Dear all,

It is a privilege for me to be able to present today the next chapter of our flagship initiative for youth empowerment in the tourism sector: the Global Youth Tourism Summit.

After the massively successful event, held in Italy last year, we want to help you – our members – to embrace the GYTS magic, bring the initiative closer to you and help you offer your young talent an opportunity to inspire the future of tourism in your countries and beyond.

Youth engagement is a topic of utmost significance for our global community – and tourism is no exception to that. As we navigate the diverse challenges and seek a brighter, more sustainable future for our sector, empowering our youth is not just an opinion – it is imperative.

We must invest in the potential of our young people and help them reach their full potential, recognize their talent, and give them an opportunity to share a better world.

This is why we have taken on the task of preparing #Youth4Tourism – A Handbook to Champion Youth Participation in Tourism. We hope this will be an invaluable source of guidance towards a future where the youth take the centre stage in transforming the tourism landscape.

The handbook provides practical information for the holding of youth centred events in physical and digital environments, and includes sample educational activities for 5 crucial topics, related to tourism: from the global community of the United Nations to tourism for rural development, sustainable tourism, accessibility in tourism and climate action in tourism – touching upon SDGs 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17.

I often say that tourism is the most human of all economic sectors. I am certain you will agree with me that investing in the human capital is crucial for the future of our sector. Yet tourism is even more than that. It is a bridge that connects cultures, fosters understanding, and cultivates growth.

Only in our region, we are faced with multiple devastating armed hostilities and natural disasters. The lives of are being shattered into pieces. We believe that tourism can drive the recovery of the communities once the immediate danger subsides. And the recovery must not only include – but start with the youth.

Their energy, creativity, and fresh perspectives are the driving force that can redefine and revitalize the tourism sector. It is our duty to nurture their promise and encourage their active involvement.
This handbook is a testament to the United Nations World Tourism Organization’s commitment to promoting youth participation in tourism. Our hope is that it will help you equip our youth with the knowledge and skills needed to become leaders and innovators in the tourism sector.

As you delve into the pages of this handbook, envision a future where young minds are actively involved in shaping policies, influencing decisions, and implementing sustainable practices in the tourism sector. Let us recognize that their voices matter and their contributions are vital for a thriving, inclusive, and sustainable tourism.

Thank you.