

## What they say



"Tourism will be the biggest business in the next century. When my father was born 67 years ago, there were 25 million tourists in the world. When my son was born 15 years ago, we had more than 700 million tourists in the world. And now we have more than 1.2 billion."

**Istvan Ujhelyi**, vice-chair of the Committee on Transport and Tourism of the European Parliament



"China is New Zealand's second-largest and fastest-growing visitor market, and visitor numbers have more than tripled since 2008. Chinese tourists are finding more to love about New Zealand - they are staying longer, spending more, and returning more often."

**John McKinnon**, ambassador of New Zealand to China



"A lot of wonderful tourism resources failed to be developed because of insufficient supporting infrastructure, especially in poverty-stricken regions. The government should oversee the investment in tourism infrastructure, and companies can actively participate in the process under the government's guidance."

**Duan Qiang**, CEO of Beijing Tourism Group



"The conference ... helps us to learn about governments' considerations about formulating policies and their visions so that we can view our development over the long term. We also have opportunities to communicate with and learn from other tourism companies."

**Yu Dunde**, CEO of Tuniu.com



Participants in the ongoing First World Conference on Tourism for Development exchanges views during a break in proceedings.  
WANG ZHUANGFEI / CHINA DAILY

## Event hails progress in China's tourism sector

By **SONG MENGXING**  
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The ongoing First World Conference on Tourism for Development in Beijing will discuss the achievements that the Chinese tourism industry has made in recent years and how the tourism industry aids global development, the event's organizers said.

Chinese tourism plays a broad role in the country's economic and social development, said Li Jinzao, chairman of the China National Tourism Administration, at the conference.

The tourism industry contributed more than 10.8 percent to China's GDP in 2015, with 10.2 percent of the jobs created in the country coming from the sector.

Li said over the next five years China plans to alleviate poverty for 12 to 14 million people through the development of the tourism industry.

Isabel Hill, director of the National Travel and Tourism Office at the US Department of Commerce, said the conference is the first about how tourism will advance the UN's sustainable development goals, which include ending poverty.

She said holding the event in China is significant because the country has made strides in the development of its tourism industry, both domestically and internationally.

Peng Qinghua, Party chief of the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, said Guangxi is an underdeveloped region but has a fertile natural environment and rich ethnic cultural resources, which can be

**13 percent**

of the annual global tourism revenue contributed by China, according to the World Tourism Organization data

used to develop tourism and increase people's incomes.

He said by building the region into a domestic and international tourist destination, Guangxi people could see improved standards of living. Representatives from 107 countries and regions and 14 international organizations are present at the tourism conference, which started on Wednesday and will run through Saturday.

The event is jointly hosted by the Chinese government and the United Nations

World Tourism Organization.

Other activities at the event include a summit forum about how tourism can be used to bring peace and the Beijing International Tourism Expo 2016.

According to the UNWTO, China has been the largest consumer of outbound tourism since 2012, contributing more than 13 percent of the annual global tourism revenue on average.

The Global Business Travel Association predicted that China would surpass the US this year to become the world's largest business travel market.

Through the conference, China hopes to share its experiences with other countries and help improve the global tourism, officials at China National Tourism Administration said.

## Summit upbeat on industry's role in poverty relief

By **ZHANG ZHAO**  
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Tourism has both provided pleasure and helped to reduce poverty, according to officials and entrepreneurs at a summit forum of the First World Conference on Tourism for Development in Beijing on Thursday.

Arief Yahya, Indonesia's minister of tourism, said: "Tourism consists of at least three aspects - the cultural, the economic and environmental aspects." He said that in the past, Indonesia focused only on the cultural aspect of tourism, whereas now tourism is projected to be the country's main source of foreign income by 2020.

The officials and entrepreneurs at the forum called for cooperation between different agencies and sectors, including governments, the private sector and academia, to develop tourism with the aim of reducing poverty.

"The government provides opportunities; the companies create wealth; and the local people enjoy the wealth," said Chen Min'er, Party chief of Guizhou province in Southwest China.

He said attention should be focused on developing the rural tourism industry, as poverty is most widespread in the countryside. "Using the natural resources and unique ethnic elements (of the countryside), tourism can be integrated with agriculture, culture and even the e-commerce model, to help lift local residents out of poverty," he said.

Katevan Bochorishvili, Georgia's vice-minister of economy and sustainable development, said tourism had been the fastest-growing industry in Georgia over recent years, with the number of international tourists and the sector's contribution to the national economy both sharply rising.

Most importantly, she said the business has created jobs "in a very creative way."

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**Chen Min'er**, Party chief of Guizhou province

In addition, tourism allows people to experience cultures that are different from their own, said Jose Santos, minister of tourism in Argentina.

He added that tourism connects nations and peoples in a way that other sectors cannot.

To ensure locals benefit most from the industry, tourism-related companies should give preference to local residents during the hiring process, and then make sure they receive proper training, said Marcio Favilla, executive director for operational programs and institutional relations at the World Tourism Organization.

