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PolyU signs pact with World Tourism Organization

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU)'s School of Hotel and Tourism Management (SHTM) and the World Tourism Organization (WTO) have signed pact to foster co-operation in research and industry support activities relating to tourism in Asia and the Pacific region.

At a special ceremony held on the University campus yesterday (22 July), a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by Mr Xu Jing, WTO's Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific, and Prof. Kaye Chon, Chair Professor and Head of SHTM, in the presence of Mr Na Jong-min of WTO and Mr James Lu, Executive Director of Hong Kong Hotels Association.

Prof. Chon, also former elected Vice Chairman of WTO's Education Council, said, "Asia Pacific has been the fastest growing tourism region in the world over the decade, and it is expected to maintain a high rate of growth in the forthcoming years. Without doubt, the rapid development of China's economy and the organization of major international events such as 2008 Beijing Olympics and 2010 Shanghai World Expo will help boost the hotel and tourism industry in the region. I believe that this collaboration with WTO is timely and will contribute to the further development of tourism in the region."

Under the agreement, SHTM and WTO will design and conduct research and industry support programmes related to tourism in Asia and the Pacific region. The two parties will also jointly publish a research-based monograph about major tourism trends in the region. The publication, to be disseminated to WTO members, will be further developed into a periodical report summarizing major trends in tourism in Asia Pacific.

SHTM and WTO have developed close partnership for the promotion of tourism over the years. The School has worked with WTO on tourism development feasibility studies in Yunnan, Heilongjiang and Vietman. Since 1999, the School has been designated by WTO as one of its Education and Training Network Centres around the world – the only one in Asia. The School has also received WTO's TedQual Certification, a quality assurance system for tourism education, training and research.

The World Tourism Organization, a specialized agency of the United Nations established in 1925, is the leading international organization in the field of tourism. With its headquarters in Madrid, Spain, WTO serves as a global forum for tourism policy issues and practical source of tourism know-how. Currently, WTO's membership is comprised of 145 countries, seven territories and more than 300 Affiliate Members representing the private sector, educational institutions, tourism associations and local tourism authorities.

PolyU's School of Hotel and Tourism Management is Asia's leading university in tourism and hospitality education. Having a history of 26 years, the School has nurtured more than 10,000 young talents for the hospitality industry in Hong Kong. With over 1,200 registered students, 40 academic staff from 16 countries, SHTM is among the world's top 15 academic institutions in tourism and hospitality based on research and scholarly activities. Last year, the School formed strategic alliance with the Education and Training Department of the Shanghai Municipal Tourism Administrative Commission to foster co-operation in professional tourism training, education and research.



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