

**REPORT OF THE FIFTH SESSION OF THE  
ISLAMIC CONFERENCE OF TOURISM MINISTERS**

**BAKU – REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN**

**18-19 Sha'ban 1427H**

**11-12 SEPTEMBER 2006**

1. The Meeting of the Fifth Session of the Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers was held in Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan on 18-19 Sha'ban 1427H (11-12 September 2006).

2. The Meeting was attended by the following Member States:

- Republic of Azerbaijan
- Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
- State of the United Arab Emirates
- Republic of Indonesia
- Republic of Uzbekistan
- Republic of Uganda
- Islamic Republic of Iran
- Islamic Republic of Pakistan
- Kingdom of Bahrain
- Brunei Darussalam
- People's Republic of Bangladesh
- Republic of Turkey
- Republic of Togo
- Republic of Tunisia
- People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
- Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
- Republic of Senegal
- Republic of Sudan
- Syrian Arab Republic
- Republic of Iraq
- Republic of Gambia
- Republic of Guinea
- Guinea-Bissau
- State of Palestine
- State of Qatar
- Republic of Kazakhstan
- Republic of Cameroon
- State of Kuwait
- Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
- Republic of Maldives
- Republic of Mali
- Malaysia
- Arab Republic of Egypt
- Kingdom of Morocco
- Islamic Republic of Mauritania
- Republic of Yemen

3. The following representatives of the OIC General Secretariat, Subsidiary Organs, Specialized and Affiliated Institutions took part in the meeting:

- OIC General Secretariat.
- Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRTCIC).
- Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA).
- Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT).
- Islamic Development Bank (IDB).
- The Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI).
- The Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO).
- Islamic Conference Youth Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation (ICYF-DC).

4. The Secretary General of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) also attended the meeting.

5. The list of participants is attached in **Annex-I**.

6. The meeting started with a recitation of verses from the Holy Qur'an.

7. In his opening statement His Excellency President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev welcomed the delegations participating to the Conference and reiterated the support of Azerbaijan to the OIC and to joint Islamic action. In this context, His Excellency Aliyev made reference to the successful meeting of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Islamic Conference of the Foreign Ministers (ICFM) which was held in Baku on 19-21 June 2006. His Excellency also referred to the launching, at the opening ceremony at the 33<sup>rd</sup> ICFM of the OIC Ten Year Programme of Action which was adopted by the Third Extraordinary Islamic Summit Conference held in Makkah Al-Mukarramah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in December 2005. The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan expressed his appreciation to the Secretary General of the OIC for his leadership and for his untiring efforts in the restructuring and reinvigorating this organization so that it could face the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

The President underlined the need to strengthen economic and commercial cooperation among OIC Member States. In this context he called for the promotion of trade among the Member States and particularly the promotion of tourism which will contribute to the development of OIC countries and the improvement of living conditions of their population. President Aliyev highlighted the vast potential which exists among OIC Member States in the domain of tourism. In this regard, he stressed the potential of tourism in Azerbaijan and reiterated that his government is ready to cooperate with other OIC Member States for the development of their potential in the area of tourism. The President of Azerbaijan reiterated his condemnation of the aggression of Armenia against Azerbaijan with destruction of historical Islamic heritage, including mosques, ethnic cleansing and killing of thousands of innocent people. In concluding, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan reiterated his support to joint Islamic action for the benefit of the OIC Member States as well as the Muslim communities in non-OIC Member States. The Statement of President Ilham Aliyev is attached in **Annex II**.

8. In his capacity as Chairman of the Fourth Session of the Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers, His Excellency Ousmane Masseck Ndiaye, Minister of Tourism and Air Transport of the Republic of Senegal, delivered a speech in which he expressed his thanks to the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan for hosting the Fifth Session of the ICTM. His Excellency recalled in his speech the progress report on the implementation of the resolutions of the Fourth Session of the ICTM prepared by the Republic of Senegal in collaboration with the OIC General Secretariat. He further emphasized the importance of achieving sustainable development in the tourism industry and the growing contribution of this industry to the economies of the OIC Member States, while stressing the need to reactivate intra-OIC tourism and implementation OIC Ten Year Programme of Action. The statement of the Minister is attached in **Annex III**.

9. His Excellency Prof. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, OIC Secretary General, made an opening address in which he expressed his gratitude to the Government of Azerbaijan for hosting the Fifth Session of the ICTM and also 33<sup>rd</sup> Session of the ICFM, commending the contribution of His Excellency President Ilham Aliyev which reflects interest in and support to the OIC's activities. His Excellency stressed that tourism has become one of the most important sectors of the world economy, for it constitutes an efficient tool to fight poverty and improve the standard of living of the people through creation of job opportunities and generation of income.

