

RESOLUTION
ON THE COORDINATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF
TOURISM ACTIVITIES AMONG THE OIC MEMBER
STATES ADOPTED
BY THE SIXTH SESSION OF THE
ISLAMIC CONFERENCE OF TOURISM MINISTERS

DAMASCUS, SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC
25-28 JUMADIUL THANI 1429H
(29 JUNE – 2 JULY 2008)

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ON THE COORDINATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM
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The Sixth Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers (ICTM), held from 25 to 28 Jumadiul Thani, 1429H (29 June – 2 July, 2008), in Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic.

Recalling Resolution No 3/11-E (IS) of the Eleventh Islamic Summit Conference held in Dakar, Republic of Senegal , on 6-7 Rabiul Awwal 1429 (13-14 March 2008);

Further recalling Resolution No 4/35-E of the 35th Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM), held in Kampala, Republic of Uganda, from 14 to 16 Jumadiul Thani 1429H (18-20 June 2008);

Recalling also the Resolutions adopted by the previous Sessions of the ICTM;

Recognizing that tourism plays a pivotal role in promoting economic, social and cultural interactions among nations contributing to international peace and security as well as international understanding;

Recognizing also that the promotion of tourism among the OIC Member States further enhances the solidarity of the Islamic Ummah;

Emphasizing that tourism is one of the priority areas identified in the Plan of Action Strengthen Economic and Commercial Cooperation among OIC Member States;

Reaffirming the importance of publicizing the provisions of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism adopted by the Thirteenth Session of the General Assembly of the UNWTO;

Acknowledging the importance of the emphasis placed by World Trade Organization (WTO) on tourism as a means of promoting peace and dialogue among civilizations;

Acknowledging also the potential of tourism as an important poverty alleviation tool;

Expressing satisfaction at the conclusion of a Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation between the OIC General Secretariat and UNWTO;

Mindful of the current volatile international situation;

Taking note of the Background Report of the OIC General Secretariat, the working papers of the Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA), Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC), the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT), the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) and the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), presented to the Conference as well as contributions made by the Member States during the deliberations of the Conference:

1. **Reaffirms** that the Kuala Lumpur Programme of Action for the Development and Promotion of Tourism in the OIC Member States develops a set of concrete actions in the

field of tourism, based on the OIC Plan of Action to Strengthen Economic and Commercial Cooperation among Member States.

2. **Takes note** of the report of the Preparatory Meeting between the representatives of the Syrian Arab Republic and the OIC General Secretariat preparatory to the Sixth Session of ICTM, held in Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic, on 7-8 May 2008.

3. **Thanks** the Republic of Azerbaijan for following up on the resolution on Tourism Development adopted by the Fifth Session of the Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers, and for submitting an exhaustive report thereon.

4. **Thanks** the Governments of the Republic of Indonesia, Malaysia and the Islamic Republic of Iran for their significant role as focal points, in collaboration with the appropriate OIC institutions, for tourism facilitation, tourism marketing and research and training in tourism, respectively, and appreciates the reports submitted by them in following up of the actions carried out in their respective fields.

5. **Thanks** the Republic of Turkey for hosting the Second Experts Group Meeting on Tourism Development in Istanbul, Republic of Turkey, on 9-11 May 2007.

6. **Takes note** of the Framework for Development and Cooperation in the Domain of Tourism between OIC Member States, developed by the Second Experts Group Meeting on Tourism Development, and will submit it to the 24th Session of the COMCEC, for final approval.

7. **Thanks** the Republic of Azerbaijan for hosting the International Scientific Conference on “Role of Tourism in the Economies of OIC Countries” in Baku, on 21-22 June 2007.

8. **Thanks** the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for hosting and organizing the First Tourism Forum, held in Jeddah, on 30 October - 1 November 2007, in collaboration with the ICCI and IDB.

9. **Thanks** the Republic of Azerbaijan for hosting the OIC Forum for Silk Road Tour Operators, held in Baku, Azerbaijan, on 14-15 April, 2008.

