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PolyU to host Fifth China Tourism Forum

The World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), School of Hotel and Tourism Management (SHTM) of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) and Tourism College Huangshan University will co-organise the Fifth China Tourism Forum in Huangshan, Anhui Province, China, from 13 to 14 December 2008.

The China Tourism Forum was first initiated by the School in 2004 to foster an open dialogue between academics and practitioners on emerging issues related to China tourism. This year, the Forum is themed around nature-based tourism.

Professor Kaye Chon, Chair Professor and Director of SHTM, said: “I am pleased to note that, due to our location and history, our School is uniquely positioned to play a leading role in facilitating the development of China’s tourism development. While China is experiencing strong demand for international and domestic tourism, however,” Professor Chon cautioned, “the country is not immune to external and internal factors affecting the tourism industry. It is, therefore, important to examine these factors and related issues facing the tourism industry in China.”

“While responding to the current economic challenges, it is important that the international tourism bodies should not lose sight of long-term sustainability goals,” the UNWTO Secretary General Francesco Frangialli noted and concurred. “On the whole,” he added, “international tourism has proven to be resilient in similar circumstances in the past and able to cope with various types of challenges.” Indeed, all statistics point to the fact that China remains the most dynamic key player of world tourism today.

The Forum has attracted a whole host of prominent scholars and industry experts who will share their views on how nature-based tourism in China is developing, including:

- Professor Kaye Chon, Chair Professor and Director of School of Hotel and Tourism Management, PolyU
- Professor Shanfeng Hu, Dean of Tourism College Huangshan University
- Professor Chris Ryan, Professor in Tourism, Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Waikato Management School, The University of Waikato
- Professor Bruce Prideaux, Professor of Tourism Marketing Management, School of Business, James Cook University
- Professor Huimin Gu, Deputy Dean, Tourism Management School, Beijing International Studies University
- Professor Tiger Wu, Peking University
- Professor Fengsheng Li, President, Guilin Institute of Tourism

- Mr Ken Chang, General Manager and Vice President of Associated Tours Ltd
- Mr Nixon Chung, Managing Director, Camloy International Ltd
- Mr Yuqiu Wang, Vice President, Huangshan Tourism Development Co Ltd
- Ms Ingrid Yin, Director of Sales and Marketing, Jinlin Hotels and Resorts Corporation

Speakers will also include government officials representing the China National Tourism Administration, Anhui Tourism Administration, Sichuan Tourism Administration, leading academics and industry professionals from Mainland China, Hong Kong, around the region and the world.

China has become one of the world's most visited destinations, receiving 54.7 million international tourists in 2007. It is also forecast by UNWTO that China will become the first destination in the world by 2020 and the fourth largest source market.

PolyU's School of Hotel and Tourism Management is a leading provider of hospitality education in the Asia-Pacific Region. It is ranked No. 4 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.

With 60 academic staff drawing from 18 countries, the School offers programmes at levels ranging from PhD to Higher Diploma. It was awarded the "2003 International Society of Travel and Tourism Educators Institutional Award" in recognition of its significant contribution to tourism education, and is the only training centre in the Education and Training Network in Asia recognised by the World Tourism Organisation.

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