
ISTO OPINION ON THE OCCASION OF THE WTTC SUMMIT 2021

The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) summit in Cancun, Mexico, under the theme "Uniting the World for Recovery", in which many of our members participated, has just taken place on 26 and 27 April.

We at the International Social Tourism Organisation (ISTO) are pleased to see that the issues on the agenda have changed radically as a result of the crisis that COVID-19 has brought with it. The issues that have historically concerned us at ISTO, such as the impact of tourism on the lives of communities and families, decent employment, gender equity and new opportunities for local development through a different kind of tourism, were the issues that leapt from the shadows to the forefront at this summit.

It took a crisis of global proportions to break the inertia of unrestrained tourism growth and for the actors in the sector to address, hopefully on a permanent basis from today onwards, the human, social and environmental issues of tourism.

In her opening speech, the WTTC President mentioned the fact that the crisis has mainly hit families, women and communities. In her opinion, the tourism sector has taken a step forward and the crisis will serve as an important learning experience about its role in global development. Doing things differently requires talking about them differently. By putting human issues on the agenda, it is possible to begin to change our tourism practice and make it more responsible, caring and sustainable in the future.

Overcoming the inertia that the utopia of limitless tourism growth brought for so many years is something we certainly welcome at ISTO, although it is unfortunate that it took a crisis of this magnitude to do so. However, the future can be promising as long as we are aware that we must build a new future by doing things differently, putting people at the centre of the discussion on tourism development and putting tourism at the service of people, communities and territories.

International Social Tourism Organisation (ISTO)