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**PROGRESS REPORT  
ON  
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF  
THE FRAMEWORK FOR DEVELOPMENT AND  
COOPERATION IN THE DOMAIN OF TOURISM  
AMONG OIC MEMBER STATES AND THE ICTM  
RESOLUTIONS**

**ADOPTED  
BY  
THE TENTH ISLAMIC CONFERENCE OF  
TOURISM MINISTERS (ICTM)**

**DHAKA, PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH  
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## **PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FRAMEWORK FOR DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION IN THE DOMAIN OF TOURISM AMONG OIC MEMBER STATES AND THE ICTM RESOLUTIONS**

### **I. Introduction**

Trade in goods and services have become the hallmark of intra-OIC cooperation over the years. The steady growth of intra-OIC trade has lent credence to the status of the Organisation as a veritable economic actor within the OIC region. Accordingly, the growth witnessed by OIC in the services sector can be largely traced to the various activities of OIC member states in the tourism sector. Tourism is a vital part of the global economy and it continued to be a key driver of the global economic recovery in 2016, and a dynamic contributor to job creation, poverty alleviation, environmental protection and multicultural peace and understanding across the globe. International tourist arrivals grew by 3.9% to reach a total of 1,235 million, according to the latest UNWTO World Tourism Barometer<sup>1</sup>. Some 46 million more tourists (overnight visitors) travelled internationally last year compared to 2015. Accordingly, 2016 was the seventh consecutive year of sustained growth following the 2009 global economic and financial crisis. As a result, 300 million more international tourists travelled the world in 2016, as compared to the pre-crisis record in 2008.

Regionally, Asia and the Pacific (+8%) led growth in international tourist arrivals in 2016, fueled by strong demand from both intra- and interregional source markets. Africa (+8%) enjoyed a strong rebound after two weaker years. In the Americas (+4%) the positive momentum continued. Europe (+2%) showed rather mixed results, with double-digit growth in some destinations offset by decreases in others. Demand in the Middle East (-4%) was also uneven, with positive results in some destinations, but declines in others.

International tourist arrivals are also expected to reach 1.8 billion by 2030, according to UNWTO's long-term forecast: "Tourism towards 2030". Demand continued to be strong in most source markets and destinations, despite ongoing geopolitical, economic and health challenges in some parts of the world. Once essentially excluded from the tourism industry, the developing world has now become its major growth area. Tourism is a key foreign exchange earner for 83 percent of developing countries and the leading export earner for one-third of the world's poorest countries. For the world's forty poorest countries, tourism is the second-most important source of foreign exchange after oil.

However, when the international tourism sector is evaluated as a source of foreign exchange earnings by relating the international tourism receipts in each country, as a percentage, to its total merchandise exports, figures indicate that international tourism activity plays a more significant

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<sup>1</sup> UNWTO World Tourism Barometer.

role in the economies of the OIC countries as a source of foreign exchange earnings. In 2012, due to conflicts in some OIC countries, especially located in the Middle East region, intra-OIC arrivals saw a decline and measured as 54 million arrivals that represented a 31.9 percent share in total OIC international tourist arrivals. In 2013, intra OIC tourism arrivals bounced back and climbed to 60.7 million arrivals that was the highest figure measured during the 2009-2013 period. Intra-OIC tourist arrivals in 2013 represented a share of 34.8 percent in total OIC international tourist arrivals. In the same period, the share of intra-OIC tourism receipts in total OIC receipts also recorded a meaningful increase that went up from 31.2 percent to 34.9 percent.

This Progress Report will highlight the major actions taken towards implementation of the OIC Framework for Development and Cooperation in the domain of Tourism among OIC Member States, the Resolution of the 9<sup>th</sup> ICTM, and commemoration of the OIC City of Tourism 2016 and 2017, which are Konya (Turkey) and Madinah Al Munawwarah respectively.

The Report will also prefer recommendations for consideration by the 10<sup>th</sup> Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers including a Strategic Roadmap for Development of Islamic Tourism in OIC Member Countries and a Study on Muslim Friendly Tourism Branding in the Global Market needed to further implement the OIC Framework under reference during the next two years. In addition, the ICTM will discuss the following subjects: Selection of the OIC City of Tourism Award (2019 and 2020); Islamic Tourism Development; Progress on Tourism Infrastructure Projects; OIC Tourism Fairs; and Reconstitution of the Tourism Coordination Committee. The General Secretariat has submitted the Draft Agenda and Draft Annotated Agenda of the 10<sup>th</sup> ICTM to the Member States on 16 February 2017 for their views and inputs. In addition, the General Secretariat has submitted Draft Dhaka Declaration, Draft Resolution on Tourism Development and Draft Progress Report on the Implementation of the Tourism Framework on 25 September 2017.