10. **Also thanks** the Republic of Azerbaijan for hosting the OIC Conference on “Religious and Health Tourism: Organization of Spiritual and Physical Recreation”, held in Nakhchevan, Republic of Azerbaijan, on 20-22 May 2008.

11. **Emphasizes** the need to settle crises, conflicts and disputes hindering tourism movement using diplomatic and peaceful means on the basis of the UN Charter and international norms and principles in order to preserve the right of all peoples of the world to exercise their right to tourism, travel and movement in optimal conditions.

12. **Invites** the international community to establish greater understanding among all cultures on the basis of mutual respect to the individualities of each people.

13. **Expresses** deep concern on the detrimental impact of conflicts on the cultural and natural heritage as well as on ecotourism of OIC Member States and **strongly condemns** deliberate destruction of Islamic cultural and historical monuments as well as of natural bases for ecotourism in conflict-affected Islamic countries.

14. **Expresses** the view that acts of terrorism hinder the development and promotion of tourism and **condemns** them in all their manifestations.

15. **Also calls** for the elimination of discriminatory measures against Muslim travellers.
16. **Condemns** the unilateral sanctions imposed upon some Member States and **calls on** the Member States to cooperate between themselves in order to avoid the negative effects on tourism as a result of the unilateral sanctions imposed on some Member States.
17. **Condemns** all Israeli actions and attempts to Judaize the city of Al-Quds Al-Sharif settlement activities, the building of the Annexation and Expansion Wall around the holy city, and the excavation activities taking place near the Al-Aqsa mosque and which attempt to change the city's historic character. **Reaffirms** the necessity to preserve the Arab identity of this city and uphold it as the capital of the independent Palestinian State in accordance with international legitimacy resolutions.
18. **Expresses** its great concern in face of the continued Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories and what it entails in terms of the devastating effects this has on the Palestinian people, their economic infrastructure, and the tourism sector. **Condemns** the Israeli attacks against the sites of Palestinian cultural heritage and the Muslim and Christian holy places in Al-Quds and all Palestinian territories, the settlement activity, the barriers, and the isolation of the various regions, including the racist separation wall, and **calls on** the Member States to offer all forms of support and assistance to the Palestinian tourism sector and in this context encourages private tourism offices and corporations in its States to work directly with the Palestinian tourism offices and corporations to promote tourism to Palestine.
19. **Calls on** Member States to invite the Ministry of Tourism and Ancient Monuments in Palestine and the Palestinian private tourism sector to take part in the tourism exhibitions that are held in the Member States and offer support to develop the participation of the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Ancient Monuments in the tourism exhibitions and conferences. **Also calls on** them to establish a fund dedicated to supporting the severely harmed Palestinian tourism sector.
20. **Calls on** all Member States to assist with the return of the Iraqi heritage that were illegally taken out of the country and thanks the Syrian Arab Republic and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for their efforts and cooperation with regard to the return of Iraqi heritage.
21. **Expresses** its support to the efforts exerted in Afghanistan for the sake of protecting the Islamic Monuments there.
22. **Commends** IRCICA and ISESCO for the continued support of the projects concerned with cultural tourism and the preservation of the cultural and architectural heritage in Al-Quds and other cities in Palestine and **calls on** them to offer additional support and assistance in this matter in cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities in Palestine as well as the specialized scientific institutes. **Also calls** for supporting the resolution of the Arab League to declare Al-Quds the Arab Cultural Capital of 2009.
23. **Strongly condemns** the destructive Israeli aggressions perpetrated against Lebanon and their devastating effects on the Lebanese people and its economic and social institutions and infrastructure and affirms its total solidarity with the Lebanese people in its adversity and calls upon Member States and related organizations to contribute to the reconstruction of Lebanon, mainly the tourism and archeological sites.
24. **Welcomes** the Resolution No. 34/6-P of the Thirty-fourth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, held in Islamabad, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, in May 2007, and Resolution No. 5/35-P of the 35th Council of Foreign Ministers of the OIC, held in Kampala, Republic of Uganda, on 18-20 June, 2008, on the Situation in Cyprus, in particular the decision to hold the Forum on Tourism

Development in the Islamic World, to be held in Turkish Cypriot State, from 27 to 29 October, 2008. In this context, **calls upon** all Member States and all OIC Institutions to actively participate in this Forum.

