



# Plan For Our Kids

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**SUN<sup>x</sup> Malta**

**Climate Friendly Travel Think Tank**

**Qawra, Malta. 24 – 28 February 2020**

**REPORT**



## OUR VISION

*“ SUNx Malta will be relevant only to the extent that the ideas we generate are sound and others pick them up.*

*We believe that:-*

- *The Climate Crisis is existential and we must start to act now.*
- *The core concept of Climate Friendly Travel ~ measured: green: 2050 proof: would produce a kind of sustainable Travel & Tourism system that fits into a Paris and SDG targeted future.*
- *Our first Sector Report, with WTTC, in September 2019, in the side-lines of the UN Climate Summit, is a decent, accurate analysis / action plan.*
- *The Registry of Ambitions for “Climate Neutral” 2050 tracks with what other sectors are doing in UNFCCC.*
- *The Climate Friendly Travel Diploma we are launching with ITS from Gozo, Malta will build global support capacity for transformation.*
- *The 100,000 Strong Climate Champions we will encourage in all UN States by 2030 will help companies and communities to transform, as well as provide new jobs for smart young people.*
- *Our partnership with Malta - as a Global Centre for Climate Friendly Travel - is a game changer.*

*If people agree and work with us - particularly through our SDG 17 Agreement Network - then SUN<sup>x</sup> will have made a useful contribution.*

*That’s how our inspiration, the late Maurice Strong did things - encouraging progressive change.... And we are trying to follow his vision”*



**Report by Geoffrey Lipman and Nancy Cockerell**

## INTRODUCTION

On February 28, 2020 in Qawra, Malta, Hon. Julia Farrugia Portelli, Minister for Tourism and Consumer Protection, addressed [SUN<sup>x</sup> Malta's](#) inaugural **Climate Friendly Travel Think Tank**, highlighting the Government of Malta's commitment to establishing itself as a Centre for Climate Friendly Travel. She stated: -

“Our country is not just acting as a member of the international community in leading a global effort, but is putting Climate Resilience at the forefront of the agenda of the Maltese tourism sector, by promoting Climate Friendly Travel through reduced emissions, with the ultimate objective of carbon neutrality.

The Minister added that “Malta has a strong tradition of spearheading initiatives of global environmental significance such as the initiative at the 1967 United Nations General Assembly that culminated in the adoption of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and Malta's action at the United Nations General Assembly in December 1988 that inspired UN's resolution on the urgent need to conserve climate in the interests of mankind by protecting it against negative man-made changes and recognizing climate change as a common concern, requiring timely action”.

SUN<sup>x</sup> Malta gathered 35 international thought-leaders, from across academia, industry, and government, to debate the key issues on Climate Change in relation to Travel & Tourism. Participants were invited from all continents, with a wide range of experience and focus, and brought to Malta, with support from Qatar Airways. For participation see Attachment 1.

The meeting was chaired by Leslie Vella, Deputy CEO of Malta Tourism Authority, Chair of SUN<sup>x</sup> Malta and moderated by Prof. Geoffrey Lipman, President SUN<sup>x</sup> Malta.

The Think Tank's goal was to review and update the first [Climate Friendly Travel 2050 Ambitions Report](#) which was released on the side-lines of the UN General Assembly in New York in September 2019.

Keynote, presentations were made by the following, with subsequent spirited discussions.

- Prof. Ian Yeoman – Futures Scenarios
- Felix Dodds – UN Climate System
- Jeff Poole – WTTC/UNFCCC Action Program
- Gursoy Galop – SUN<sup>x</sup> Malta 2050 Climate Neutral Ambitions Registry
- Prof. Susanne Becken – Going Further, Faster
- Prof Paul Peeters – Aviation: Major Challenge
- Chris Lyle – ICAO: CORSIA and Beyond
- Prof Geoff Lipman – Climate Friendly Travel
- Alex Raynor – Measure Smartly
- Harold Godwin – Green to Grow
- Carlos Moreira – 2050 proof: 4IR: & Digital Engagement
- Dan Morell – Trees: Planting & Offsetting

The Think Tank also held detailed exchanges with Hon Minister Julia Farrugia Portelli: MEP, Istvan Ujhelyi Vice Chair European Parliament Transport Committee, Dr Gavin Giulia Chair MTA and Robin Nixon Chair Intrepid Foundation.

