



UN Tourism and UTM highlight Meetings and Events as Drivers for Local Development

Macao, China, 24 October 2025: UN Tourism's Asia-Pacific Member States met to boost capacity and explore how meetings and events can drive sustainable economic, social, and cultural growth

The 17th UTM-UN Tourism Training Programme organized by Macao University of Tourism (UTM) in collaboration with UN Tourism, focused on "Leveraging Meetings and Events for Local Development." The four-day training programme (21-24 October), sponsored by MGM, brought together renowned industry leaders, academics, and practitioners from across the Asia-Pacific region.

MICE as driver of growth and opportunity

In her opening remarks, Fanny Vong, Rector of UTM, emphasized the training programme's significance saying: "Our longstanding collaboration with UN Tourism has covered a lot of ground, ranging from sustainable tourism planning to destination branding. This year, we explore how meetings and events can become drivers of local prosperity, strengthening destination branding and fostering public-private partnerships that empower youth development and advance sustainability. Here in Macao, where MICE is a key pillar of economic diversification, this discussion is especially pertinent."

UN Tourism's Programme Officer for the Regional Department for Asia and the Pacific - Christine Brew, on her part underscored the immense economic power of the meetings and events industry as well as its significant contribution to local development, travel and tourism and global GDP. In his congratulatory remarks, Iwan Dietschi, Senior Vice President of Hospitality at MGM, spotlighted MGM's support for tourism education and development in Macao.

The distinguished speakers in attendance included representatives from China Convention, Exhibition, Event Society (CCEES), Economic Development Bureau of the Guangdong-Macao In-Depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin, China, Galaxy Entertainment Group, International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA), Macao Government Tourism Office, MGM, Singapore Association of Convention & Exhibition Organisers & Suppliers (SACEOS), Union des Foires Internationales (UFI), and faculty members of Macao University of Tourism (UTM).

10 years of training and empowerment

As the UTM-UN Tourism Training Programme enters its second decade, it will continue to address emerging challenges and opportunities in the tourism industry. By bringing together international experts and regional practitioners, future editions of the programme will continue to foster the cross-cultural collaboration and knowledge exchange—essential for addressing shared challenges and promoting more inclusive development models. The insights gained will contribute to shaping tourism policies and practices that benefit not just individual destinations, but the global community as a whole.

Over the past decade, this collaboration between UN Tourism and UTM has trained nearly 400 participants from 36 UN Tourism member countries from Asia-Pacific and Europe, and has consolidated this annual programme as a premier capacity-building initiative in the region's tourism sector.