



PRESS RELEASE

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UNWTO Secretary General appointed as PolyU honorary professor

The School of Hotel and Tourism Management (SHTM) of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) bestowed Honorary Professorship on Mr Francesco Frangialli, Secretary General of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), on 13 January in recognition of his significant contribution to the development of the world's tourism industry. The University is looking forward to benefiting from Mr Frangialli's expert advice and guidance on the area of hotel and tourism management.

Immediately after the conferment ceremony, Mr Frangialli shared his insights with nearly 200 industry practitioners, academics and students in a public lecture titled "Current Status of World Tourism and Future Prospects".

Prof. Kaye Chon, Chair Professor and Director of SHTM, said, "The School and its students look forward to sharing Mr Frangialli's vast industry experience, as head of a world body of tourism and in his new capacity as our Honorary Professor. While the whole world is now forecasting on the ripple effect of the financial tsunami, we are most pleased to have him discussing with us the outlook of the tourism industry in this timely public lecture."

At the lecture, Mr Frangialli talked about the current economic turmoil. He remarked, "The major developed economies have been affected one after another. Most of them have passed the 'stagflation' stage, and several have already tilted clearly into recession. The economies of the emerging countries, although they continue to grow substantially, are no longer doing so at the same rate as before."

In regard to the outlook of the tourism industry, Mr Frangialli explained that the need to go on trips, to take holidays, is too strong in our post-industrial societies for people to stop travelling. During periods of economic downturn, the demand for leisure perhaps manifests itself in other forms, but it remains intact for the most part. Tourism will, in fact, contribute to mitigate the negative impact of the current crisis and will function as a damper rather than an accelerator to the financial and economic turmoil of the world.

He also enlightened participants on the fact that "climate change" is an important challenge that condition the long-term future of the industry. With greenhouse gas emissions generated by trips and stays, tourism contributes to global warming. At the same time, tourism is also a victim as leisure activities in different parts of the world being affected by the climate change. He said, "We must find avenues of research and instruments of action that will enable our tourism industry to adapt and diversify, with the twofold aim of surviving climate change and progressively decreasing its contribution to global warming."

Lastly, Mr Frangialli used the correlation between the global financial turmoil and climate change as an example to illustrate that businesses should not sacrifice their long-term commitment in face of their short-term concerns, like alleviating the current financial crisis through humanity's activities which will, in turn, accelerate global warming.

Mr Francesco Frangialli was elected Secretary General of UNWTO in 1997 and has held the post for more than 10 years. The main achievements of Mr Frangialli during his term of tenure included the creation of a universally accepted system Tourism Satellite Accounts which assess tourism's economic importance to national economies, and the adoption of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism to encourage responsible and sustainable tourism.

Mr Frangialli has an extensive background in public administration and served from 1986 to 1990 as Director of the Tourism Industry in the French ministry responsible for Tourism. He has a degree in economics from the Paris School of Law and Economics, studied at the National School of Administration, and is a graduate of the Paris Institute of Political Studies, where he was a lecturer from 1972 to 1989.

SHTM was ranked fourth among the world's top hotel and tourism schools based on research and scholarship, according to a study published in the *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research* in 2005. SHTM has a long-standing affiliation with UNWTO, a specialized agency of the United Nations and a leading international organization in the field of tourism. Since 1999, the School has been designated by UNWTO as one of its Education and Training Network Centres around the world – the only one in Asia. The School also serves on UNWTO's Education Council Steering Committee.



Prof Kaye Chon, Chair Professor and Director of SHTM, presenting the Certificate of Appointment to Mr Francesco Frangialli. SHTM and its students look forward to sharing Mr Frangialli's vast industry experience.



Mr Francesco Frangialli believes that tourism will contribute to mitigate the negative impact of the current crisis and will function as a damper rather than an accelerator to the financial and economic turmoil of the world.

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