Opportunity for All: Samarkand Academy Adds to Growing UNWTO Education Network

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has further enhanced its status as the global leader in advancing education and skills development for the tourism sector. As one of the top priorities of the Organization’s leadership, and fully endorsed by all Member States, education serves as the foundation for building more resilience and accelerating the shift to greater sustainability.

Against the backdrop of the 25th General Assembly (Samarkand, Uzbekistan, 16-20 October 2023), Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili visited the new Tourism Academy Samarkand in Collaboration with UNWTO. The Academy will train students new to the sector as well as those already working in tourism, giving them the skills they need to grow their careers. The Secretary-General praised the commitment of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev and Minister Aziz Abdukhakimov to investing in education and professional training and for recognizing the role both can play outside of the tourism sector itself.

The Samarkand Academy is just the latest in a growing network of education initiatives spearheaded by UNWTO. Just one month before the General Assembly, against the backdrop of this year’s World Tourism Day (27 September), the Secretary-General visited the newly-opened Riyadh School for Hospitality and Tourism in Collaboration with UNWTO. The school has already welcomed its first students and aims to welcome many thousands more, both from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia itself as well as from across the wider region and the world.

Alongside its Academies, UNWTO is transforming tourism education at every level. The Education Toolkit, launched out of the UNWTO Regional Office for the Middle East, is designed to support Member States everywhere introduce tourism as a high school subject. This stands alongside the growing UNWTO Tourism Online Academy, the UNWTO Students League and now the Bachelor’s Degree in Sustainable Tourism Management offered by UNWTO in partnership with the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and the Arts of Switzerland, in supporting people at every stage of their educational journey in tourism.

Education as a priority for the sector will next be highlighted at the Minister Summit hosted by UNWTO at the World Travel Market (London, 6 November).