7th World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue
Dialogue for a Shared Future: Building bridges in a Fractured World
Baku, Azerbaijan, 27-29 October 2026

UN Tourism Special session on:

Tourism for a shared future: how inclusion, equity, and community leadership are quietly building peace

Tuesday 27 October 2026

Background

The global tourism industry serves over 1.5 billion travelers crossing international borders annually. Yet, for hundreds of millions of people, meaningful participation in tourism remains out of reach. Persons with disabilities, women, rural and indigenous communities, youth from marginalized backgrounds, and populations in conflict-affected areas are traditionally excluded from tourism both as travelers and as beneficiaries of the economic gains it generates.

Evidence increasingly shows that when tourism is intentionally designed around inclusion, accessibility, and gender equality, it does far more than broaden market reach. It becomes a vehicle for social cohesion, community empowerment, economic prosperity, and ultimately, peace.

When women lead tourism enterprises, they reinvest in families and communities. When Persons with Disabilities can travel without barriers, their full potential is affirmed by society and the income they generate within destinations. When indigenous and rural communities are the protagonists of their own tourism development, their cultures are preserved and their voices amplified. When all of this happens together, societies become **more resilient, more equitable**, and **less prone to the exclusion and grievance that actually fuel conflict**.

This thematic dialogue showcases transformative projects from different parts of the world where tourism grounded in wider social purpose — has contributed measurably to positive peace, inclusion, and community well-being..

Preliminary Proposed Panelists

Region - Country	Context of the project
Moderator:	
Prof. Marina Novelli Chair, World Committee on Tourism Ethics Director of the Sustainable Travel & Tourism Advanced Research Centre, University of Nottingham	*The Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (GCET)* is a comprehensive set of principles designed to guide key players in tourism development. Addressed to governments, the travel industry, communities and tourists alike, it aims to help maximise the sector's benefits while minimising its potentially negative impact on the environment, cultural heritage and societies across the globe.
Ms. Gunay Murshudova Baku Project Manager, Transcaucasian Trail Caucasus Mountain	*The Transcaucasian Trail (TCT)* enables young people from around the world, particularly from Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan, to connect by working together on the joint project of building a hiking trail through the Caucasus Mountains. The project supports sustainable tourism practices as well as develops trail-building and interpersonal skills of volunteers, enabling cultural exchange among them.
Ms. Ann Kalembe Founder, Women in Hospitality Uganda CEO, Gazelle Safaris DMC	*Women in Hospitality Uganda and Gazelle Safaris DMC*, both led by Ms. Ann Kalembe, provide a practical example of women's leadership in tourism, from supporting women in the sector to running a tourism business that engages local communities. Their experience brings a useful grassroots perspective to the session's discussion on inclusion, empowerment and community-led tourism.
Mr. Jean-Philippe Le Moigne Director of Development Destination Original Indigenous Tourism	*Destination Original Indigenous Tourism (DO-IT)* supports Indigenous-led tourism and destination development, with a focus on strengthening local communities and protecting cultural heritage. Its experience offers a practical perspective on how tourism can support Indigenous leadership, cultural understanding and more inclusive community-based development.
Dr. Madhura Dutta Senior Consultant, Culture, Climate & Development Banglanatak	*Banglanatak dot com* is a social enterprise working across India to promote sustainable development through culture-based approaches. It focuses on the rights of women, children and Indigenous communities, and supports local livelihoods through culture, skills development and experiential tourism. In 2005, the organization launched Art for Life to safeguard Indigenous cultural traditions and strengthen community livelihoods, including through the development of cultural tourism destinations such as Purulia. As part of its work, Banglanatak also organizes Sur Jahan, a world peace music festival that has provided a platform for heritage artists from India and abroad since 2011

Ms. Samira Ezzo **Founder** Founder Layers of Lebanon	*Layers of Lebanon* brings the stories of Lebanese cities to life through guided experiences beyond presenting heritage sites as destinations; it creates spaces for people to engage with the history, memories, identities, and diverse narratives that have shaped Lebanon. In particular, the Green Line Walking Tour transforms the former demarcation line of Beirut into a space for exploration and dialogue, inviting participants to engage with the city's history.
Ms. Leyla Musayeva Head of Cultural Heritage Development Division State Tourism Agency of Azerbaijan Republic	*The State Tourism Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan* supports the preservation and sustainable development of the country's cultural heritage sites. Through the development of creative activities within historic reserves and the adaptive reuse of historic buildings, Leyla Musayeva's work illustrates how tourism public policies can bring heritage to life, strengthen local cultural identity and create new opportunities for community engagement while safeguarding the value and authenticity of historic places.