## **II. Islamic Tourism Development**

1. With an increasing awareness and expanding numbers of Muslim tourists, many tourism industry players have started to offer special products and services, developed and designed in accordance with the Islamic principles and with the aim of catering to the needs and demands of these tourists. Nevertheless, despite attracting significant interest across the globe, Islamic tourism is relatively a new concept in both tourism theory and practice. Not surprisingly, Islamic tourism activity remained highly concentrated in Muslim majority countries of the OIC, which are currently both the major source markets for the Islamic tourism expenditures and popular destinations. Islamic tourism is a natural-fit for these countries as the majority of them already has basic infrastructure and environment in place to meet the specific needs of Muslim tourists, and thus, have a comparative advantage over the others. Therefore, it is true to believe that, if planned and managed properly, Islamic tourism could play a significant role in revitalizing the economic development and growth and hence, spread the prosperity across OIC member states. This is in addition to the current efforts in promoting Islamic Tourism brand, the value of which is currently estimated at US\$151 billion and a projection of US\$ 243 billion in 2021, according to Thompson Reuters.

### Working Group on Islamic Tourism

2. Considering the importance of Islamic tourism, the 9<sup>th</sup> ICTM, held in Niamey, Republic of Niger on 21-23 December 2015, decided to establish a Working Group on Islamic Tourism, which comprised the Republic of Indonesia (Coordinator), People's Republic of Bangladesh, General Secretariat, SESRIC, SMIIC and IUT. In line with the Resolution of the said ICTM, the Republic of Indonesia hosted the First Meeting of the Working Group on Islamic Tourism in Padang, West Sumatra, Republic of Indonesia, on 29 September 2016.
3. The Working Group reviewed the Terms of Reference for the preparation of "Strategic Plan for the Development of Islamic Tourism in OIC Member Countries", prepared by SESRIC. In this context, the Meeting requested the SESRIC to prepare a first draft of the Strategic Roadmap in collaboration with the members of the Working Group.
4. The Working Group meeting also adopted an Executive Program for the Development of Islamic Tourism (2017-2018) including, among others, preparation of a study on Islamic Tourism Branding in the Global Market, convening of the OIC Forum on Islamic Tourism, activation of tourism committee of SMIIC to introduce the standards of Islamic tourism industry, products and services, opening of Islamic Tourism Tertiary Related Programs by IUT.

### **III. Strategic Roadmap for Development of Islamic Tourism in OIC Member States**

5. The "Strategic Roadmap for Development of Islamic Tourism in OIC Member States" is a framework, which provides a systematic approach to promote cooperation among the member states in this area for development and specifies the needed resources for anticipated changes. It outlines a guideline for the future development of Islamic tourism in OIC member countries via Islamic tourism standards and quality control drafts in management, operations and implementation.
6. The Strategic Roadmap also sets a stage for cooperation among OIC member countries, OIC Institutions and relevant international organizations in the field of Islamic tourism. The document identifies five key specific thematic areas of cooperation in the domain of Islamic tourism, namely data and monitoring, policy and regulation development, marketing and promotion, destination and industry development, and capacity development in order to enhance cooperation at intra-OIC level as well as to improve Islamic tourism ecosystem in OIC member states.
7. The General Secretariat has circulated the said Strategic Roadmap, submitted by SESRIC, among all OIC Member States on 20 March 2017 for their views and inputs. The said Draft document will be submitted to the 10th ICTM for final approval. Essentially, the Roadmap provides for following areas of cooperation and incorporates a matrix of activities for their implementation: Develop national Islamic tourism indicators for collation, processing, and dissemination of Islamic tourism data; Strengthening national statistical systems; formulating and implementing national policy and regulations for the development of Islamic tourism market; Promoting Islamic tourism hotels and tour agencies in OIC countries; Enriching the online/offline content for Islamic tourism products and services; Improving networking

among Islamic tourism service providers in OIC Member States; Improving human resources quality in Islamic tourism industry; Standardization and Certification; Raising awareness on the importance and potentials of the Islamic tourism industry; Mapping best practices and developing joint-capacity building programmes; Boosting investments in the Islamic tourism industry; Easing visa polices to improve intra-OIC tourism especially in the Islamic tourism industry.