25. **Notes with appreciation** the report submitted by the SESRIC on the situation and development of international tourism in OIC Member States, and **commends** the new format of the report and the analysis of the statistical data on the major indicators on tourism provided by the Centre in the country profiles section of the report.

26. **Thanks** the SESRIC for its invaluable contributions to the various OIC expert group meetings and seminars on tourism with research studies on the subject that help Member States identify each other's potentials and needs, as well as for the valuable recommendations for tourism development at the national level as well as at the OIC cooperation level.

27. **Urges** the SESRIC to continue its follow-up of the developments of the sector of tourism in Member States and submit a report thereon to the forthcoming session, and **invites** the Member States to provide the Centre with the relevant and updated statistics and information on the tourism sector in their countries.

28. **Takes note with appreciation** of the efforts made by the SESRIC for organising training workshop on tourism statistics in Ankara on 16-18 June 2008, in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Turkey, the Turkish Statistical Institute and the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), and **commends** the valuable experience provided to the trainees by the experts on various important issues of tourism statistics, such as the new concepts and definitions, data collection and consistency of border, accommodation and domestic tourism statistics.

29. **Encourages** the SESRIC to continue organising of various workshops and training course on different aspects of tourism in collaboration with relative national and international organisations, particularly with the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO).

30. **Thanks** the ICDT for its efforts to organize a Tourism Fairs, in cooperation with the IDB and the ICCI, in Member States, once every two years, and **thanks** the Government of the Republic of Turkey for hosting the First Tourism Fair on 24-26 November 2005 in Istanbul. In this regard, the Conference **welcomes** the offers of the Republic of Lebanon, the Arab Republic of Egypt, Syrian Arab Republic and Islamic Republic of Iran to host the Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Tourism Fairs in 2009, 2010, 2012 and 2014, respectively and **calls upon** the Member States to actively participate in the Tourism Fairs.

31. **Calls on** Member States to take part in the multilateral trade negotiations of the WTO related to services in particular the tourism sector, and assess the impacts of their outcome on their national economies.

32. **Notes with appreciation** the study submitted by the ICDT on tourism activity in OIC Member States and the on-going negotiations on services in particular tourism sector within the World Trade Organization, **and commends** the efforts put in by the ICDT to prepare this study.

33. **Adopts** the draft resolution No. OIC/6-ICTM/2008/DRES/RP on "the Sustainable Development of tourism in a cross-Border network of Parks and Reserves in West Africa".

34. **Reaffirms** its support for the regional project and calls upon OIC Member States and institutions to provide their financial and technical support for the project.
35. **Requests** the Project Follow-up Committee to continue to provide its support for the Member States; and notes, with satisfaction, that the ICDT and SESRIC ensure, with great efficiency, the coordination of the project at the OIC level.
36. **Notes** with interest the importance that the Central African States Member of the OIC attach to the protection of the forest ecosystem of the Congo basin, 2nd world forestry reserve after Amazonia.
37. **Expresses** its support to the sub-regional project for the development of ecotourism in the cross-border protected areas of the Central African States members of the OIC,
38. **Agrees**, in principle, to the provision of technical and financial assistance to the Ecole Sous-regionale d'hotellerie et de Tourisme of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC) of which Cameroon, Gabon, Chad and Central African Republic are members;
39. **Requests** these States to submit to the OIC Secretary General feasibility studies on these development projects.
40. **Thanks** the Islamic University of Technology (IUT) for organizing the Seminar on Development of E-Tourism Technology in Islamic Countries, in cooperation with the Republic of Azerbaijan, as Chairman of the 5th ICTM, held at the IUT headquarters in Dhaka, Bangladesh, on 22-24 April 2008, and **appreciates** IDB for contributing to the financing of this Seminar.
41. **Takes note** of the various activities of the Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA) aimed to widely project the image of Islamic Cultural Heritage by raising more awareness and encouraging tourism developing activities.
42. **Thanks** the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for hosting and organizing the International Conference on Tourism and Traditional Crafts in Islamic Countries and associated activities, held in Riyadh, from 16 to 23 Shawwal 1427 H (7-14 November 2006), in collaboration with the Research Center for Islamic History, Arts and Culture (IRCICA).
43. **Notes with appreciation** the successful development of the "Al-Quds/Jerusalem 2015 Program" organized jointly with Al-Quds university and other universities from Turkey, Italy, USA and Bosnia and Herzegovina, including a seminar (25 November 2006), two study missions to Al-Quds/Jerusalem (June 2007 and January 2008) and a workshop (12 June 2008), in which the final report will be published in September 2008.
44. **Takes note** of the efforts which have been made by the IRCICA towards establishing the "Prince Sultan ibn Salman Islamic Architectural Heritage Database" on Islamic monuments and sites which was launched under the generous initiative of HRH Prince Sultan ibn Salman, Secretary General of the Supreme Commission for Tourism, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, aiming to register and elaborate Islamic architectural heritage around the world, and by that way, to contribute to their preservation, promotion worldwide and economic development of the area of properties. **Calls on** Member States to contribute all relevant data to IRCICA to feed the Database Project.
45. **Commends** the Agreement of Cooperation signed between the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Turkey, IRCICA and UNESCO for establishing the Süleymaniye Book

