The global organization for professional services, education, capacity building and intellectual property

المجموعـــــة العـالميــــة للخدمـــــات المهنيـــــة والتعليـــــم وبنـــــاء القــــــدرات والملكيـــة الفكريـــة

Chairman Office

مكتب الرئيس

Smart Tourism & Big Data Solutions
Talking Points
By: **Talal Abu-Ghazaleh**

UNWTO Tourism Tech Adventures
Big Data Solutions in Tourism

Manama, Bahrain
November 1st, 2018

HE Mr. Zurab Pololikashvili,
Secretary-General, World Tourism Organization
HE Mr. Zayed R. Alzayani,
Minister of Industry, Commerce & Tourism of Bahrain
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

- I am very pleased to be here today among the elite and experts whose presence is dedicated to discuss the impact of Big Data in the ever-challenging sector of Tourism and I thank you for giving me the opportunity to address such a great audience and allowing me to learn from you; I have been passionate about the role of technology in developing the tourism sector for such a long time and I strongly believe that technology is the key for building knowledge –based societies in the world.

- I consider myself a Bahraini at heart. Our presence as TAG-Org here in Manama, in addition to my being personally continuously resident for more than half a century in Bahrain, contributed to the growth of our global businesses and various activities in education, Intellectual Property in addition to others and we owe it to the leadership of this great Kingdom HM Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and I thank His Majesty and his great father the late Sheikh Issa for their support and guidance.

TAG-Org GA Building
46 Abdel Rahim Al-Waked St., Shmeisani
Tel: +962 6 5100 900
Fax: +962 6 5100 901
P.O.Box: 921100, Amman 11192 Jordan

tagorg.com

مبنى الإدارة العامة ـ مجموعة طلال أبوغزالـه
٤٦ شارع عبدالرحيم الواكد، الشميساني
هاتف: ٩٠٠ ٥١٠٠ ٦ ٩٦٢+
فاكس: ٩٠١ ٥١٠٠ ٦ ٩٦٢+
ص.ب: ٩٢١١٠٠ عمان ١١١٩٢، الأردن

1

- Allow me to thank HE Mr. Zurab Pololikashvili for his vision and dedication for building a better future through the use of technology.

Ladies and Gentlemen

- I am proud of being a Special Ambassador to this great organization and in addition to other UN positions such as a member of the United Nations Social Impact Fund High Level Advisory Board (UNSIF-HLAB) and Chair of CSU Honorary Council concerned with the UN SDG 11, I have been planning to benefit from the development in the ICT sector to serve the sustainability of the tourism sector as this crucial sector employs tenth of the working force and responsible for the tenth of the GDP in the developed countries.

- The industry of tourism thrives on information and Big Data is one of the most representative paradigms of the "knowledge economy".

- Big Data is labeled as a key source of value creation that makes it possible to gain invaluable insights about customers' views, preferences, needs, attitudes, etc.

- Tourism big data has changed from expert's views and surveys to information produced by travelers themselves.

- Big Data's emergence is a common trend for all industries however, it becomes especially relevant for the tourism industry given its information-intense nature and the reliance on Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). I served on the United Nations Information and Communication Technologies Task Force and I have always stated that the power of ICTs is necessary to promote the development needed to deliver greater equality of opportunity for citizens in developing countries.

- From an information based view, tourism is a complex phenomenon in which data, information and knowledge, from and about tourists, is the essential basis for destinations' competitiveness and innovations and how tourists play a substantive role as key source of knowledge.

- We have established Talal Abu-Ghazaleh University College for Innovation (TAGUCI), an entity where no student will graduate from unless they innovate a new ICT-related product or service in various fields and tourism will be a huge focus for them.

- Smart Tourism relies on extensive adoption of emerging technologies such as AI, VR, Smart apps...etc.

- Smart Tourism Destination considered as the core of Smart Tourism, as it is the result of the interconnection of tourism destinations with multiple community stakeholders through dynamic platforms, knowledge intensive communication flows and enhanced decision support systems.

- Benefits of utilizing Big Data in Smart Tourism:

  - Much better tourism experience,
  - Create contextualized offerings based on tourist needs
  - Co-create products and services with tourists, thus providing better value to them in real time.

- The creation of a Smart Tourism Destination requires:

  - integrating technologies, systems, services, and
  - capabilities into an organic network that is sufficiently multi-sectorial and flexible for future developments,
  - open-access

- We need to focus on Virtual Reality as a promising application for Smart Tourism

But there are challenges:
  - Difficult to predict the level of advancement that the future technologies will offer
  - VR's ability to stimulate the other three senses remains somewhat rudimentary

Your Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am fascinated by everything related to knowledge and in my latest book "The Brave Knowledge World" I stressed that technology can raise the level of education to fit the knowledge world and that we need to invest heavily in technology if we want a better future for the next generation… and indeed we do.

We are excited to announce that the UNWTO and Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Organization are in the final stages of establishing a unique project under the name the "International Smart Tourism Center" which will be headquartered in Amman with the support of the TAG-Org's IT companies. This project aims to promote and foster the role of tourism in the achievement of the Sustainable Developments Goals (SDGs) through innovation and technology.

This joint action will help make tourism destinations "smarter" thus contributing to make them more competitive and sustainable and establishing a common vision on technology and innovation for smart tourism.

The Center will develop an online platform (datalake) that can help the development of big data and its analysis to forecast tourism and foster technological solutions.

Thank you.