#### **IV. Study on Muslim Friendly Tourism Branding in the Global Market**

8. In line with the 9<sup>th</sup> ICTM Resolution, the ICDT prepared a Study on Muslim Friendly Tourism Branding in the Global Market. The Study starts with the analysis of the concept of Muslim Friendly Tourism (MFT) and its various components. It discusses the opportunities and challenges in developing and marketing MFT.
9. This rapid growing new trend of demand for Halal products is due to changes in the social and economic conditions of predominantly Muslim nations, thereby requiring an Islamic Marketing and Branding to regulate the operations of all stakeholders in the Islamic tourism market. There are several other recommendations in the Study related to areas covering directly the MFT. Their implementation will also allow OIC Member States to better position themselves in the MFT market and gain a higher share of the Muslim visitors' arrivals. The recommendations of the Study can be classified in three categories as:
  - i. **Systemic and sub systemic recommendations:** Maximizing the inherent strengths in OIC Member States; Developing a MFT Alliance both on a regional a sub-regional levels; Developing a Global and Comprehensive MFT Policy; Government involvement; Investing in MFT Industry; Enhancing research on MFT; Developing an environment for innovation and entrepreneurship on MFT related products and services.
  - ii. **Marketing recommendations:** Setting an overall MFT market goal to encourage growth in the MFT sector in OIC Member States; Capturing opportunities in the niche sub-segment within MFT; Implementing and streamlining the basic MFT related services; Targeting Muslim Minority Countries; Developing healthcare services and facilities for the Muslim market.
  - iii. **Technical recommendations:** Standardization and Certification System; Increasing awareness of the MFT market among the travel industry stakeholders; Developing Handbooks and Guide; The role of Internet in Marketing MFT; and Developing MF Applications.
10. The OIC General Secretariat has submitted the said study to all Member States for their views and inputs. The study will be submitted to the 10<sup>th</sup> ICTM for its final consideration.

## V. OIC City of Tourism 2016 and 2017 (Konya and Madinah Al Munawwarah)

11. In line with the Resolution of the 8<sup>th</sup> ICTM, the 4<sup>th</sup> Coordination Committee Meeting, held in Jakarta, Indonesia, on 3 June 2014, selected the Konya (Republic of Turkey) as the awardees of OIC City of Tourism for 2016. In addition, the Fifth Coordination Committee Meeting on Tourism, held in Niamey, Niger, on 22 December 2015, selected the Madinah Al-Munawwarah (Saudi Arabia) and Tabriz (Islamic Republic of Iran) as the awardees of OIC City of Tourism for 2017 and 2018, respectively. The 9<sup>th</sup> ICTM, held in Niamey, Republic of Niger, on 21-23 December 2015, considered the recommendations of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Coordination Committee Meeting on Tourism on the awardees of OIC City of Tourism.

### Workshop on the Future of Tourism development in Konya, Konya, Republic of Turkey, on 15-16 November 2016

12. SESRIC, ICDT and Konya Metropolitan Municipality jointly organized a Workshop on “The Future of Tourism Development in Konya” in Konya, Republic of Turkey on 15-16 November 2016. , The event was a good opportunity to showcase the rich cultural and touristic resources of Konya for the participants from different countries, regional and international organisations. They discussed the different aspects and dimensions of tourism development and its future prospects.
13. The Workshop recommended, among others, the diversification of tourism, such as food and gastronomy, recreation and health through well-developed regional tourism plans equipped with a sound mechanism for implementation. It also urged the relevant stakeholders especially governmental institutions and academia to cooperate for having a common understanding and strategic vision for the development of tourism. Participants requested ICDT, SESRIC, SMIIC and other relevant institutions to seek ways to cooperate in the field of capacity-building and raising awareness on Islamic tourism by means of knowledge and experience sharing programmes. The recommendation of the workshop will be presented to the 10<sup>th</sup> Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers for its consideration.

