

13.15 - 14.00 Wednesday 7th March, Hall 7.1a, New York 1

DAVID JONES' SPEECH - YOUTH & TRAVEL PANEL

“Thank you Dr Conrady for the opportunity to speak on a topic that I know is very close to the hearts of young German people.

I am sure that I sit here today in a room where most of us have had the opportunity to enjoy that singularly unique and life-changing experience of international travel as a young person.

Young German travellers played an important pioneering role in developing the phenomena of youth travel over the last 4 decades and have a well deserved global reputation as one of the most well-travelled, young populations in the world.

But the world we know is changing quickly and I will take 5 minutes to review the results of our studies and experiences in the youth and student travel market, which shows that:

- Although many of the core values have not changed drastically over the past decades, today's young traveller has a new set of ambitions and we face a major challenge in meeting the massive growth in this new demand for international travel experiences.
- Governments and institutions can play an important role in meeting this demand and I will offer our view on how they can achieve this
- And, perhaps most importantly, the new media that are now the essential vehicles for engaging the community of young travellers both here in Germany, and around the world

Whilst the quest for discovery may remain the most fundamental motivation for young travellers - the patterns, activities and ambitions of today's young traveller are different to those of travellers 50 years ago - according to studies conducted by our organisation.

Our studies show that less than 20% of young travellers identify themselves as tourists. But rather than having an anti-tourist attitude, their message is simply that they are different to mainstream tourists. They travel to explore and to engage with cultures and environments that are different to their own. But what is particularly new and unique about today's traveller is that they are also extremely sociable. Many of us who travelled decades ago, travelled with the

ambition of finding places that no other traveller or tourist had been to. Today's traveller is motivated by being part of the multi-million strong global community of young independent travellers who are out there exploring the world as we speak today.

When they return to their guesthouses or hostels in the evening, they know that they will spend time with an international group of young people just like themselves. This interaction between young travellers is an extremely important part of their current motivation to travel. We also know that young travellers have varied ambitions. Our studies show that, more than ever, young people will mix their travel ambitions with study, work, volunteer placements, adventure, relaxation and socialising.

Because of the unique motivations of young travellers, this niche market is extremely important to many of the key objectives on the global tourism agenda. They travel with a purpose and tend to stay much longer and therefore spend more than the average tourist. They live and interact closely with the communities that they visit, and our statistics show that they invest more of their tourism spend with local community-run operations, thus contributing to sustainable tourism and poverty alleviation.

This type of “independent travel with purpose” also contributes to responsible travel habits and the primary mission of our organisation is the quest for international understanding and peace.

Beyond the social value of travel and the contribution it makes to the learning and personal development of young people, there is also a powerful economic and industry-related value to this sector. Youth travel is the fastest growing sector of the travel industry, currently representing over 20% of all international arrivals.

The growing demand for youth travel is fuelled by a global population of young people who view international experience as an increasingly important part of their personal development and sense of personal equity. A major difference for young travellers today is the support that they receive from their parents, their educational institutions and their future employers - support that we, the independent travellers of yesterday did not receive.

The World Youth Student & Educational Travel Confederation has been reorganised in the last year to create a united organisation that combines the 50+ year legacy of its founding organisations, ISTC and FIYTO, to take on a new broader mission:

- promoting international education - one of the fastest growing sectors of this market
- representing the core social value and massive economic importance of this sector to the tourism industry
- contributing to responsible travel habits and sustainable tourism
- providing a framework for members of our own community to share knowledge, trade and engage governments and other players in facilitating travel opportunities for young people

The WYSE Travel Confederation has a network of 550 specialist organisations in 118 countries that serve the diverse travel needs of 10 million young people per year. Our message is that:

- this is a unique market that must be understood for its specialist needs
- we must engage governments in promoting youth travel opportunities. Most governments have traditionally dismissed this market - incorrectly - as low budget and largely ignored its potential
- in doing so, excellent examples we can learn from include Australia's development of the youth tourism market and the solid work and programmes produced by governments such as Germany

We will encourage governments to work on a policy of providing information about opportunities that exist, and most importantly, to integrate these policies in order to facilitate the diverse and holistic ambitions of young travellers. This involves integrating work and study visas, involvement of the educational sector and support for

specialist organisations that provide opportunities for young travellers.

One of the most important messages that we will take to governments and the industry is that now more than ever, the medium for communicating with young travellers has changed drastically, particularly with in the last year. Web 2.0 applications have enriched information content and empowered young consumers with a collective wisdom about the market. If possible, I would like to come back to this topic, as new practical developments that have emerged over the last 6 to 8 months are now so essential to successfully understanding and accessing the market.

Young travellers of today are social and commercial leaders, and the mainstream travellers of tomorrow. They will also set future travel trends. We have an opportunity to enrich the value of their travel experiences and in so doing, promote responsible and sustainable travel habits, and preserve the phenomena of youth travel for the personal and broader contribution to society for generations to come.

Thank you very much. I look forward to discussing this further with you.”

David Jones

Director General

World Youth Student & Educational Travel Confederation

For press liason contact:

[Stephanie Cooper](#)

[Communications Officer](#)

[WYSE Travel Confederation](#)

stephanie@wysetc.org



DAVID JONES BIOGRAPHY

David Jones is the Director General of the World Youth Student & Educational (WYSE) Travel Confederation – which acts as the global voice for student and youth travellers.

Representing 540 specialist student and youth travel organisations in 118 countries, WYSE Travel Confederation members serve over 10 million student and youth travellers each year.

Being Canadian, David began his involvement with student services as the elected chair of Canada's National Student

Services Organisation. After becoming Executive Director of this emerging organisation, it grew to 100 million dollars over the next 15 years.

David moved from Canada to Amsterdam when he was made Director General of the International Student Travel Confederation (ISTC). Over the last two years, David has led the process to merge FIYTO and ISTC into one united global organisation - WYSE Travel Confederation - which launched in October 2006.

David sits on a number of travel industry committees, including the UNWTO Sustainable Development of Tourism Committee.