Hospital Project which comes within the context of the cooperation of IRCICA with UNESCO in its capacity as a focal point for OIC-UN cooperation in the field of arts, crafts and promotion of heritage.

46. **Takes note** of the efforts been made by the IRCICA towards organizing the international Congress on Employment of Traditional Industries within the new architectural projects planned to be held in Tunis between 27 and 31 October 2008 in collaboration with the Ministry of Trade and Handicraft and the Ministry of Culture and Heritage Preservation of the Tunisian Republic.

47. **Takes note** of the efforts been made by the IRCICA to publish an album of historical photographs of Makkah and Madinah chosen from its archive collection of the Yildiz Palace albums.

48. **Notes with appreciation** the preparation made by the IRCICA for publishing a historical album of Al-Quds and Palestine to include annotated reproductions of historical photographs from the late 19th century and to be published in English, Arabic and Turkish.

49. **Notes with appreciation** the preparation taken by IRCICA to organize the second conference on al-Quds during the Ottoman Era planned to be held in cooperation with the Syrian Ministry of Culture in Damascus in March 2009.

50. **Notes with gratitude** the generous donation of H.H. Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and Emir of Dubai for establishing an electronic library at IRCICA, which were sources of encouragement for the Centre.

51. **Expresses** its thanks and appreciation to all the Member States for the moral and material support they are extending to IRCICA, thus enabling it to fulfill its mission.

52. **Encourages** the efforts made by Member States to continue preserving their cultural and architectural heritage through measures, including surveying and registration of cultural and architectural heritage sites and exchange of information.

53. **Thanks** the IDB for its efforts in developing and financing supportive infrastructure that play an important role in strengthening the tourism sector within the member countries, as well as supporting the related tourism activities within the framework of the OIC.

54. **Calls on** the IDB group to extend financial assistance for a comprehensive feasibility study on reviewing Bangladesh's performance in tourism development as a LDC over previous fifteen years with an aim of ultimately formulating a strategic marketing plan under the aegis of the OIC Framework for Development and Cooperation in the Domain of Tourism between OIC Member States.

55. **Requests** the IDB to consider developing some mechanisms and ways that will enable it to contribute developing tourism infrastructure in accordance with the Bank's objectives and priorities and in compliance with the laws and regulations that govern its work.

56. **Invites** financing institutions and bodies and the private sector in OIC Member States to join efforts to attain and establish the aspired goals, with a view to empowering the sector of tourism to achieve the economic and social development of our States. In this regard:

- a. **Recommends** that the Member States negotiate amongst themselves regional and national projects in the field of tourism. To be more attractive, these projects should concern two or several countries and cover such fields as those related to training, transport, communication and issuance of visas.
- b. **Encourages** international organizations, including the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), concerned OIC institutions and Arab Tourism Organization to support these regional and national projects as they can contribute significantly to the economic development of the Member States and to the alleviation of poverty.
- c. **Requests** international organizations, in particular the World Tourism Organization, and the OIC institutions, to extend their support to the Member States in order to set up higher institutions of training in the field of tourism to equip our countries with efficient human resources for a high quality tourism.

