

It's time the hotel industry focused a lot more on sustainable and responsible

Amitabh Kant, India's G20 Sherpa and former CEO of NITI Aayog, urged the hotel industry to take the lead in fostering environmental sustainability and become catalysts for positive change. Speaking at the 'Travel For Life: Tourism Sustainability' conference in Delhi, organized by the Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI), Kant emphasized that by embracing environmental sustainability and responsible tourism, the hotel industry can not only enhance India's brand value on the global tourism stage but also attract premium tourists and encourage green investments in the country's tourism and hospitality sector.

Acknowledging the imminent growth in Indian tourism, Kant emphasized the need for responsible development, ensuring that it does not come at the expense of the environment. With limited carbon space remaining for emerging countries like India, he urged against repeating the environmental mistakes made by developed nations during their industrialization and urbanization.

Highlighting the substantial carbon footprint associated with travel, Kant advocated for a focus on value-oriented tourism over mass tourism. He praised Kerala for identifying sustainable and responsible tourism as its niche, targeting high-value tourism centered around culture, art, craft, and backwaters.

Addressing the importance of behavioral changes, Kant warned that delayed responses to climate issues could lead to the destruction of destinations. He also underscored India's "population scale" advantage in making affordable and transformational changes, drawing parallels with the digital payment revolution in the country.

Pradeep Shetty, president of FHRAI, emphasized that consumers are increasingly prioritizing environmental issues, and hotels with strong environmental credentials are likely to receive greater support. Anil Chadha, CEO of ITC Hotels and executive committee member of the Hotel Association

of India (HAI), highlighted that Indian hotels rank high in their commitment to environmental sustainability, according to a global survey.

On the occasion, FHRAI signed MoUs with the Indian Plumbing Association (IPA) and the Indian Green Building Council (IGBC).