## KEY OUTCOMES

In broadly endorsing the conclusions of the 1<sup>st</sup> Climate Friendly Travel Report, produced by SUN<sup>x</sup> Malta and WTTC, the Think Tank, with the exception of Professor Harold Goodwin, made the following Calls to Action.

- **The Climate Crisis is eXistential. All stakeholders must act now, to meet the Paris 1.5° trajectory within the next 7- 10 years.**
- **Climate Friendly Travel is an imperative and must become the new norm.**
- **Fully transforming all modes of transport is pivotal. SUN<sup>x</sup> Malta's call for a Moon-shot approach for synthetic aviation fuel was strongly supported.**
- **High quality carbon offsetting may be a short-term transition mechanism, but totally inadequate as a long-term solution.**
- **The sector must engage more actively with Green Finance programs to be able to secure adequate funds for transformation.**
- **Emerging innovations and technologies must be accelerated – buildings' refurbishment, cruise shipping carbon reduction, waste to fuel transformation, developing consumer behavior and digital opportunities.**
- **The SUN<sup>x</sup> Malta Climate Friendly Travel Registry of Ambitions was reviewed and endorsed, as was the initiative with WISeKey to develop an innovative consumer facing secure platform.**
- **Education of the Next Generation was underscored as a high priority, with favorable support for a new accredited Graduate Diploma, from the Gozo Institute of Tourism Studies Campus.**
- **The SUN<sup>x</sup> Malta 100,000 STRONG Climate Friendly Travel Champions and as well as its school's program is a very positive step forward to support company and community transformation.**

The event concluded with a Town-Hall session led by Minister Portelli, with a positive discussion of Malta's commitment to the importance of tackling Climate Change and creating a model of Climate Friendly Travel, with Malta as a global Centre of Action.

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## MAIN DISCUSSION POINTS

During the sessions the following issues were discussed and are noted here in the order they were considered.

### Need for new thinking and smart action.

Travel & Tourism accounts for some 10% of global GDP – 5% directly and 5% indirectly – as well as 10% of jobs worldwide. Its contribution is greater still for some lesser-developed economies heavily dependent on tourism. So, it is not an activity that can simply be dismissed as frivolous, or irresponsible, during the climate crisis.

Research by UNWTO and others suggests that the sector produces some 5% of total global carbon emissions, (some recent research suggests it could be as high as 8%), Almost half comes from aviation alone. Based on current forecasts, this share is also predicted to increase significantly by 2050, due to the inexorable growth of consumer demand – particularly involving, air travel, with its almost total reliance on fossil fuel-based energy.

Rather than restricting travel, thereby depriving destinations of the socio-economic benefits of Travel & Tourism, the core discussion was framed on how to ensure a substantial reduction in emissions and put the sector firmly on the Paris Agreement trajectory towards a carbon neutral world by 2050.

### Time is of the essence

The climate crisis requires far more immediate action than has been hitherto been recognised. And the COVID-19 pandemic is not a reason to put climate policy on hold. On the contrary. The rapid response to COVID-19 illustrates the ability of governments, corporations and the public to put an emergency brake on 'business as usual'. It also offers a golden opportunity for all stakeholders to ensure that we adapt to a new 'business as usual' rather than pick up where we left off before the widespread lockdown.

All stakeholders should act urgently to start the transformation, in order to ensure that we are aligned with the Paris 1.5°C trajectory within the next 7-10 years. Governments, businesses, communities and consumers must all commit to Climate Neutral 2050 and start taking meaningful steps towards that goal in 2020. Fully transforming all modes of transport is pivotal.

In order to be able to secure adequate, much needed funds for transformation, the Travel & Tourism sector must also engage more actively with emerging Green Finance programmes, such as the European Green New Deal. All stakeholders should adopt Climate Friendly Travel as an imperative and the new norm.

### Aviation needs to go much further

Aviation currently accounts for approximately 2-3% of man-made global carbon emissions. Without timely action, the Think Tank thought leaders agreed, it could consume some 20% of the global carbon budget by 2050.

To maintain growth and at the same time address its environmental impact, the aviation industry has committed to carbon-neutral growth per 2020 through the International Air Transport Association (IATA), and pledged to reduce net aviation carbon emissions to 50% below 2005 levels by 2050. But this is not good enough.