### International Symposium on “Konya in Islamic Civilization”, held in Konya, Republic of Turkey, on 17-19 December 2016

14. The International Symposium on “Konya in Islamic Civilization” was organized by IRCICA and Karatay University in Konya, on 17-19 December 2016, in coordination with Konya Metropolitan Municipality and the Governorate of Konya. The Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Turkey, H.E. Prof. Nabi Avcı, delivered a Speech in the Opening of the Symposium. During the three-day academic symposium, forty-eight scholars from eight OIC Member States including Turkey, Iran, Azerbaijan, United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Albania, Oman and Tajikistan presented their papers. The Russian Federation also attended the event as an observer.
15. Diverse aspects of Konya as a center of cultural tourism were highlighted during the various presentations. The papers addressed topics relating to the cultural and scholarly developments in Konya over the course of its Islamic history from the Seljukid, and Ottoman to the present periods. It also reviewed the role of Konya’s eminent religious scholars, educational institutions, social, artistic and literary developments. The Session also focused on Konya’s

urban and architectural heritage and the spirit of tolerance that emanated from the scholarly-mystic atmosphere of Konya making it a world city that symbolizes tolerance and compassion.

### **OIC City of Tourism for 2017 - Madinah Al-Munawwarah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

16. In line with the 9<sup>th</sup> ICTM Resolution, which approved Madinah Al-Munawwarah as OIC City of Tourism 2017, the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia organized the launching Ceremony of Madinah as OIC City of Tourism 2017, in Madinah on 18 February 2017. The launching was performed by His Royal Highness Prince Sultan Bin Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, the President of Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage. The occasion was also attended by His Royal Highness Prince Faisal Bin Salman Bin Abdulaziz, the Governor of Al-Madinah. Also in attendance were the Minister of Tourism of Sudan, Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives of OIC member states, among other dignitaries.
17. The audience also received the speech of His Excellency, Dr. Yousef Al-Othaimen, the OIC Secretary-General, wherein he congratulated the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, the Government and people of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on this well-deserved award to the City of Al-Madinah and expressed his hopes that the various programmes and activities lined up for the celebration of the OIC City of Tourism in 2017 would boost the potential of Madinah Al-Munawwarah as a regional hub for heritage and eco-tourism, considering its peculiar ecological attractions, historical landmarks and opportunities for desert safari, among others.
18. In addition to the impressive choreographic dances and historical displays on the ancient city of Al-Madinah, the authorities unveiled several other programmes and activities lined up for the celebration of the award during the year. These include: Festivals of Tourism and Heritage of Al-Madinah, the Ansar Village Programme for Youth and Sports, the Madinah Festival of Fireworks, Interactive Family Entertainment Programme, the Origin of Culture and Technology, Al-Mubarakah Exhibitions and Economic Development Fair. Other programmes and activities include: Madinah Arts Gallery, Choir Competition, Women Handicrafts Exhibition and Students Programmes by both Universities of Al-Madinah and Taibah as well as Women Cultural Shows.
19. On their part, the relevant OIC institutions plan to carry out a Programme of Activities in commemoration of Madinah Al Munawwarah during the year. The components of the Programme include: Granting incentives and financial prizes to the Best Cultural Institution working for revitalizing cultural tourism in Madinah Al Munawwarah; Permanent Exhibit of ISESCO publications; Symposium on Addressing Defamation of Islam and its Sacred Symbols in the Media in a Professional and Human Right-Wise Manner. The Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage have created a web site on Madinah as OIC City of Tourism (<http://madinah2017.com/?lang=en>), which was published all the activities during the year.

### **VI. Islamic Heritage**

20. Prince Sultan bin Salman Islamic Architectural Heritage Database. IRCICA has recorded the data and information on the sites and monuments of the Muslim world into the Prince Sultan bin Salman Islamic Heritage Database. At the same time, the Center has requested all Member



States to provide the data regularly on their sites and monuments and designate focal points to be in charge of regular on-line communication with the Centre for this purpose. Within the framework of the activity programs relating to the database, the Centre monitors other similar international efforts and keeps relations with institutions concerned.