57. **Calls** for more active participation of the private sector in Member States in the field of tourism development.

58. **Endorses** the efforts of ICCI aimed at encouraging the private sector to play its due role in promoting tourism and takes note of the initiative of ICCI to establish an International Tourism Company.

59. **Takes note** of the proposal of the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry to organize in future on a regular basis Private Sector Forums on Tourism.

60. **Endorses** the implementation of the project on “Promotion of Youth Tourism in the OIC countries” developed by the Islamic Conference Youth Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation (ICYF-DC); **calls upon** the Member States to extend their full support to the ICYF-DC for the successful implementation of the project and **requests** the General Secretariat to assist with promotion of the project within the framework of the OIC cooperation with relevant international organizations.

61. **Calls** for facilitating the movement of media people among the Member States in order to utilize the media to serve the purposes of tourism, **calls on** media to participate more actively in the promotion of tourism in Member States in line with Kuala Lumpur Programme of Action and paragraph 1 of this Resolution.

62. **Welcomes** the preparation by the Republic of Turkey, OIC General Secretariat and OIC concerned institutions of a Framework for Development and Cooperation in the Domain of Tourism between OIC Member States and **expresses** appreciation to the Government of Turkey and the Secretary General of the OIC for the preparation of this Framework.

63. **Endorses** the Framework for Development and Cooperation in the Domain of tourism between OIC Member States (2008-2018) and **invites** Member States and OIC institutions to contribute to the effective implementation of this Framework.

64. **Decides** to set up a coordination committee in charge of boosting and coordinating the implementation of the Framework for Development and Cooperation in the Domain of Tourism between OIC Member States.

65. **Designates** the following OIC Member States to be members of the Coordination committee for the implementation of the Development and Cooperation in the Domain of Tourism between OIC Member States.

Chairman = Republic of Turkey

Members = Republic of Cameroon and
Republic of Senegal (Representing the African Group)

Arab Republic of Egypt and
Republic of Tunisia (Representing the Arab Group)

Republic of Azerbaijan and
Malaysia (Representing the Asian Group)

State of Palestine as Permanent Member

Arab Republic of Syria, Chairman of the 6th ICTM

Islamic Republic of Iran as future Chairman of 7th ICTM

The Secretary General of the OIC or his Representative.

66. **Concurs** that the mandate of the Member States in the Coordination Committee will be four years renewable. **It was also agreed** that representatives of concerned OIC Subsidiary organs, Specialized and affiliated institutions will participate to the meeting of the Coordination Committee.

67. **Mandates** the Coordination Committee to prepare plans and programmes in order to ensure the implementation of the Development and Cooperation Framework between OIC Member States in the Domain of Tourism, taking into account the said document and the remarks and proposals, submitted by the different delegations during the consideration of the issue.

68. **Mandates** the Coordination Committee to conduct an evaluation of the implementation of the Development and Cooperation Framework in the Domain of Tourism, every two years and submit a report thereon to the Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers, through the Secretary General.

69. **Appreciates** the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran to host the Seventh Session of ICTM in 2010, and invites the Member States to actively participate in the Conference.

70. **Expresses** its profound gratitude to H.E. Mr. Bashar Al-Asad, President of the Syrian Arab Republic, for kindly patronizing the Conference, and for his inspirational support and guidance provided to the Conference.

71. **Further expresses** its deep gratitude to the government and people of the Syrian Arab Republic for the warm welcome and the generous hospitality extended to the delegations, as well as for all the arrangements made to ensure the success of the 6th ICTM.

72. **Congratulates** H.E. Prof. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Secretary General of the OIC for his brilliant reelection as Secretary General of the OIC and **expresses** its thanks and appreciations

for his outstanding support for the successful organisation of the Conference, as well as the implementation of the earlier resolutions of the ICTM.

73. **Requests** the OIC Secretary General to implement this resolution and report on its implementation to the next ICTM.
