

KTO says Winter Olympics will help 'ease tensions'

The Korea Tourism Organisation (KTO) has denied existing tensions between its northern neighbours and the US will affect its hosting of the 2018 Winter Olympic Games.

In a dinner for clients and press at Four Seasons Hyde Park, in London, KTO president Chang Soo Jung went as far as to say the Olympic event would ease tensions with North Korea.

Speaking through a translator, Soo Jung said South Korea was among the safest countries to visit, pointing out there was no history of attacks on tourists.

When asked about whether KTO was concerned about the increasing nuclear threat between North Korea and the US, he laughed and said: "Yes

I was expecting that question.

"As you may all know, (Korea, Japan and China) host mega events despite the high expense and this will increase and encourage economic development. In this context, no country would want to escalate the tensions in the Korean peninsula, including the USA. I believe this process of the event will contribute ultimately to terminate the tension in the Korean peninsula."

The dinner also previewed the Winter Olympic Games, saying it would be the first games to use humanoid robots to carry out activities like the torch relay, PR activities and information services.

International meeting associations announce five-year partnership

IACC, the only association to certify conference and meetings-focused venues on an international basis, and Meeting Professionals International (MPI), the leading association for meeting professionals, have announced a five-year partnership for the 'mutual benefit of their members'.

The associations, who have collaborated in the past, will share learning, including education delivered at annual conferences, regional events, and online, as well as research initiatives.

In the last year IACC has delivered education at various MPI events, including most recently at the Southern California Chapter Conference and MPI Philadelphia Area Chapter Education Institute. MPI presented two workshops at the IACC-Americas Connect conference this week in Los Angeles.

IACC's chief executive, Mark Cooper, said: "The leadership

teams at MPI and IACC have been collaborating on several successful initiatives over the last two years and now seems the perfect time to bring all this great work together under one strategy to allow us to seize more opportunities and provide more for our respective members."

One new project will entail MPI conferences streamed live to IACC venues, where MPI members can come together, learn and experience valuable networking. MPI's 2017 World Education Congress (WEC), which takes place June 19-22 in Las Vegas, will be the first conference featured.

MPI will also take part in the next phase of the IACC Meeting Room of the Future research project, which aims to transform the meeting experience through a collaboration of leaders in meeting space design, technology, hospitality, delegate collaboration, experience and conference management.

AIM Group scores well in medical sector

AIM Group, the professional congress organiser, has won a string of new contracts.

Collaborating with the World Bank Group, the AIM Group will be organising the IFC's Global Debt Mobilisation Conference, in Madrid, this year, while the European Ceramic Society Congress, expected to attract 1,500 delegates, will be held in Turin, in June 2019.

The 4000-delegate International Bar Association Conference will be gracing Rome's new conference centre La Nuvola in December next year and the AIM Group will be supporting IBA's core PCO Judy Lane, ICS, with the management of the social programme as well as the local services.

The PCO, with offices around the world, will be making a triumphant return to Africa in October 2017. Following its successful handling of the 2016 edition in the USA, the Group has been appointed to manage the African meeting of the Reproductive Health Supply Coalition in 2017 in Dakar, Senegal.

Also in the medical field, another important assignment will be with the ADI Congress (Alzheimer's Disease International) to be held in Milan in 2019 with the participation of 1,500 delegates.

AIM Group VP Patrizia Sempredone Buongiorno said: "We are building a strong community of clients, developing collaborative partnerships and thinking not only of what they need today but what they will need tomorrow."

Pharmacists choose Abu Dhabi for 2019 World Congress

The International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) has named Abu Dhabi as the host destination for its 3,000-delegate World Congress of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences 2019.

The UAE will be the first country in the Gulf to stage the five-day event, which is taking place in the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre (ADNEC), and only the second in the Middle East.

Providing a platform to highlight pressing issues and exchange know-how, the event will seek to enhance the role of pharmacists in improving healthcare systems across the world.

It will examine the most important scientific innovations in the pharmaceuticals domain and explore ways to strengthen the role of pharmacists in delivering the right treatments.

FIP President Carmen Peña said: "The International Pharmaceutical Federation is delighted that the 79th World Congress of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences is to be held in Abu Dhabi. We look forward to working with colleagues there to bring our global pharmacy network to the United Arab Emirates, so that important discussions of professional issues can take place."

Barcelona's 'Diagonal' hotel named best for meetings

A hotel in Barcelona has been named the best place to meet, by cloud-based event management company Cvent.

The Hilton Diagonal Mar Barcelona topped a list of 50 hotels across Europe, the Middle East and Africa, which stood out from the almost quarter-of-a-million venues in Cvent's database.

Four new properties have entered the top 10: Melia Castilla Hotel & Convention Centre Madrid (4th), Moevenpick Hotel Amsterdam City Centre ijVENUES (7th), Hilton Vienna (9th) and the Rome Marriott Park Hotel (10th). The UK was represented by Hilton London Metropole in sixth spot.

The list was compiled by analysing meeting and event booking activity through the Cvent Supplier Network, which features more than 245,000 hotels, resorts and special event venues.

Kelly Shrivess-Wrist, Director of Business Development for Hilton



Top 10 EMEA Hotel Properties

1. Hilton Diagonal Mar Barcelona
2. Hilton Prague
3. Hotel Arts Barcelona
4. Melia Castilla Hotel & Convention Centre Madrid
5. W Barcelona
6. Hilton London Metropole
7. Moevenpick Hotel Amsterdam City Centre ijVENUES
8. Sheraton Frankfurt Airport Hotel & Conference Centre
9. Hilton Vienna
10. Rome Marriott Park Hotel

London Metropole said: "We are very grateful and privileged that Hilton London Metropole is one of Europe's leading hotels for meetings, conferences and events. We want to thank all our clients and we look forward to welcoming repeat events to raise the bar for their next event."

The JW Marriott Marquis Hotel Dubai (ranked 45th) is the first property from the Middle East to make the newly expanded list. Hilton, Marriott and Intercontinental (in that order) are the top 3 hotel chains which have the most properties on the top 50 list.

"Hotels have become increasingly focused on developing more meeting and event business, and as such, have become more sophisticated in competing for the most lucrative opportunities for their respective venues," said Kevin Fliess, VP of marketing for Cvent's Hospitality Cloud.