

# WTTC launches initiative to support women in travel and tourism

The world's leading travel and tourism leaders have pledged to work towards women's equality and boost female representation in leadership roles in an announcement before the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC).



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The commitment came as WTTC, which represents the travel and tourism private sector, launched its Women Initiative, at its Global Summit in Cancun, with the help of 18 Grand Slam singles title winner, Martina Navratilova.

WTTC President and CEO Gloria Guevara unveiled the public-private-academic partnership to promote diversity and drive inclusivity which will help lead the way to achieving equality for women throughout travel and tourism.

## Equal, equitable environment

It led to the signing of the WTTC Cancun Women Declaration to support women, which recognised their contribution around the world and the importance of an equal equitable environment to enable them to thrive as leaders, entrepreneurs, and innovators.

The drive committed signatories to provide equal opportunities for women by removing barriers, ensuring fair treatment, and encouraging greater financial, professional, and social independence.

Guevara said: "As the first female president and CEO of WTTC, it is an honour to champion this important initiative. The pledge made today with the launch of the first Women Initiative in travel and tourism by a combination of the private, public and academic sectors to work towards women's equality, marks a significant step forward.

"Globally, women have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic which has exacerbated the pay gap, the opportunity gap and the shocking lack of senior positions and leadership roles across the travel and tourism sector.

"This needs to be changed, WTTC research shows women play a vital role and represented 54% of travel and tourism's employment worldwide. Yet while more than half the sector is accounted for by women, all too few occupy any senior or strategic roles.

"Therefore, I'm delighted to share a platform today with one of the world's greatest ever tennis players, Martina Navratilova, to help launch WTTC's ground-breaking Women Initiative."

Martina Navratilova added: "Women have always had to outperform men, and whilst things are changing for the better, it is still a fight and a constant battle.

"Change happens much quicker when it comes from the top. Companies would be more profitable if more women were in positions of power and boardrooms were less homogenous and reflected the diversity of their customers.

"This is why I am delighted to be here with WTTC on the day it launches its Women Initiative. As an advocate for women's rights, I know every act we take will help change the lives of women everywhere and make the world a fairer and better place.

## **Developing skills and partnerships, programmes**

For the private sector in the short term, the Women Empowerment Initiative has two core elements; developing skills and creating formal sponsorship and mentorship programmes for young women in business.

It will encourage women to bring in new ideas and skills to broaden the wealth of experience and expertise from women at all levels across the entire travel and tourism sector.

Senior women leaders will also be empowered to become mentors and share their skills and experience with the next generation of female travel and tourism leaders to nurture and develop new talent.

Where possible, companies will also be asked to assign a senior executive or Board member to be a sponsor for gender diversity and inclusion, who is accountable for progress.

The private sector pledged to increase female representation of leadership positions by 30-50% and aim toward increasing by a third, the representation of women to board levels and C-suites, by 2030.

There will also be a commitment to identify opportunities to reduce any gender pay gaps and implement gender diverse slate requirement for all open roles and to each year share progress and publish an action plan to achieve their goals.

According to WTTC data, in 2019 before the pandemic struck, the Travel & Tourism sector accounted for 10.4% of global GDP and supported the livelihoods of 334 million people.

Under the theme *Uniting the World for Recovery*, the Global Summit made history this week by becoming the first-time global travel and tourism event where leaders gathered together since the Covid-19 ravaged the sector and halted all major

events around the world in March 2020.

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