We have less than a decade in which to make really significant changes. Action to date and the airlines' proposed ambitions are far behind the rapidly intensifying transformation needed.

If we don't succeed in keeping the increase in emissions to 1.5°C, the resulting climate impacts will impose massive costs on the global economy. And if we "only" manage to keep it to 2°C – let alone 1.5°C – we will see a complete transformation of global energy, food (30% of food today is wasted), transportation and economic systems.

### **Carbon offset / mitigation schemes should be an interim measure at best**

The consensus view, with some exceptions, is that we can "patch up" with high-quality carbon offsets, as a short-term palliative when there are no real solutions to eliminating carbon. But there is a danger that offsets lead to lethargy and prolongation of 'business as usual'. They should not be seen to provide travellers absolution from guilt over polluting.

While there was in principle support for the ICAO/CORSIA approach to offsetting, it was emphasised that it is currently too conservative and needs to have a zero carbon 2050 goal in line with UNFCCC Climate Neutral program.

### **Urgent need for sustainable and alternative aviation fuels**

SUN<sup>x</sup> Malta's call for a moonshot approach for a sustainable synthetic fuel for aviation – to further accelerate technological research and harness emerging innovations – was strongly supported. This would also involve the immediate distribution and rapid scaling up of currently available solutions to substantially reduce aviation fossil fuel reliance.

It is high time airlines and aviation manufacturers took charge of their own destiny rather than outsourcing it. We have less than a decade to really make significant changes. Aviation fuel is the key issue and we should be aiming for zero fossil fuel-based flights.

That requires political will to enforce new norms and a suspension of all subsidies for fossil fuels. In 2018, the value of these increased to US\$400 billion. In addition, there needs to be a major change of focus among the big fuel companies towards alternative fuels, not to mention an agreement by the aircraft and engine manufacturers to intensify the research on new propulsion technology and design.

Further investments and incentives for innovations, such as electric and hybrid engine technologies, would help airlines move away from fossil fuels. There are over a dozen companies today that are pursuing battery-electric, hybrid and even hydrogen power prototypes.

In the meantime, more widespread legislation would boost the development and uptake of sustainable aviation fuels (SAFs) – alternative fuels – which have the potential to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from aviation by up to 85%, including the conversion of waste, into fuel.

### **Stakeholder engagement**

It is critical to involve all stakeholders in any action /decision-making process – from governments and international organisations to infrastructure providers and manufacturers, transport operators, the hospitality sector and travel services.

Governments are generally strengthening their commitments and increasingly have tools to measure their emissions, which they now file as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

There was considerable discussion of, and support for the EU Green Deal and new Climate Law, putting into legislation the target to reduce GHG emissions to a net zero by 2050, and setting in stone the Paris Agreement's goal. In this context Istvan Ujhelyi specifically called on SUN\* Malta to hold another follow up meeting in Brussels and to help galvanise support for the Green Deal generally and Tourism related funding specifically.

The participants expressed support also for the Single European Sky (SES). They called for urgent implementation, citing the estimated reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by up to 10%, resulting in 25 million tonnes of emissions savings a year.

Individual governments are also taking bold steps. Norway is in the early stages of implementing emissions-free air transport in its regional market – all the country's short-haul airliners should be entirely electric by 2040. The Netherlands is now mandating synthetic aviation fuels from 2023, with a pathway for 14% of all bunker fuels tanked in the Netherlands to be synthetic or biofuels. These examples of good practice are increasing rapidly, particularly driven by cities and Paris 1.5 Coalitions.

The declared withdrawal of the USA from the Paris Agreement was noted with abject dismay and there was general support for any efforts to help reverse this.

Travel & Tourism industry's carbon reduction actions vary from one sector to another, but most stakeholders have been playing their part, albeit somewhat half-heartedly in some cases. The main problem seems to be a lack of cross-sector co-operation and collaboration.

Airlines, as previously noted are pivotal players and much of the future sector response will be based on their action under CORSIA – including a widespread need to increase ambitions to achieve Climate Neutrality by 2050. It was believed that the CORSIA targets, first raised by IATA/ATAG are outdated and must be strengthened to meet the Paris 1.5 trajectory.

