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UNWTO Academy: Human capital development

Note by the Secretary-General

In this document, the Secretary-General presents to the Members of the UNWTO Commission for Europe his views on the importance of human capital development and the establishment of the UNWTO.Academy.

UNWTO Academy: Human capital development

I. Why is tourism human capital important for UNWTO?

1. Tourism at international level is expected to grow in the coming years. This presents both an opportunity and a challenge at the same time. The opportunity is to invest and create quality job opportunities in the tourism sector. The challenge is that, in order to support the expected growth and to achieve tourism sector competitiveness and sustainability, UNWTO Member States need the right tourism human capital base that meets current and future market demands and, ultimately, enhances competitiveness and sustainability of tourism destinations.
2. Therefore, tourism development in UNWTO Member States needs a human capital base that is:
 - **Abundant:** the right volume of human capital available at all skill levels and in all sub-sectors and job families of tourism;
 - **Highly qualified:** human capital with the right type and level of education, training and experience available at all skill levels and in all sub-sectors and job families of tourism;
 - **Highly motivated and with the right attitude:** in order to deliver exceptional experiences to visitors;
 - **Able to gain the economic benefits from tourism:** it is also imperative that UNWTO member States and their local communities can fully benefit from the growth of the tourism sector through meaningful, quality jobs with clear and visible career path opportunities in the sector.
3. When planning the development of tourism human capital, it is important also to note that the human capital needs of the tourism sector today are not the same as the human capital needs of 2030 will be. We will see the emergence of new types of tourism businesses, products, services and professions, requiring different competencies, knowledge and personality attributes. Meeting the new demands will require concerted efforts and the UNWTO.Academy can and should take a leading role in addressing emerging needs.

II. Why is human capital important for tourism?

4. There are several characteristics that make tourism an attractive economic development option and key in that is its potential to create and support jobs and boost employment.
5. Tourism employment delivers long-term benefits to destinations and these benefits include economic development, poverty alleviation, and sustainability. Naturally, tourism is also conducive for enterprise development as it opens opportunities for small and medium sized businesses that are engaged in providing products and services for the tourism industry.

6. Given its economic connections, tourism's impacts are particularly strong in the local farming and fishing industries, handicrafts and construction industry, among others. It is for this reason that tourism is strongly recognized as a valuable tool in alleviating poverty as employment within the sector can provide income and experience and therefore, contribute to a person's social inclusion and individual development. It also contributes in a major way to the long-term sustainability and competitiveness of destinations, where local people are employed and trained and income flows directly to the local economy.

III. UNWTO Academy

7. At the UNWTO.Academy we will strive to help UNWTO Member States to face these opportunities and challenges by offering them a comprehensive portfolio of products and options to address this:
 - **UNWTO Courses**
 - Face-to-face Courses
 - Online and Blended Courses
 - **Quality Certification Systems**
 - UNWTO.TedQual: Quality Certification System for Education and Training Programmes in Tourism
 - UNWTO.QUEST: Quality Certification System for Destination Management Organizations (DMOs)
 - **New Products**
 - International Centres associated with the UNWTO.Academy
8. These International Centres will work as Hubs for delivering UNWTO Capacity Building activities and we are open to all proposals from UNWTO Member States.
 - UNWTO.Academy Talk
 - Certification for Professionals