



Tourism Promotion Organization  
for Global Cities

# Press Release

Busan, 10 September 2025



## **TPO Adopts Chair's Statement on 'Digital and Green Transformation' at 12th General Assembly in Ho Chi Minh City**

### **Shaping the Future of Tourism Through Smart Technology and Sustainability**

#### **Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam - September 6, 2025**

The Tourism Promotion Organization for Global Cities (TPO) adopted the Chair's statement on 'Digital and Green Transformation' at its 12<sup>th</sup> General Assembly held in Ho Chi Minh City on September 3 to 6. The assembly was held alongside the International Travel Expo Ho Chi Minh City (ITE HCMC) 2025, with the combined events gathering 1,000 participants, including representatives from 33 cities worldwide as well as key stakeholders from the global tourism industry.

The Chair's statement was initially proposed by the host city, Ho Chi Minh City, during the Leaders' Conference on September 4, and was formally adopted at the plenary session on September 5. The statement focuses on two main objectives: building a smart tourism ecosystem that integrates cutting-edge technologies such as AI and IoT, as well as promoting sustainable tourism development through green transformation. Through the adoption of the *TPO Green Horizon* Chair's Statement, TPO has strengthened its position as a leading international cooperation body that goes beyond tourism exchange to drive global urban tourism innovation.

#### **New Leadership and Future Host Cities**

Key organizational changes were made at the 12th TPO General Assembly. Busan (Korea), Gimhae (Korea) and Kota Kinabalu (Malaysia) were elected as the TPO President and Co-President, respectively, for the 2026-2027 term. The Assembly also approved statutory reforms to recognize the role of TPO Regional Meetings. This is expected to facilitate regional policy coordination and enhance regional cooperation and decision-making processes.

Host cities for future TPO Conferences were also decided through member voting at the assembly. Gimhae (Korea) won the bid to host the 13<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in 2027, while Ulsan (Korea) was selected as the host of the 11<sup>th</sup> Forum in 2028. These selections ensure continued momentum for TPO's regional cooperation initiatives.

#### **Cities Share Best Practices in Digital-Green Transformation**

Beyond institutional agreements, the Assembly served as a platform for knowledge sharing and collaboration. Thematic sessions explored urban tourism strategies based on digital technology and sustainability, while the ITE high-level forums discussed ways to strengthen cooperation

among member cities. Gimhae (Korea), Manjung (Malaysia), Samarkand (Uzbekistan), Ipoh (Malaysia) and Incheon (Korea) garnered attention by delivering presentations on their best practices in green and digital transformation.

### **Comprehensive Side Events Drive Engagement and Recognition**

One of the highlights of this General Assembly was the revival of the TPO Best Awards after a six-year hiatus. The Awards, aimed at recognizing member cities' outstanding achievements, were presented in five categories: Marketing, Innovation, Sustainability, Leadership, and Media, celebrating each city's creative policies and strategies on the international stage. The Tourism Marketing Award went to Taichung (Chinese Taipei), Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam) and, Taiping (Malaysia), while Incheon (Korea) was presented the Tourism Innovation Award. Ipoh (Malaysia), Kota Kinabalu (Malaysia), Hanoi (Vietnam), and Batu (Indonesia) received the Sustainable Tourism Award, Jamunarani S. Nadarajah, Deputy Director of Ipoh City Council (Malaysia) won the Tourism Leadership Award, and Sanya (China) brought home the award in the Tourism Media category.

The Assembly also featured extensive promotional activities and networking opportunities. Seven cities including Busan (Korea), Sanya (China), Incheon (Korea), Manjung (Malaysia), Pohang (Korea), Taichung (Chinese Taipei) and Ulsan (Korea) participated in the TPO Joint Promotion Presentation, while Busan (Korea), Jeonju (Korea), Incheon (Korea), and Ulsan (Korea), Sanya (China), Hanoi (Vietnam), and Taichung (Chinese Taipei) participated in the TPO Tourism Roadshow. Both events showcased participating cities' unique attractions to a global audience. Thirteen bilateral meetings conducted during the Assembly proved to be a valuable opportunity for cities to engage in discussion to establish concrete future partnerships.

### **Entering Next Phase**

TPO Secretary General Kang Da-eun stated, "This Assembly demonstrated TPO member cities' strong commitment to smart tourism and green transformation. The joint statement will serve as a foundation for stronger collaborative projects among member cities." The Vice Mayor of Busan Metropolitan City, Seong Heui Yeob, emphasized, "As the President City, Busan will work alongside member cities to lead the digital and green innovation of global tourism."

Moving forward, TPO plans to strengthen its member city cooperation network through the 1st Global Cities Tourism Summit scheduled for October in Busan. The organization will also develop a variety of global initiatives, including human resource exchange projects, tourism innovation research, and platforms for joint promotion.

We kindly request immediate or same-day publication of this press release.

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