



News Release

WORLD'S LEADING YOUTH AND STUDENT TRAVEL INDUSTRY TRADE GROUPS MERGE

“A unified voice for the community”

Toronto, Canada, Oct. 12 -- In a move to strengthen and promote the interests of the youth, student and educational travel community, the world's two leading trade associations have announced their merger, creating a powerful new unified voice to carry out their shared mission.

The Federation of International Youth Travel Organisations (FIYTO), which represents 450 plus members, and the International Student Travel Confederation (ISTC), encompassing a global network of 5,000 travel offices, have joined together to bring more clout to the industry, and enable increased business opportunities for their membership.

“Youth, student and international educational travel is more than just an economic engine, it is about young peoples' personal development. Anyone that has ever participated in one form or another of travel within our community, understands that the sharing and exchanging of our cultures and heritage is the key to our own individual growth, and the road to peace and understanding for the world,” David Jones, ISTC Director General.

Students and young people form the fastest growing travel sector, accounting for 20% of the international travel industry and generating billions of tourism dollars annually. While governments from around the world have begun to realise the value of this sector, many have recently adopted legislation that inhibits its growth. An important benefit of the merger will be the combined advocacy strength of the two organisations and increased ability to address these challenges.

“For more than fifty years our two organisations have been side by side in establishing, promoting and protecting the unique identity of youth, student and international educational travel. Now we have joined forces to provide a single voice to advance the recognition, understanding and of course, the tremendous value, both economically and socially, of our industry to governments and official tourism bodies,” Susan Goldstein, FIYTO Director General.

At the World Youth and Student Travel Conference being held in Toronto, Canada, members of both organisations unanimously voted for the merger, recognising the need for a unified voice and the strength that the two combined organisations would boast. Logistical details of the merger as well as the combined organisation's name will soon be determined.

About FIYTO

The Federation of International Youth Travel Organisations is a global membership association and trade forum devoted to the youth and student travel industry. Partnering with leading national, official and non-governmental tourism organisations, FIYTO provides its members and the industry with a voice for advocacy, business & networking opportunities and focused industry intelligence.

About ISTC

The International Student Travel Confederation is a global network of the world's leading student travel organisations. 5000 specialist student travel offices in 116 countries provide young travellers with special flight arrangements, a globally accepted student identity card, ground transport deals, work abroad opportunities, adventure travel and cultural experiences.

ISTC represents the student and youth travel sector through ground breaking research studies and active partnerships with UNESCO, national tourism authorities and other international organisations.