His Excellency highlighted the importance of ensuring the implementation of the OIC Ten Year Programme of Action adopted at the Third Extraordinary Session of the Islamic Summit Conference. The OIC Secretary General further stressed the important role of tourism in promoting cooperation and solidarity among OIC Member States on the one hand and between them and the other countries of the world on the other, which will contribute positively to developing dialogue and understanding among various civilizations. The statement of the OIC Secretary General is attached in **Annex-IV**.

10. His Excellency Mr. Francisco Franjiali, Secretary General of the UNWTO, made a statement in which he laid emphasis on the role of tourism in achieving economic progress, considering it an important factor for rapprochement among people. He expressed the UNWTO's willingness to offer necessary support to the OIC Member States. The statement of the Secretary General of the UNWTO is attached in **Annex-V**.

11. The Meeting elected the following Members of the Bureau:
- Chairman : Republic of Azerbaijan
  - Vice Chairman : Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
  - Vice Chairman : Republic of Uganda
  - Vice Chairman : State of Palestine
  - Rapporteur : Republic of Senegal
12. The Meeting adopted its Agenda and Work Programme are attached in **Annex – VI & VII, respectively.**
13. The Minister of Tourism of the Republic of Senegal (in his capacity as Chairman of the 4<sup>th</sup> Session of the ICTM) presented the report on the activities and developments under taken since the Fourth Session of the ICTM, held in Dakar, Republic of Senegal, on 28-30 March 2006. The Report of the Minister is attached in **Annex -VIII.**
14. The Chairman of the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) of the 5<sup>th</sup> Session of the ICTM presented the report on the SOM, held in Baku, on 9-10 September 2006. The meeting adopted the report of the SOM which is attached in **Annex-IX.**
15. In their presentations, the delegations expressed their deep gratitude for the keynote speech delivered by His Excellency Mr. Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and considered it as an official guideline document for cooperation among the OIC Member States. The Head of delegations thanked the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan for hosting the Conference as well as for the initiatives it took to ensure its success. They also expressed his gratitude for the warm welcome and generous hospitality extended to participants. The Ministers and other Heads of Delegation made statement in which they highlighted their national development policies and plans for the development of tourism and submitted proposals with the view to fostering intra-OIC cooperation in this domain.
16. The Conference listened with keen interest to the report submitted by H.E. the Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the illegal exploitation of natural resources and the destruction of cultural and historical monuments in the Azerbaijani territories occupied by Armenia. In this connection, it reaffirmed Resolution 33/9-POL adopted by the 33<sup>rd</sup> ICFM, condemning the destruction of Islamic cultural and historical monuments in this region and in all Islamic States, and requested the Chairman of the Conference to submit a report thereon to the forthcoming session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers.
17. The Conference reaffirmed the need to strengthen economic and commercial cooperation among the OIC Member States generally, and particularly in the area of tourism. In this context, critical momentum can be gained in achieving this objectives by encouraging the development of intra-OIC tourism and giving priority to joint regional tourism project within the framework and spirit of the Makkah Summit and the OIC Ten Year Programme of Action to face the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. This will stimulate the flow of tourists across OIC countries as tours operator will offer more and more attractive packages. The Conference reaffirmed the view that this will need an integrated approach including improving transport and communication services and facilitating visa formalities.
18. In this context, the conference welcomed the project on Sustainable Development of Tourism within a Cross-border Network of Park reserves and Sanctuaries across West Africa, which involves nine member states. The Conference reaffirmed its support to this regional project and appeal for member states, OIC and international institutions to provide necessary political and financial support for the speedy and effective implementation of this regional programme.
19. The Conference reaffirmed the need to develop partnership between OIC Member States for the development of tourism and in this context reaffirms the importance of the preparation of a strategic plan involving government and private sectors. This strategic plan will encourage entrepreneurial-ship and convergence of views in conformity with the OIC plan of Action and the OIC Ten year Programme of Action. The conference further underlined the need to ensure human resources development in the area of tourism and hospitality management.
20. The Conference welcomed the offer made by the Republic of Turkey to host an Expert Group Meeting on Tourism Development during the first quarter of 2007, and thanked the Republic of Turkey for this offer and invited all Member States and concerned OIC Institutions to actively contribute to the preparation of the Strategic Plan for Tourism Development in OIC. The Conference requested COMCEC in coordination with the OIC General Secretariat and other concerned institutions to undertake necessary measures for the preparation of this strategic plan which should be in harmony with the OIC Plan of Action to Strengthen Economic and Commercial Cooperation among Member States and the OIC Ten-Year Programme of Action. The following items, among others, will be placed on the meeting agenda: Tourism Research and Training; Tourism Marketing and Promotion; Tourism Facilitation; Enhancement of Air Transport Service among Member States. The Conference underlined the need to strengthen the capacity of the General

Secretariat to ensure effective follow-up and implementation of all decisions of the ICTM and other fora related to tourism and to contribute effectively in the preparation of the Strategic Plan.

