

WTTC hails Tourism for Tomorrow Awards' winners

by Ian Taylor | Apr 5th 2019, 08:18 | [f](#) [t](#) [in](#) [G+](#)

An Indian hotel chain which recruits its workforce from people with disabilities and the 'opportunity deprived' has won the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) Tourism for Tomorrow Award for investing in people.



Lemon Tree Hotels of India, where less than 3% of people with disabilities have jobs, was one of five Tourism for

Tomorrow Awards winners recognised at the WTTC global summit in Seville.

The awards recognise best practice in sustainable tourism around the world.

The Climate Action Award went to the Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort in Aruba, which has been certified as carbon neutral since last year.

Tourism for Tomorrow's new Changemakers Award, which focused on the fight against the illegal wildlife trade this year, went to SEE Turtles of the US which runs sea turtle conservation programmes throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Tourism for Tomorrow Destination Stewardship Award was won by St. Kitts Sustainable Destination Council in the Caribbean.

The Social Impact Award went to Awamaki of Peru, which works with women artisans' co-operatives, connecting them with international markets.

Receiving the Investing in People Award, Aradhana Lal, Lemon Tree Hotels vice president of brand, communications and sustainability initiatives, said: "Thank you from our 1,000 employees with disabilities or opportunity deprived."

She told industry leaders: "Come and see for yourself. Meet our employees with Down's Syndrome, autism, who are deaf or have low vision. You will find the service as you would expect anywhere."

Ewald Biemans, Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort owner and chief executive, said: "Our journey began in 1993 and we achieved certified carbon neutrality nine months ago, but I realise our environmental journey just started."

SEE Turtles president Brad Nahill thanked "the dozens of organisations we work with around Latin America. We would not have been able to do anything without them."

Collecting the Destination Stewardship Award, Carlene Morton – permanent secretary at the St Kitts & Nevis ministry of tourism – said: "This is a remarkable achievement for the people and government of St Kitts & Nevis."

And receiving the Social Impact Award, Awamaki founder and executive director Kennedy Leavens, said: "This award really belongs to the incredible artisans who work hard to build a better future for themselves and their families."

The awards, now in their 15th year, are judged by a panel of independent experts led by Professor Graham Miller, executive dean and professor of sustainability in business at the University of Surrey.

The winners are chosen from 15 finalists selected from more than 180 applicants and subject to on-site evaluations which make the Tourism for Tomorrow awards process unique among sustainability awards.

Miller said: "This is an opportunity to recognise amazing work."

Fiona Jeffery, chair of the Tourism for Tomorrow Awards judges, said: "The awards showcase some of the most exceptional examples of sustainable tourism practices in the world."

She added: "There is more to be done. We must protect the product that sustains our industry."