He called for financial support for small local companies, and suggested locals "supply services and goods directly to tourists".

Santos noted a successful example in northern Argentina, where, despite the area's natural wonders, such as the Iguazu Falls and numerous wetland areas, more than 2,000 residents lived in poverty. The Argentinian government subsequently introduced a plan in partnership with local communities and companies, which featured infrastructure investment in nature reserves, and allowed local people to develop their own projects.

## PART OF THE BEIJING DECLARATION

**Editor's note:** The First World Conference on Tourism for Development, jointly hosted by the United Nations World Tourism Organization and China, issued a declaration, titled "The Beijing Declaration on Sustainable Tourism as a Driver of Development and Peace", that calls for utilizing tourism as a means to bring about peace and global development. The following are excerpts:

We, the representatives of tourism administrations, international and regional organizations, the private sector, academia and civil society, gathered at the First World Conference on Tourism for Development.

The UNWTO's mandate states that the fundamental aim of the organization shall be the promotion and development of tourism with a view to contributing to economic development, international

understanding, peace and prosperity and universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.

The United Nations General Assembly resolution titled "Declaration on a Culture of Peace", which recognizes that "peace not only is the absence of conflict, but also requires a positive, dynamic participatory process where dialogue is encouraged and conflicts are solved in a spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation."

Tourism is one of the fastest growing socioeconomic sectors, accounting for an estimated 10 percent of global GDP, one in 11 jobs and 6 percent of global trade. Tourism is an important instrument for sustainable development as it can stimulate economic growth, create jobs, attract

investment, enhance the quality of life of host communities, foster entrepreneurship, preserve ecosystems and biodiversity, protect cultural heritage and promote the inclusiveness, empowerment and ownership of local communities.

This declaration calls upon all governments to acknowledge that countries are in different stages of development, to respect and encourage countries and regions to explore models of tourism development suited to their own conditions, to take part in international and regional tourism cooperation in the spirit of openness, innovation and mutual benefit, and to jointly promote inclusive and sustainable development of the tourism sector.

The private sector should act in line with the principles of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism and advance corporate social

responsibility initiatives.

All stakeholders should acknowledge and promote tourism as an effective tool for nurturing respect, tolerance and mutual understanding between people, nations and cultures, and contributing to building a culture of peace and dialogue between civilizations.

The declaration pledges to advance the contribution of tourism to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the UN's sustainable development goals in its respective areas of action and to duly recognize tourism as an important tool for development and peace.

This declaration also aims to ensure that necessary changes in policies, business practices and behavior will increase the contributions of tourism to sustainable and inclusive development and peace.

## Dong ethnic group increases incomes by sharing culture

By **ZHANG ZHAO**

At the foot of Fanjing Mountain in Jiangkou county, Guizhou province, is Zhaisha village, where most of the population belongs to the Dong ethnic group. For local villager Yang Juyuan, the development of tourism in recent years has allowed him to earn in a day what he could have earned in a year just five years ago.

He said that in the past, most local men made their living by working outside the village or by carrying sedan chairs for tourists to the mountain, earning 200 yuan (\$30.70) a day during busy seasons - and zero at slack seasons.

Yang's entire family earned less than 4,000 yuan annually until 2012 when he redecorated his residence and started a farmstay. Now his fam-

ily makes more than 200,000 yuan a year, and several thousand yuan a day in the busy season.

Tourism in the village emerged in 2010. The county government believes the business should be based on Fanjing Mountain, a national nature reserve and one of China's top five Buddhist mountains, as well as local villagers' unique lifestyle and culture.

An industry chain has been established, covering hospitality, sightseeing, performances and souvenirs. The village welcomed more than 800,000 visitors last year.

More than 70 local households have built Dong-style wooden houses, in addition to village gates, drawbridges, stages and bell and drum towers, all in the Dong ethnic style.



Zhaisha village in Jiangkou county, Guizhou province improves lifestyle through developing tourism.  
TONG SHIXUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

There are also museums introducing the local ethnic culture and farming civilization.

More than 60 families in the village have started farmstays, which employ nearly 300 people - about 90 percent of the village's population. The per-

capita annual net income is 12,460 yuan.

Only three households are still below the poverty line.

In September 2013, the county's first tourism industry association was established in Zhaisha and trained villagers and updated road signs.

In March 2014, the Jiangkou Culture and Tourism Development Co was founded. One of its first projects was the improvement of the natural environment and infrastructure in Zhaisha village.

"In the past, you got covered in dust on a sunny day, and in

mud on a rainy day," Yang said. "Now you enjoy the view of stilt-houses everywhere. The farmhouses attract tourists with our warm welcome."

The national financial poverty relief department has invested 59 million yuan to support tourism in the village, focusing on local ecology and traditional architecture protection. The government also organized training programs on cooking, etiquette and marketing, which have attracted nearly 80 local households.

New roads have been built, linking neighboring villages and towns, and the old houses have been rebuilt in an orderly fashion and unified style.

There are regular art performances on the weekends. The company has invited professionals from provincial theaters to train the performers.