & Carry, it is not just about larger sales volumes – Henry and Susi are also motivated to give back to society by contributing to rural development, creating jobs, and improving livelihoods.
World Export Development Forum 2020

27-28 August in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia*

Sustainable tourism is at the centre of the 20th edition of the International Trade Centre’s annual flagship event, the World Export Development Forum. This year’s host, the Government of Mongolia, welcomes you to Ulaanbaatar at the end of August. We will bring together the major actors in the field of sustainable tourism to discuss the way forward and measures for recovery in the context of the COVID-19 economic crisis.

The World Export Development Forum is all about business and exports. The event features:

- **Business-to-business matchmaking meetings** in the tourism and related sectors;
- **Practical skill-building workshops** on crisis communication, sustainability certification schemes, digital marketing, and much more; and
- **Discussions on cutting-edge topics**, including links between sustainable tourism and agribusiness, climate change adaptation and opportunities for women entrepreneurs and youth.

Partner with us to share what works in sustainable tourism and to support small businesses!

Participate to learn how to become a sustainable supplier and to meet potential partners!

Entrepreneurs, investors, policymakers, development partners – we look forward to the World Export Development Forum 2020, to rebuild together the trust in tourism and trade.

To become a partner, pre-register or for more information, please send an e-mail to wedf@intracen.org

* Date is subject to change, considering further effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.
NEW ITC PUBLICATIONS
Resources on trade and export development for exporters, trade support institutions and policymakers

For free download, please visit: www.intracen.org/publications

PROMOTING SME COMPETITIVENESS IN BOTSWANA
Drawing on data from the ITC Competitiveness Survey on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), this report shows that improved access to skilled labour has strengthened Botswana companies, especially in services. However, very low rates of certification to international standards, and infrastructure shortfalls, prevent many firms from going global. Young entrepreneurs could benefit from management and accountancy training. With most firms perceiving significant environmental risks and 40% investing to reduce their environmental footprint, Botswana SMEs are at the frontier of the green economy.

http://www.intracen.org/publication/Botswana-Competitiveness/

MORE FROM THE CUP: BETTER RETURNS FOR EAST AFRICAN COFFEE PRODUCERS
East Africa produces some of the world’s most valuable specialty coffees, yet only a small share of profits go to coffee producers. Using case studies from Africa and beyond, this report explores how to get better prices for green coffee beans, learn about branding and develop business partnerships in international markets. Direct trade from origin, also feasible through e-auctions, can result in better average prices for green beans. Roasted coffee offers significantly higher margins, but may not be practical to export. New alternatives exist for contract roasting, packaging and outsourced marketing to transform green beans into branded coffee close to the customer.

http://www.intracen.org/publication/more-from-cup/

RED GOLD RUSH: MANAGING QUALITY FOR AFGHAN SAFFRON EXPORTS (IN DARI)
Saffron, the world’s most expensive spice, offers great potential for Afghan exporters. Developing a consistent brand for quality is the key to unlocking a ‘red gold’ rush, a priority sector of Afghanistan’s national export strategy. An extensive guide outlines how to build a quality saffron sector based on mandatory requirements, voluntary standards and market preferences for three major markets: Europe, India and China.

This brochure serves as a summary in Dari of the extensive guide in English, also available online.

http://www.intracen.org/publication/red-gold-rush/at-a-glance/dari/
# Agenda

*from April 2020*

## Upcoming events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27 June</td>
<td>Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Day 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 July</td>
<td>ITC Joint Advisory Group Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-28 August</td>
<td>World Export Development Forum, Mongolia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-30 September</td>
<td>The 75th session of the UN General Assembly, New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 September</td>
<td>WTO Public Forum, Geneva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-23 October</td>
<td>15th UNCTAD Quadrennial Conference, Barbados</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-8 November</td>
<td>China International Import Expo, China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-8 November</td>
<td>Geneva Peace week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-19 November</td>
<td>The 26th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP26) of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Scotland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-25 November</td>
<td>World Government Summit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-13 December</td>
<td>UNCTAD World Investment Forum, AbuDhabi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-15 December</td>
<td>SheTrades Global, Dubai</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*subject to cancellation or postponement due to COVID-19.

Join the International Trade Centre at these major trade development events. For updates, see www.intracen.org/events

---

Listen to

**TRADE FORWARD THE PODCAST**

The Untold Trade Stories
Building Bridges for a Successful AfCFTA

IATF2020 - Africa’s leading fair in support of the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), providing businesses a unique platform to access an integrated African market of over 1.2 billion people with over $2.5 trillion GDP.

Key Components:

Exhibition
Trade and Investment Forum
• IATF2020 Conference
• Business to Business and
• Business to Government
• Country Days
Virtual Trade Fair
Creative Africa

IATF2020 by the numbers:

• More than $40 Billion in Trade and Investment Deals
• More than 10,000 Conference Delegates, Trade Visitors and Media
• +55 Countries
• +1,100 Exhibitors

IATF2020 - Brought to you by Afreximbank, in collaboration with the African Union and the Government of Rwanda

To register and get more information, visit www.intrafricantradefair.com
SUBSCRIPTIONS:
forum@intracen.org

PRINT SUBSCRIPTION:
US$ 60/year
(free to trade support institutions and firms in developing countries)

Follow us on Facebook
facebook.com/InternationalTradeCentre

Follow us on Twitter
@ITCnews

Follow us on LinkedIn
linkedin.com/company/international-trade-centre

Follow us on YouTube
youtube.com/Exportimpactforgood