21. Preservation of Islamic architectural heritage of Nagorno Karabagh: international symposium. Within the framework of its studies on the Islamic heritage monuments in the occupied Nagorno Karabagh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan, IRCICA organized an international symposium on “Karabagh: History and Heritage”, in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Azerbaijan and Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, in Baku, on 10-11 November 2016. The principal aims of this project are to promote research and disseminate information on the history of the region, record the assets, assess their status, and raise awareness about preservation of this heritage in world opinion. The presentations at symposium sessions were followed by discussions.
22. Project on preservation of cultural heritage and assistance to social development in Al-Quds and Palestine. IRCICA launched a project to be implemented with the collaboration of authorities concerned, universities and institutions from Palestine and the participation of a multidisciplinary group of experts. The project aims to improve the life standards and welfare of the people of al-Quds and Palestine and help preserve and promote their cultural heritage. An expert level seminar was convened by IRCICA in Istanbul on 18-19 May 2016 to draw the guidelines of the project. The seminar reviewed recent developments and the current state of affairs concerning cultural heritage, as well as housing, education, and Palestinians’ rights based on international law. The experts mapped the sectors and sub-sectors and drew guidelines towards preparation of a set of policy papers.

## **VII. OIC Award of Seal of Excellence for Handicrafts**

23. In line with the Mechanism and Criteria for the Award of OIC Seal of Excellence for Handicrafts, IRCICA has prepared a programme for the implementation of the said OIC Award in coordination with the Member States and OIC General Secretariat. This award aims at stimulating an innovation by encouraging artisans for more creativity, while drawing attention of craftsmen to their important role in preserving crafts and heritage.
24. Within the spirit of the said OIC Award, IRCICA and Tabriz University for Islamic Arts jointly organised the Tabriz International Award for Innovation and Creativity in Crafts - Awards worth US\$80.000 distributed on ten Craft topics. This Award scheme came within the Tabriz International Festival of Arts, Crafts and Creativity, which took place in Tabriz on 4-12 May 2017. The Festival gathered participation of Artisans from 31 Countries who hailed from the different geographical places of the World: Algeria, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Cote D’Ivoire, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iran, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Sultanate of Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda and Uzbekistan. Bosnia and Herzegovina and Tatarstan (Russia Federation) also attended the ceremony as observer countries. The Jury Committee Members assessed and examined the following characteristics in the presented craft products: Excellence, Creative Concept Design and Invention in Traditional Technique. During the assessment and evaluation process of the submitted works,

the Jury took into account all the characteristics and technical features of each product, and special attention was given to products which came in accordance with the terms and conditions of the award.

25. The festival aimed to gather innovators and artisans in pavilions forming a traditional heritage international Craft village where they displayed their works, tools, and techniques applied. The Festival was accompanied with the International Exhibition of Artisans-as at-work and the International Congress on "Innovation Dimension in Arts and Crafts".

### **VIII. OIC Tourism Capacity Building Programme (Tr-CaB)**

26. The Stat-CaB Programme of SESRIC aims to identify and implement training programmes by matching the capacities and needs of the National Statistical Offices (NSOs) in the member countries depending on the survey responses on Statistical Capacity Building. Since 2007, the Centre has organized over 244 statistical capacity building programmes including 175 short-term training courses, 45 international workshops, 10 study visits, and 8 technical missions with the participation of thousands of experts from the NSOs of OIC member countries. In the domain of tourism, SESRIC has organized 14 short-term training courses and 4 international workshops since 2007.
27. During the period of under consideration, the following training programmes have been implemented by SESRIC, which are listed below:
  - Regional Workshop on “Tourism Satellite Accounts” in Kazakhstan, 30 November - 3 December 2015;
  - Training Course on “Tourism Statistics” in Suriname, 9-11 August 2016;
  - Training Course on “Tourism Statistics” in Gambia, 24-26 August 2016;
  - Training Course on “Inbound Tourism Statistics” in Azerbaijan, 21-22 November 2016;
  - Training Course on “Tourism Satellite Account” in Suriname, 14-16 February 2017;
  - Workshop on the Future of Tourism Development in Konya, 15-16 November 2016;
  - Training on the Development and Promotion of Muslim Friendly Tourism in Ankara, Turkey, 4-7 July 2017.

### **IX. Other Tourism Related Activities:**

#### **a) Regional Project on Sustainable Tourism Development in a Network of Cross-Border Parks and Protected Areas in West Africa**

28. The 13<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee Meeting of the “Regional Project on Sustainable Tourism Development on a Network of Cross-border Parks and Protected Areas in West Africa” was

held in Casablanca, Kingdom of Morocco, on 15-17 February 2016. The Meeting was attended by delegates of members of the Committee and representatives of the ICDT and IDB Group. The meeting adopted programme of activities for 2016 and urged participating Member States to submit their national projects in bankable format for further necessary action. It is worth noting that this meeting was preceded by a Training Workshop on the Setting up of Tourism Projects, organized for the benefit of the focal points of the beneficiary Countries in order to familiarize them with the methodologies and procedures of the Arab, African and international Financial Institutions. In addition, the Steering Committee recommended the elaboration of terms of references for the formulation of bankable projects on the protected areas of (a) Niokolo- Badiar (b) Djoudj-Diawling (c) Park W (d) Bafing-Falémé and (e) River Basins. The Experts of the Project made an estimation of USD 100.000 to conduct the Mission of formulation of bankable projects.

