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Renewable Energy – the ‘DNA’ of Sustainable Tourism

Natural disasters have become a constant challenge to modern civilization. However, is it all about CO2 and green house gas emissions? People’s health is at stake, when smog is in the air. Diminishing rain forests give way to desertification, fossil energy calamities have become rampant, and nuclear energy has lost its ambiguous innocence since Chernobyl and Fukushima, at the latest. Add to that an almost pandemic spread of garbage, and you’ll have a threatened civilization, whose dangerous energy sources are running short and whose lifestyle should do what our climate indicates: change.

The human impact on environment and climate has ceased to be regarded as negligible, and Travel & Tourism has its responsibility – now and even more in future. With millions more travellers predicted from emerging powerhouses like China and India, we have only a vague idea of tourism, its energy needs and socio-ecological effects in times to come.

Everybody expects – and will keep expecting – that hotel heating, cooling, or illumination are constantly available. But nobody likes the sound of diesel-propelled power engines in holiday lodges. And hardly anybody would frown at being offered electric mobility from airport to hotel, or electric shuttle services at trade fairs and exhibitions.

In many developing countries, access to both electrical power and electronic communication is insufficient or non-existent. Wood and charcoal are often the only energy sources in rural areas. People are out of reach of any existing power-grid. Solar Energy devices and mobile phones provide a solution.

Sometimes visions do come true, if the people in charge only want it. The crucial point is leadership. It’s a matter of vision, entrepreneurial capability and political will. In terms of energy, there is a real option to energy monopoly or war for energy sources: It’s about turning the magic of ‘tapping the sun’ into reality: It is the vision that *“everyone can be an unlimited clean energy producer”*.

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It is true that the world's largest industry – tourism – revolves around the smallest destination, that is: Tourism happens locally. The same holds true for Renewable Energy – due to its very nature of unlimited 'power' and its capacity to produce 'clean' energy locally, exactly where it is used.

Great economic changes have occurred when new energy regimes converge with new communication regimes. Jeremy Rifkin, who defends this thesis, refers to the 1990s: Internet and wireless communication technologies increased industrial productivity and created new opportunities through the industrial convergence with renewable energy. The subsequent '*power-to-the-people*' approach contributed to the growing demand for decentralized solutions.

Renewable Energy is – decentralized, ecological, and autonomous. Renewable energy is limitless. There is no need to wage war to gain access to it: Promoting Renewable Energy means *promoting peace*. Travel & Tourism positions itself as a paramount peace industry. Both Tourism and Renewable Energy share the same ideal.

Cross-promoting Sustainable Tourism and Renewable Energy would pave the way for win-win solutions so far unheard of: Let's just imagine PATA's concept of 'Total Tourism' ¹⁾, to be linked with Renewable Energy businesses. Could such a move not be instrumental to enhancing cross-industry investment and to mutually boosting exports related to both Renewable Energy and Tourism?

We need responsible stakeholders who understand that everywhere in the world millions of power stations could stand, different in size, technology and capacity, providing with Renewable Energy to everything from private houses to entire cities. *Renewable Energy* is predestined to become the first *principle of Sustainable Tourism*, since energy stands at the beginning of everything. As a matter of fact, Renewable Energy is not only 'natural', and sustainable, it is inherently '*ethical*'.

Becoming ethical leads back to the roots. That is seeking the original; it means gaining authenticity, reconciling things like 'indigenous wisdom' and innovation urge; it means identifying vintage-trends of consistency and sustainability. Travel & Tourism is indisputably a lifestyle trendsetter. We need cross-sector pioneers who set shiny higher-purpose benchmarks. Tourism should be the very 'trailblazer' for the Authentic, the Beautiful, the Good. That is a higher purpose. It should be the pivot of Sustainable and Responsible Tourism.

Being conscious of sustainability requires *solidarity*, including trust, dignity, responsibility. *Sustainable Tourism is Responsible Tourism* and should be partnered with likeminded allies. Renewable Energy and Sustainable Tourism are complementary to each other. *Renewable Energy is the only sustainable energy*; an optional resource provided by a '*likeminded*' Creator; 'likeminded' in originating the Authentic, the Beautiful, the Good. It is time to remember that we ourselves – as *professionals and co-creators* – are the necessary link to creating this visionary benchmark.

Let's refer to 'tapping the sun': The sun is a symbol of freedom, happiness, wealth, success, beauty, restart or unification. *The sun is the 'face of energy'*, the symbol of an emerging Solar Age. We need to '*energize*' our tourism concepts with a strong, new and cohesive approach – the '*solar*' approach. Let's make *the sun our inexhaustible source of Renewable Energy and clean global Travel & Tourism!*

Rather than a mere industry for leisure and business services, Tourism is a *multitasking interface of communication links*. Positioning Renewable Energy as key to sustainability of destinations and tourism operations, Travel & Tourism will become a *promotional bandwagon for Renewable Energy*. Renewable Energy will make Travel & Tourism – renewable. The outcome will be a new, *converging architecture of two leading peace industries*. Let's make *Renewable Energy the DNA of Sustainable Travel & Tourism!*

¹⁾ benefits from covering the complementary benefits of inbound, domestic and outbound tourism – introduced by the Pacific Asia Travel Association PATA years ago