

Former UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon endorses Ambassador Dho Young-shim as next UN World Tourism Organization head

SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA, March 24, 2017 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The United Nations General Assembly has designated 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development. For the duration of 2017, the global UN community, across all nations and agencies, will focus on the critical role of tourism as a vehicle for global unity, opportunity, and sustainable advancement of the economies, societies, cultures, and environments.

To mark this milestone year for the tourism sector, Dr. Taleb Rifai, Secretary General of UNWTO, visited Seoul on March 22, in order to pay tribute to Mr.

Ban Ki-moon as the 8th Secretary General of UN, in recognition of his valuable support and commitment to the work of UNWTO in promoting sustainable tourism for peace, development, and poverty alleviation during his ten-year tenure.



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Mr. Ban Ki-moon

An award ceremony was co-hosted by UNWTO and Seoul-based UNWTO ST-EP Foundation at the Seoul Arts Center in honor of Mr. Ban in the presence of Dr. Rifai; the Korean Acting Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr. Song Soo-keun; the Chairperson of the UNWTO ST-EP Foundation and UN SDGs Advocate Ambassador, Dho Young-shim; and members of the diplomatic community in the Republic of Korea.

Introduced by Ambassador Dho, Dr. Rifai delivered a speech in honor of Mr. Ban and his dedication to the UN and global

causes, including human rights, sustainability, and peace. Dr. Rifai also reminded the audience that Mr. Ban, during his tenure as the top official of the UN, had visited UNWTO, the youngest of the UN specialized agencies, several times. His first visit to Spain as UN Secretary General on June 5, 2007 was to visit UNWTO headquarters in Madrid.

Mr. Ban delivered an impressive speech on the important role of the tourism industry, stressing that it "serves as ambassador of culture and mutual understanding, peace, reconciliation, tolerance, and mutual respect. Focusing on the great potential of tourism to contribute to international development

and poverty elimination, Mr. Ban included in his remarks a message of thanks to Ambassador Dho and the UNWTO ST-EP Foundation for its activities aimed at fostering sustainable tourism towards the achievement of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and then the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which include ending poverty in all its forms everywhere, by 2030.

Sighting one important example of the organization's efforts in upliftment of communities, Mr. Ban referenced the Thank You Small Library (UN SDGs TYSL) initiative spearheaded by the ST-EP Foundation, with a total of 180 small libraries established around the world. Mr. Ban praised its contribution to "so many young children who otherwise without this would have nothing to do." He added that his wife had the opportunity to visit UN SDGs TYSLs on several occasions.

Finally, Mr. Ban also shared with the audience his personal and sincere hopes around the aspirations of the people of the Republic of Korea for Amb. Dho's candidacy to be the next Secretary General of UNWTO. He added that he had "great confidence and trust as a personal citizen of Korea that she can be the absolutely right leader for the UNWTO in these changing and challenging times to promote tourism, and by promoting tourism, we can expect more peaceful societies."

Currently, seven candidates are competing for the highest post in world tourism; Ambassador Dho Young-shim is the only Asian and female candidate among the seven candidates. The decision will be made in May 2017 by the UNWTO Executive Council for ratification by the UNWTO Membership in September.

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