29. Besides, ICDT seized the opportunity of its participation in the South-South Expo held in Dubai in October 2016 and at the COP 22 held in Marrakech in November 2016 to promote the Project and raise awareness on the necessity to find the necessary funding to conduct the above mentioned Mission, which constitutes an essential step to prepare with success the holding of the 2nd Donors Conference scheduled in 2018.
30. In June 2017, the Regional Coordinator of the Project informed ICDT that the Project has just been registered among the most important government projects in the Investment National Plan of the Republic of Guinea.
31. In the meanwhile, ICDT in collaboration with SESRIC will continue to work with its different partners to support the Project, notably by organizing activities aiming at reinforcing the capacities of the touristic staff managing of the concerned cross border parks and protected areas and local communities living around. In this regard, the Centre has agreed to co-organize with SESRIC a “Workshop on the management of parks and protected areas” with a view to reinforcing the capacities of the touristic staff managing the concerned cross border parks and protected areas and local communities living around.

**b) 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Meetings of the OIC/COMCEC Private Sector Tourism Forum**

32. The 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Meetings of the OIC/COMCEC Private Sector Tourism Forum were held in Istanbul, Republic of Turkey, on 14-15 January 2016 and 4 May 2017 respectively. Several presentations were made by keynote speakers from both the Public and Private Sector agencies as well as SESRIC during the both meetings.
33. The Meetings adopted, among others, the following recommendations: raising the awareness about Muslim Friendly Tourism not only in the OIC Member States, but also in Non-OIC World; experience sharing, technical cooperation and capacity building programmes among the Member States in Muslim Friendly Tourism; developing and harmonizing standards in Muslim-Friendly Tourism in the OIC Member States. It also underlined the importance of creation of collaboration between Public and Private Sectors for restoring tourism destinations and business relations.

34. Notwithstanding the fact that the OIC/COMCEC Private Sector Tourism Forum aims at bringing together public and private players in the tourism sector in order to exchange information, ideas and discuss some of the most important present and future challenges of tourism development in OIC countries, majority of the participants of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Forum was from public sector. It is, therefore, essential for OIC and its relevant institutions to encourage more inclusive participation of the Private Sector agencies in the future meetings of this nature.

**c) Simplification of visa and customs procedures**

35. Pursuant to ICTM resolution on simplification of visa and customs procedures, the General Secretariat has compiled a list of visa concessions in OIC Member States as mentioned below. Generally, a host of OIC Member States have granted visa free entries to businessmen and holders of diplomatic, service and ordinary passports from OIC Member States.

	<b>Member States</b>	<b>Beneficiary Countries</b>
1.	Bahrain	All GCC citizens.
2.	Burkina Faso	- All ECOWAS citizens - Central African Republic (OIC Observer), Morocco, Mauritania, Somalia and Tunisia, Cameroon, Iran and Malaysian Citizens (Diplomat and Service Passports holders)
3.	Indonesia	Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, Morocco, Azerbaijan, Iran, Tunisia and Turkey citizens (Diplomatic and Service Passports holders)
4.	Mali	Burkina Faso, Guinea, Niger, Tunisia, Turkey, Gabon, Iran, Ghana, Cameroon and Mauritania citizens
5.	Niger	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tchad, Togo and Tunisia citizens
6.	Azerbaijan	Albania, United Arab Emirates, Indonesia, Jordan, Iran, Kuwait, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, Malaysia, Morocco, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Syria, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, UAE (Diplomatic and Service Passports holders).
7.	Saudi Arabia	Granted Visa to Businessmen Visas multiple of one year or six months and also grants visas for business visits. Visas are granted within 24 hours.
8.	Iraq	Granting of Entry Visas to Arab and Foreign VIPs, businessmen and Investors, who wish to visit Iraq
9.	Iran	Granting of visa free concessions to Azerbaijan, Egypt, Lebanon and Turkey
10.	Turkey	Exempt from Turkish visa: Albania, Azerbaijan, Brunei Darussalam, Iran, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Morocco, Syria, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan (extending from 30-90 days).

