

Redefining African Travel:
Meaningful Tourism For Sustainable Development In Africa

19 June
10 am Ghana
11 am UK & Nigeria
12 pm Berlin
1 pm Saudi & Egypt
3.30 pm India
6 pm China
8 pm Sydney



Virtual Summit with Expert Panel 19 June



Hon. Prof. Mamunatu Pratt
Fmr. Minister of Tourism
& Cultural Affairs
Sierra Leone



Nana Owuahene Acheampong
Fmr. Executive Director
National Commission
on Culture, Ghana



Ms. Judy Kepher Gona
Founder & Executive Director
Sustainable Travel & Tourism
Africa, Kenya



Ms. Ola Wright
CEO West Africa Tourism
Organisation (WATO)
Lead West Africa
Ecotourism Network (WAEN)



Dr. Abigail Adesina Olagbaye
President
Sayari Dunia Sustainable
Tourism Foundation



Mr. Emmanuel Frimpong
President
Africa Tourism
Research Network
Ghana

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UN Tourism

International tourist arrivals Q1 2025*
% change from 2024*



Source: UN Tourism (May 2025)

*Data is provisional



Meaningful Tourism for Africa *An Introduction*

Prof. em. Dr. Wolfgang Georg Arlt FRGS FRAS

Meaningful Tourism for Africa

Africa's tourism sector holds immense potential to contribute to economic development, cultural preservation, environmental sustainability, and community empowerment.

However, conventional tourism models often fail to create lasting value for all stakeholders.

With the shift in global tourism trends toward more sustainable, equitable, and enriching transformational experiences, Meaningful Tourism provides a new positive approach for a sustainable tourism development in Africa.

Meaningful Tourism

The Meaningful Tourism paradigm defines six main stakeholders in tourism and hospitality.

All six need to receive *objective* benefits and *subjective* satisfaction from tourism and hospitality activities to support the sustainable development of destinations, companies and organisations, to mitigate and adapt to climate change and to successfully perform transformative processes within a fast-changing world.

Stakeholders of Meaningful Tourism

The six Stakeholders of Meaningful Tourism:

1. Visitors/Guests
2. Host Community
3. Tourism Employees (including tourism, hospitality, transport, retail, attractions)
4. Tourism and Hospitality Service providing companies
5. Governments on different levels
6. Environment (Local and Global)

Meaningful Tourism approach

- Meaningful Tourism is a holistic approach to sustainable tourism development, which includes all key stakeholders. It involves aligning benefits and satisfaction with measurable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for continuous improvement.
- The Meaningful Tourism approach includes sustainable practices along the whole production chain, from financing and hotel construction to waste management.
- Meaningful Tourism is based on principles of Positive Psychology, creating both meaningful rational behaviour as well as emotional Wellbeing.

Meaningful Tourism Tools

Meaningful Tourism offers:

- A tool to **analyse** and understand the situation of a destination / company
- A tool to mitigate contradictions between stakeholders and **align** interests
- A tool to develop a holistic sustainable development **strategy**
- A tool to develop SMART KPIs to **monitor** progress
- A tool to **compare** destinations / company in an Meaningful Tourism index
- A tool to support integrate the Meaningful Tourism paradigm into academic and vocational **education** in the form of trainings, university programs, etc.
- A tool to support public tourism **discourse** by providing transparent meaningful SMART KPI measurements

Meaningful Tourism Development

The development of Meaningful Tourism paradigm is a result of

- the limits of tourism **growth** reached end of 2010s decade (Overtourism, Flygsham)
- the **pandemic** of the early 2020s (mobility as a threat)
- the increasingly dramatic results of **climate change** 2025ff (for tourism: end of skiing, end of beach holidays, tourism moving indoors, less leisure tourists)
- the switch of the image of tourism from provider of **joy** and peace to source of unnecessary **pollution** since 2018
- the lack of **staff** and decrease of number of tourism students post-pandemic
- The return of governments/industry to **arrival numbers** as main KPI post-pandemic
- The proliferation of **partial solutions** (EVs, tourism tax, de-marketing)

Meaningful Tourism 2021 - 2025

Steps of Meaningful Tourism development

- 2021 Establishment of Meaningful Tourism Centre by Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Georg Arlt
- 2022 Start of annual Meaningful Tourism Awards (Singapore, Doha, Kathmandu)
- 2022/23 Publication of chapters *Meaningful Tourism* in Buhalis (ed): Encyclopedia of Tourism Management and Marketing , and in Morrison/Buhalis (eds): Routledge Handbook of Trends and Issues in Tourism
- 2023 Publication of Arlt (ed.): *Meaningful Tourism Index 2023*, Arlt (ed): *Best Practice Examples for a Sustainable Tourism Future* and *Meaningful Tourism Weekly*
- 2024 Establishment of Meaningful Tourism Centre Ltd. (UK), HQ in Kathmandu
- 2024 Start of Meaningful Tourism Transformational Game Workshops
- 2025 PATA approves new Vision Statement: *Meaningful Pacific-Asia Tourism Economy*
- 2025 Meaningful Tourism Forum at GITF 2025 in Guangzhou, Motto of GITF 2025: *Meaningful Tourism – Enduring Connections*

Meaningful Tourism, not Travel

Meaningful Tourism is not Meaningful Travel, as the latter concentrates on the experience of the travellers only.

Meaningful Tourism is not concentrating only on higher yields, as the number of affluent travellers is limited and solutions have to be found for the whole industry, not just for the rich or for the environmentally conscious travellers.

Meaningful Tourism includes non-leisure travel for Business Travel, MICE, Visiting Friends and Relatives, Health and Wellness tourism, Education, etc.

Meaningful Tourism is necessary

Meaningfulness as a concept of Positive Psychology and Wellbeing is open for different cultural interpretations based on the common understanding of activities beneficial for oneself, for others and for the future of mankind.

Adopting Meaningful Tourism as a strategy is not a “nice-to-have” issue, but necessary for most destinations and service providers to proactively react in a Schumpeter sense of Creative Destruction to the effects of changed customer demands, technological development and climate change to survive.

Meaningful Tourism Transformational Game Workshop



The Meaningful Tourism Transformational Game Workshop is an engaging and practical learning experience that familiarizes participants with the Meaningful Tourism concept. Led by certified trainers around the globe, the workshop adopts a game-based approach where attendees take on roles within the six stakeholder groups, prioritizing alignment over compromise. It emphasizes the creation of SMART Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for all groups to facilitate progress tracking.



Meaningful Tourism – A Vision also for Africa

“A Meaningful Pacific Asia Tourism Economy” was officially adopted as the new Vision Statement of the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) during the PATA Annual Summit in April 2025.

PATA Chair Peter Semone: “Tourism must evolve from a numbers game to a values-driven endeavour. Meaningful Tourism challenges us to redefine success—not solely by arrivals or spending, but by how effectively we serve communities, protect our heritage, and enrich lives. At PATA, we believe the future of tourism lies in creating shared value, and we are proud to work in partnership with the MTC Meaningful Tourism Centre to help guide this important transition across the Asia Pacific region.”

Let us build A Meaningful African Tourism Economy!



For further information please contact the Meaningful Tourism Centre:



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