Airlines are already committed to reporting their CO<sub>2</sub> emissions annually. But international aviation emissions should also be included in NDCs in order to encourage increased national commitment, preferably through additional mitigation measures.

Note was taken of a “low carbon” cross-sector study with Europe's airports, manufacturers and air navigation service providers, led by Airlines for Europe (A4E). Over the next ten years, A4E airlines say they will invest €169 billion in greener aircraft technologies, which are on average 25% cleaner and less noisy than their predecessors. It was observed that this is not markedly different from other airline operators and the IATA/ ATAG longstanding position.

Airports, with a long history of environment regulation, were an early example, with ACI (Europe) setting a 2050 zero carbon commitment - notably excluding aircraft. London Heathrow has taken this a stage further launching “Target Net Zero” – a plan for all activities at the airport including flights to reach net zero by 2050 at the latest. London City was an early promotor of a waste to aviation fuel facility. Amsterdam's Schiphol is also working with other private parties on a demonstration plant for production of synthetic kerosene and mandatory use.

Tour Operators have had their own carbon mitigation or offset schemes in operation for many years now working through a wide variety of industry coalitions. Many are focused on projects involving destinations they serve and increasingly with customer engagement.

Hotels have made concerted efforts to incorporate energy management into their operations, with some leading developers and operators also undertaking retrofitting programmes across existing hotels. New hotel builds are covered by the construction industry.

Ground and Sea Transport are dealt with differently from air transport, in associated regulatory frameworks established by the automotive industry and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) respectively.

Some of the most significant long-term changes will be made by low carbon cars and high-speed electric train networks, and these should readily respond to the Paris framework. China is a global model for High Speed Trains. Some countries, such as the Netherlands, have been successful in encouraging a marked shift to rail travel.

But ground transportation is simply not feasible in every country around the world, and is a non-starter for intercontinental travel.

### Consumers

Consumers cannot be blamed for climate change and global warming, although their everyday behaviour has clearly been a major contributor to the worsening climate crisis, and this is now widely acknowledged, especially among younger generations. While they may not all be ready to curb their air travel, their growing sense of responsibility with regard to flying is reflected in the increasing *Flygskam* (flight shame) spreading across the world.

Taking the UK as an example, 15% of adults in who took three or more flights in the 12 months from March 2013 to March 2014 – the so-called frequent fliers – accounted for 71% of all flights taken. Some 52% did not fly at all in that period. In a separate survey, an estimated 10% of the most frequent flyers took more than half of all flights abroad in 2018, while 48% of the population did not take a single flight abroad that year. These are sobering statistics and, while not necessarily reflective of patterns across the world, they suggest that a certain percentage of flights could easily be cancelled.

Moreover, a growing number of travelling consumers seem eager to be educated as to how they can best adapt their travel behaviour to reduce their carbon footprint. They recognise the fact that all our lives are going to be fundamentally and severely disrupted as a result of this eXistential climate crisis.

Admiration was expressed for the resolve and commitment of the young generation inspired by Greta Thunberg, and it was generally believed that the sector has to respond constructively to their exhortations and that Climate Friendly Travel would be a good direction. If aviation is only polluting in line with the rest of industrial society and the Paris Climate Neutral 2050 trajectory, there can be no reason to condemn it on the grounds of carbon impact alone.

Destinations, particularly cities will be an important driver for Climate Neutral change in the Travel & Tourism long range development Framework. Groups such as C40 are holding themselves out as Paris 1.5 Champions and they are all major Travel & Tourism Centres. It was also noted that even the smallest community has a powerful capacity to chart its own destiny and that the concept of better neighbourhood lifestyles was growing in influence.

## **Climate Neutral 2050**

It was noted that WTTC is working with the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to create a basis for WTTC members – primarily leaders in the industry – to achieve the ambition to be climate neutral by 2050.

This framework involves a move beyond ad-hoc environmental practices; to incorporate Climate Change and its impacts into business strategy; to take action through measurement, reporting and the reduction of GHG emissions; to compensate for unavoidable impacts through investment in UNFCCC-recognised mechanisms; to develop co-operation models and best-practice sharing; and to collectively address knowledge gaps within the sector.

WTTC also has a Sustainable Travel & Tourism Partners Programme (STTP), designed to be a global mark of recognition to identify engagement and commitment to sustainability.

