



## Media Information

### Overcoming the challenges tourism faces in uncertain times and focus on the future take centre stage at the 5th World Tourism Forum Lucerne

The 5<sup>th</sup> World Tourism Forum Lucerne gets off to an enthralling start as 500 participants from tourism, business, politics, science and finance from 75 countries meet to focus upon the mega trends currently within the global tourism sector.

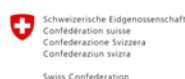
**Lucerne, 4 May 2017** – The 5th World Tourism Forum Lucerne again brought together international top speakers, prominent decision makers, up-and-coming tourism industry talents and elite students who on this occasion are focusing on the Forum's title, "Stay relevant in uncertain times!".

The eminent Forum began with the arresting sight of the large stage at the KKL Luzern congress centre becoming filled with the Young Talents, i.e. students from the partner universities, the Next Generation, i.e. talents in the tourism industries, and representatives of start-ups, which all had taken part in different Side Events the day before. This year, there is especially strong focus on encouraging the next generation and nurturing and retaining new talent.

In his welcome address, Federal Councillor Johann Schneider-Ammann reflected that although tourism faces numerous challenges today, including threats from terrorism and digitalisation, there are real reasons to remain optimistic: "Digitalisation by far offers more chances than risks. It reconstructs opportunities and should end up offering additional jobs, welfare and insight."

'Facing Tomorrow's Challenges', a discussion featuring a prominent panel including Simon Lehmann (President Phocuswright), Teo Ah Khing (Chairman Desert Star Holdings), Puneet Chhatwal (CEO Deutsche Hospitality) and Lina Annab (Minister for Tourism and Antiquities, Jordan) identified the key challenges for tourism, which include keeping up with the fast changes in technology, eradicating destination stereotypes and prejudices and getting people to understand the level of disruption upon us right now. Ways forward they suggested included realising a greater efficiency in analysing the vast array of data available to us now and creating a selection of options to prepare for the unprecedented level of change we see in these times.

In a keynote speech, Sean Cleary (Chairman Strategic Concepts) explained how a collision of factors including massive connectivity, huge population growth and a return of geopolitics have triggered the path we are taking now, while Jason Fox (Head The Cleverness) in a playful keynote speech urged us to move away from our default thinking and strive for meaningful progress.



In his presentation, Simon Anholt (Independent Policy Advisor on National Identity & Reputation) asked 'Why Does Your Country Exist?', while Experience Engineer David Pearl, with the help of a panel including Isabel Hill (Director National Travel and Tourism Office, U.S. Department of Commerce) explained yesterday's pre-Forum Think Tank event, which brought together 60 eminent tourism, governmental, investment and academic experts to brainstorm current issues.

The packed itinerary also included a panel discussion on creating a common understanding of sustainable development, a series of workshops, and the presentation of the Tourism Star Awards, honouring three international personalities from Rwanda, Iraq and Mexico whose passionate commitment and enthusiasm have a positive impact on the tourism industry.

In his address, Taleb Rifai (Secretary-General UNWTO) said: "Let us all remember what our core business must be, to make this world a better place."

### World Tourism Forum Lucerne

The World Tourism Forum Lucerne is an interdisciplinary professional platform which takes place annually, alternately in Lucerne (Switzerland) and – from 2018 – China. It offers decision-makers in business, politics, science and finance an overview of current topics and trends in the global tourism industry. It is also the only international platform which enables leading decision makers and emerging young talents in the industry to interact under the "Next Generation" designation. The World Tourism Forum Lucerne is supported by an international Advisory Board under the chairmanship of Reto Wittwer. The 5th World Tourism Forum Lucerne is taking place from 4 to 5 May 2017. [www.wtflucerne.org](http://www.wtflucerne.org)

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