

RTD8 Opening Speech

Good evening ladies and gentleman

My name is Simon Press, and I am Senior Exhibition Director on World Travel Market - the leading global event for the travel industry.

I'd like to express how delighted I am to be here on behalf of WTM to be sponsoring the 8th International conference on Responsible Tourism in Destinations.

It's great that - for the first time - this conference is being held in England, highlighting the importance responsible tourism is not just in developing areas but also in more developed countries.

I'm sure, or at least hope, many of you are familiar with World Travel Market.

Last year was arguably THE most successful World Travel Market, welcoming more than 50,000 of the industry's most senior travel professional's to London to conduct a record £2.2 billion worth of business deals

A key part of WTM's success over the years has been the Responsible Tourism Programme, which I hope many of you are aware of.

Harold has been compiling the programme since 2007 when WTM rebranded Environmental Awareness Day to World Responsible Tourism Day, as the centre piece of WTM's Responsible Tourism Programme.

He has extended this work by running the responsible tourism programme for WTM's sister event in Sao Paulo WTM Latin America, which launched last year and WTM Africa which takes place next month. Spreading the word of responsible tourism throughout the global industry.

I have personally had the pleasure of working with Professor Harold Goodwin for the past five years. His knowledge, enthusiasm and commitment has helped grow the WRT programme to one of WTM's most popular. While, WRTD is now the largest day of international action on responsible tourism in the world, with exhibitors and companies in resort alike organising events to mark, the now firmly established, day.

WTM World Responsible Tourism Day has captured the hearts and minds of industry professionals everywhere.

And while I – nor WTM – profess to be experts on the subject of responsible tourism I have learnt so much from Harold, while WTM has also benefited greatly from his involvement.

Over the years Harold has been an extremely trusted advisor on the WTM Responsible Tourism Programme, providing the best quality speakers and panellists from the industry and ensuring that top quality content is provided, guaranteeing that WTM are leading the way with education.

Last year almost 2,000 people attended the WTM Responsible Tourism Programme, some of WTM's most popular sessions, a great turnout and a testament to the fantastic sessions that took place.

This year the WTM Responsible Tourism Programme will be even bigger and better. With some of this year's not-to-be missed sessions already confirmed covering Child Protection, Wildlife and Animal Welfare and Social Inclusion. All key areas which I know have a growing relevance in the industry.

My personal involvement in the responsible tourism programme increased last year when I had the pleasure of being the judge for World Responsible Tourism Award at WTM. It was a real honour to see such awe inspiring responsible tourism programme all around the globe and in all areas of the industry.

Last year's overall winner was TUI Nederland for its work in developing policies and training staff to identify child abuse, whether amongst the families for whom they provide holidays or abuse perpetrated by travellers in the destination.

TUI Netherland demonstrated real leadership by raising the issue with travellers and encouraging them to report suspicious behaviour.

WTM will this year follow suit and make child protection a key theme of the responsible tourism programme.

I hope to see many of you at this year's World Travel Market, taking place on the 3 – 6 November and especially World Responsible Tourism Day which takes place on Wednesday 5 November.

Many thanks for your time I hope you all have an enjoyable and productive conference. And I am delighted to pass you over to.....

Thank you....