The SDG 17 Partnership Agreement with SUN<sup>x</sup> Malta and WTTC, was noted positively. This incorporates specifically, the Annual Travel & Tourism Climate Friendly Travel Report and the Ambitions Registry, as well as mutual support on Climate Action.

## **Technology**

In this era of big data and cybernetics, there are new options for sector Climate Resilience. The Think Tank noted the harnessing of big data for digital marketing and insight – such as from Amadeus’s ‘travel audience’ and SmartData.travel – to enable and facilitate data-driven decisions, as well as monitoring travel flows, events and crowds to determine impacts.

Note was taken of an initiative from WISeKey for an innovative consumer-facing secure platform. Every traveller with a secure digital identity – to aggregate other identities into a tourism-specific one, incorporating personal CO<sub>2</sub> consumption and offsetting. The user offset will be visible on a blockchain ledger, and all one’s eco-friendly activities can be registered to calculate one’s personal carbon footprint, or gain points to exchange for offset, in order to mitigate one’s carbon impact.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Think Tank participants believed that the event had been highly useful and expressed a strong view that it should be repeated annually, with interim communication as a focused Climate Friendly Travel interest group.

Thanks were expressed to the Government of Malta, MTA and particularly Minister Julia Farrugia Portelli for her leadership commitment.

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## THINK TANK ATTENDEES Attachment 1

	Carla	Aguirre	Deputy CEO, Tourism in Skåne
Professor	Susanne	Becken	Griffith University / Science Investment Adviser, NZ Dept of Conservation
	Noel	Campbell	Former Australian Ambassador to Spain & UNWTO
	Andrew	Charlton	MD, Aviation Advocacy
	Nancy	Cockerell	Managing Partner, The Travel Business Partnership
Professor	Felix	Dodds	GRI University of N. Carolina, Tellus Institute & Co-creator SUNx
	George	Drakopoulos	CEO, Tourism Generis
	Marcio	Favilla	Former Executive Director UNWTO
	Joceline	Favre-Bulle	Campus Manager, Les Roches International School of Hotel Management
Dr	Hans	Friederich	Member SUNx Board and former INBAR Director-General
	Nicola	Furey	VP, Earth Focus Foundation
	Gursoy	Galip	Co-owner and Head of Digital, Howoco
	Esmir	Ganic	Manager Regulatory and Corporate Affairs, Qatar Airways
Professor	Jafar	Jafari	Hospitality and Tourism, University of Wisconsin-Stout
	Dourgam	Kummer	Head of M&A, WISEKey International Holding AG
Professor	Geoffrey	Lipman	Co-creator SUNx President SUNx Malta#
	Chris	Lyle	CEO, Air Transport Economics
	Carlos	Moreira	Founder, Chairman and CEO, WISEKey
	Dan	Morrell	Founder, CHANT LIVE
	Robyn	Nixon	General Manager, The Intrepid Foundation
	Jeff	Poole	Director Advocacy WTTTC, Former Director General CANSO
	Alex	Rayner	CEO, SmartData.travel / Amadeus
Dr	Mondher	Sahli	Assoc Prof Tourism Economics, Victoria U, SG Int Assoc Tourism Economics
	Vicky	Smith	Founder, Earth Changers
	Lisa	Spafford	Managing Director, International Emissions Trading Association (IETA)
	Paul	Steele	Former Corporate Secretary IATA
	Natalie	Swinburne	Trade Marketing Manager, Malta Tourism Authority
	Jens	Thraenhart	Exec Dir, Mekong Tourism Coordinating Office & CEO, Chameleon Strategies
Dr	István	Ujhelyi	MEP Vice-Chair Committee on Transport & Tourism
	Leslie	Vella	Chairman, SUNx Malta & Deputy CEO, Malta Tourism Authority
Professor	Carlos	Vogeler	Former Exec Dir UNWTO
	Paul	Wilke	CEO, Upright Position Communications. Fmr VP Communications VISA
	Olly	Wheatcroft	Program Manager, SUNx Malta
Professor	Ian	Yeoman	Assoc. Professor (Futurologist) Victoria University of Wellington
Dr	Jinfeng	Zhou	S.G., China Biodiversity Conservation & Green Development Foundation