Myanmar at ITB 2016

Keeping emerging Asian destinations authentic - a best practice example from Myanmar Kayah state

ITB Congress

Wednesday, 9 March 13h15 – 14h15
Supporting organisations

**ITB Convention** (ITB Kongress): ITB organises a yearly convention in the frame of ITB which discusses current topics in the tourism sector. The Convention positions itself as the Leading Travel Industry Think Tank. In over 200 keynotes, interviews and panel debates, top decision-makers from the tourism industry and political community join recognized experts to address the core issues that will radically change the structure of the global travel sector. The room caters for an audience of 250 people.

International trends, innovative business models, best practice and recent research have featured in the Convention Program for many years to great acclaim. This makes ITB Berlin Convention an indispensable platform for information and networking, providing inspiration and orientation for strategy and action in a fast-changing global travel sector. Web users who cannot come to Berlin in person have a chance to follow selected sessions at the Convention through live streaming or to watch the video podcasts later on.¹

The **International Trade Centre** (ITC), a UN trade agency, is setting best practice examples by developing responsible tourism destinations, like in Kayah state. The region is strategically located between Northern Thailand and the highlights of Myanmar and is becoming an important hub for overland travel between Thailand and Myanmar. Pristine Kayah state has been closed for over 30 years to any outside visitor and has recently opened its doors. Ethnic groups are still living their traditions and natural beauties are attracting visitors. But how to guarantee that the destination will keep its charm? Hotel zoning and uncontrolled visits to ethnic villages are threatening the destinations’ future.

The **Pacific Asia Travel Association** (PATA), a membership association acting as a catalyst for the responsible development of the Asia Pacific travel and tourism industry, has recently published a forecast on tourism development in Asia which indicate a strong growth of the travel industry in Asia. PATA is concerned this growth might not be sustainable or feasible without proper planning.

**Objective of ITC’s session**

Raise awareness on sustainable destination development within strong growing Asian tourism industry and share best practices from the International Trade Centre’s Myanmar tourism project.

It is expected that Asian tourism will continue to grow with 7 % annually leading to 159 million extra visitors in 2019². To accommodate these visitors there is strong need and opportunity to develop new destinations. However can this be done sustainable and what is the responsibility of the travel industry? Myanmar as an emerging country offers the opportunity to demonstrate a more sustainable model learning from the experiences in already more mature tourism destinations such as Thailand and Bali.

**Focus group:** Media and opinion leaders, development players, Governments

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¹ [www.itb-kongress.de/en](http://www.itb-kongress.de/en)
Proposed Programme for the session

Technical facilitator James welcomes the audience and the speakers

0. Opening and welcome.

Taleb Rifai, Secretary General UNWTO
Marie-Claude Frauenrath, Senior Trade Promotion Officer, Asia and the Pacific, ITC

1. Booming tourism in Asia: What will the future bring and how can we deal with the pressure on authenticity and sustainability?

1A. Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) forecast on tourism growth in Asia.
Mario Hardy, CEO PATA

1B. Private sector perspective.
Willem Niemeijer, Founder and CEO, Khiri Group & Travel

2. The way forward: best practice example from Myanmar, Kayah state

2A. Introducing Myanmar as an emerging destination: what is the Myanmar tourism strategy. How is Myanmar tourism sector developing. What is it’s awareness on sustainable and inclusive development. How the private sector is involved.
Phyoe Wai Yar Zar, President Myanmar Marketing Committee and Secretary of Myanmar Tourism Federation

2B. Short film from the Berlin Film academy on Kayah impressions through the personal story of a local tourism entrepreneur. What are their visions and expectations?
Max Kerkhoff (Film maker) & Till Girke (Cinematographer)

2C. Introducing Kayah state: how is the Myanmar’s responsible tourism strategy implemented at the local level? What are the challenges? How is the environment protected and local communities involved? The process and first results of the ITC’s tourism approach from a trade perspective will be presented

Pascal Khoo, Author of the book “The green Ghost” and sustainability adviser Expeditions Myanmar Travel and ITC national consultant.

3. Panel discussion

A panel of the presenters will have a facilitated exchange with each another and the audience

James Howe (technical moderator), Senior Adviser International Marketing and Branding, International Trade Centre (ITC)

Dr. Nicole Häusler (scientific moderator), Responsible Tourism Consultant