**d) Setting up a statistical tourism database on OIC countries and conducting researches on tourism development issues and intra-OIC tourism:**

36. The OIC Statistics (OICStat) Database developed by SESRIC is the first and only international official statistics repository on the Member Countries of the Organisation of

Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Enriched with the experience drawn from its predecessor Basic Social and Economic Indicators (BASEIND) Database, OICStat is periodically maintained to ensure the dissemination of most up-to-date through the inclusion of categories and indicators on the OIC Member Countries. Equipped with more “user-friendly” features, OICStat currently hosts 310 indicators under 19 categories dating back to 1985. In the field of tourism, the data is available on the following 7 different economic indicators. The abovementioned database could be reached through the website <http://sesric.org/oicstat.php>.

No	Indicator	Unit
1	Balance of Foreign Travel	Million USD
2	Balance of International Tourism as % of GDP	Percentages
3	International Tourism Receipts as % of Exports	Percentages
4	Intra-OIC Tourist Arrivals	Thousands
5	Number of Tourist Arrivals	Thousands
6	Tourism Expenditures	Million USD
7	Tourism Receipts	Million USD

37. Furthermore, SESRIC is preparing the 2017 edition of the report titled “International Tourism in the OIC Countries: Prospects and Challenges” examines the performance and economic role of international tourism sector in OIC member countries in the latest period for which the data are available. It analyses again the two traditionally used indicators in measuring international tourism, i.e. international tourist arrivals and international tourism receipts. The analysis is being made at both the individual country and the OIC regional levels. The Report also focuses on intra-OIC tourism figures to reflect recent developments. Chapter 4 of the Report highlights the challenges and potential of Islamic Tourism; as a new dimension of tourism sector in OIC member countries. The final chapter of the Report concentrates on the promotion of regional integration in the OIC countries through tourism. It aims to explore the role of tourism sector and tourism activities in deepening regional integration in the OIC countries such as through visa facilitation among OIC countries, cross-border national park projects for tourism, and joint infrastructure projects for facilitation of tourism (e.g. cross-border railway projects). Overall, the Report sheds light on the challenges of tourism development in the OIC countries and the issue of tourism cooperation among them and proposes some recommendations to serve as policy guidelines.

#### e) OIC Tourism Fairs

##### 2<sup>nd</sup> OIC Tourism Fair

38. In compliance with the resolution adopted by the 8<sup>th</sup> Session of the ICTM, the 2<sup>nd</sup> OIC Tourism Fair was held in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates on 8-10 December 2015, under the

patronage of H.H. Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammed Al Qassimi, Member of the Supreme Council of the State of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Sharjah. The Fair was attended by approximately 125 companies representing the 13 Member States.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> OIC Tourism Fair

39. In compliance with the resolution adopted by the 9th Session of the ICTM, the 3<sup>rd</sup> OIC Tourism Fair will be held in Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt in 2018. The 43rd CFM called on OIC Member States and their respective Private Sector entities to promote intra-OIC tourism by actively participating in the 3<sup>rd</sup> OIC Tourism Fair. A Forum for Public and Private Investors in the area of Tourism will also be held on the sideline of the Tourism Fair.

#### **f) OIC Tourism Portal**

40. In compliance with the resolution of the 9<sup>th</sup> ICTM, ICCIA, ICDT and SESRIC have been entrusted to create the OIC Tourism Portal in collaboration with the OIC Member Countries. This project is part of the Executive Program for the implementation of the “Framework for Development and Cooperation in the domain of Tourism among the OIC Member States” for the period of 2016-2017. The objective of this project is to increase public awareness on existing tourist attractions, resources and facilities in the Islamic World with a view to encouraging tourists’ visits to other Islamic Countries by providing full information to potential visitors. The creation of the OIC Tourism Portal will on one hand increase the visibility on OIC Tourism resources and sites as well as tourism arrivals and revenues while on the other, it will enable the development of tourism infrastructures and tourism related activities. The OIC Tourism Portal is proposed to be structured under the following sections:

- OIC Documents
- Statistics
- Research
- Capacity Building & Training Activities
- Tourism Fairs & Events
- Tourism Destinations in OIC Member Countries
- Investment in Tourism Projects

41. The joint studies will be further enhanced on the Portal and it is expected to be featured the Portal on the web within the last quarter of 2017.

42. The ICCIA has already created on its website a section on Islamic Tourism, which features all 57 Member countries touristic attractions and related data. The said portal has been launched on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2017. In addition, ICDT and SESRIC have also agreed upon a general framework for the creation of the Portal, which promotes OIC touristic destinations and emphasizes all OIC efforts in the domain of tourism including links to the resolutions and cooperation frameworks and strategies adopted at the ministerial level sessions.

**g) Major Issues for Consideration of 10<sup>th</sup> ICTM**

43. The agenda of 10<sup>th</sup> ICTM includes among others, consideration of three documents namely “International Tourism in the OIC Countries: Prospects and Challenges: 2017” and “Strategic Roadmap for the Development of Islamic Tourism in OIC Member States” presented by SESRIC, and “Study on Muslim Friendly Tourism Branding in the Global Market” presented by ICDT. The recommendations highlighted above will require the other issues requiring attention of ICTM include:

- (a) Modalities of commemoration of OIC City of Tourism;
- (b) Study on investment opportunities in Islamic tourism sector;
- (c) Development of cultural sites, and Islamic history of arts and science.

*OIC City of Tourism Award*

44. The commemoration of OIC City of Tourism would need to be standardized to provide for specific activities to be conducted in each awardee city. In this regard, the following proposals are recommended for the consideration of the Conference;

- (1) Cultural/Arts/Heritage Festival;
- (2) Development of one tourism infrastructure project.

**X. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Designating marketing strategies in line with the updated information concerning the potential tourist demand and the motives and organizing joint sales promotion activities.
- Developing an environment for innovation and entrepreneurship on Islamic Tourism related products and services and increasing awareness of the Islamic Tourism market among the travel industry stakeholders;
- Conducting a needs assessment of statistical capacities for the production and dissemination of Islamic tourism data at the national level and an assessment of available resources to address those needs, including those related to technical cooperation, training, and sharing of best practices that may be offered by OIC member countries.
- Encouraging the Member States to develop joint Public Private Partnership (PPP) projects and benefit from the relevant OIC institutions' facilities for this purpose.
- Encouraging the Member States to promote and strengthen cooperation between them in the field of education and vocational training through allocation of scholarship, exchange of experiences, documents and publications and through the organization of research and workshops in the field of tourism.
- Organisation of issue-orientated workshops, seminars and symposia on immediate problems of common interest to allow for the development of new perspectives,

modalities and possible cooperative action in order to promote, expand and diversify tourist activities in the Member States.

- Encouraging the Member States to arrange annual celebration of OIC City of Tourism and propose programmes to facilitate mass and colorful celebration of the year-long event.

## **XI. CONCLUSION:**

As delineated above, tourism can significantly contribute to poverty alleviation and lead to socio-economic prosperity. It is however regrettable that there are still many challenges hampering this sector in a considerable number of OIC Member States. Some of the challenges include, but not limited to, lack of peace and stability, weak infrastructural base, weak and/or non-existent regulations and standards as well as lack of promotional tourism programmes.

There is also the need for the OIC Member States to facilitate knowledge and technology transfers and offer technical assistance. Nascent tourism sectors in the majority of OIC Member States need assistance in training staff and teaching new skills. OIC relevant institutions such as SESRIC, ICDT and ICCIA and Experts from established tourist markets in some of the Member States are well placed to offer assistance. Furthermore, Member States need to prioritize the search for capital investment to help them build the roads, airports, hotels, and leisure facilities needed to attract visitors in large numbers. Investments in human capacity are equally important. Local communities need special training to work in the international hospitality industry.

OIC Member States should build on what has been achieved so far in the Framework for Development and Cooperation in the domain of Tourism between OIC Member States to develop a creative marketing strategy for the tourist industry. The global tourism trade is highly competitive. Developing countries such as OIC Member States need to think about what sets them apart from other potential destinations and focus on marketing these distinctive qualities. Having a clear focus will also make it easier to attract foreign investment and visitors.

On the whole it is hoped that OIC Member States will recognize the potential of tourism in stimulating the economic growth and job creation and take the necessary measures that support tourism including the promotion of Islamic tourism products and the facilitation of visas and travelers' movements as espoused in the relevant resolutions of ICTM.

**OIC General Secretariat  
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