21. The Conference reaffirmed its support for the Regional Project initiated by 9 Member States from West Africa, namely, Benin, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Sierra Leone, concerning the preparation of a feasibility study on the creation of a Network of Cross-border Parks and Reserves in West Africa. The Conference further notes with satisfaction that the UNWTO has made a financial contribution to this study, that the SESRTCIC and ICDT have been designated as coordinators of the Project, and that a Memorandum of Understanding has been drawn up by the stakeholders. In this connection, the Conference appealed to IDB to consider financing the proposal submitted to it in order to explore which components it can finance according to its rules and regulations, and calls on the other financial institutions and potential donors to extend the necessary support.

22. The Conference thanked 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 appreciated the reports submitted by them in following up of the actions carried out in their respective fields.

23. The Conference encouraged OIC Member States to negotiate and sign bilateral or/and multilateral agreements on Tourism between themselves. The Conference decided that Tourism Fairs, Food Festivals or meeting of Tour Operators will be organized on the margin of each Conference of the OIC Tourism Ministers. The Conference mandated the Secretary General to propose in the context of the Strategic Plan for Tourism Development a framework agreement for tourism development between OIC Member States.

24. The Conference welcomed the signing of an Agreement between the OIC and UNWTO and calls for the development of an cooperation between OIC and regional/international organizations for the development of tourism in OIC Member States. The Conference expressed satisfaction for the role played by the OIC Institutions for the development of tourism in the OIC Member States and call on them to continue extending all necessary assistance in this domain to the Member States and to the General Secretariat for the preparation of tourism development in the OIC Member States and the Framework Agreement between OIC Member States for Tourism Development.

25. The Conference reiterated its call to the Member States to invite the Palestinian tourism sector to participate in the tourism fairs to be held in Member States and calls upon them to establish a special fund for the support of the severely affected Palestinian tourism sector.

26. The Conference strongly condemned the destructive Israeli aggressions perpetrated against Lebanon and their devastating effects on the Lebanese people and its economic and social institutions and infrastructure and affirmed its total solidarity with the Lebanese people in its adversity. It called upon Member States and OIC Institutions to contribute to the reconstruction of Lebanon, mainly in the tourism sector and archeological sites.

27. The Conference supported Iraq's effort at the international fora to establish an international fund to build Iraq's Great Museum and the Islamic Books and Manuscripts House. The Conference requested to help Iraq recover its stolen antiquities and abide by relevant international resolutions, including Security Council Resolution 1483 of 22 May 2003 on stolen Iraqi cultural and archeological property. It further supported Iraq in developing the tourism and antiquities sector and urge Member States to provide expertise and grants for training and scholarships in the tourism and antiquities sector. The Conference expressed its condemnation and indignation of all terrorist acts against the Iraqi people, including those perpetrated in the name of Islam, as crimes against humanity, which are detrimental to the overall development in Iraq, including the tourism sector.

28. The Conference noted with satisfaction the noteworthy efforts made by the Secretary General in the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the Islamic Conferences of Tourism Ministers as well as other meetings organized by the OIC Member States and institutions in this field. As a result the Conference gave mandate to the Secretary General to follow up on the implementation of resolutions decided at the Conference.

29. The Conference further encouraged the Secretary General to carry on his efforts to make of tourism an important factor for the development of Member States, strengthening of their economic and commercial cooperation and for poverty reduction.

30. The Conference considered the Draft Resolution on Tourism Development, the Draft Resolution on the Republic of Iraq and the Draft Baku Declaration submitted by the Senior Officials Meeting in their final versions. After discussion, the Conference adopted the Resolutions and Baku Declaration after introducing amendments which are attached in **Annex- X, XI and XII, respectively.**

31. The Conference welcomed the offer of the Syrian Arab Republic to host the Sixth ICTM in 2008, and invites the Member States to actively participate in the Conference. The Conference took note of the interest of Brunei Darussalam to host the Seventh ICTM in 2010.

32. The Conference also welcomed the offer of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran to host the ministerial level tourism related events in their countries in 2007 and 2009, respectively.

33. The Conference expressed its profound gratitude to H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, for kindly patronizing the Conference, and for his guidance-giving speech he delivered at the opening ceremony.

34. The Conference further expressed its gratitude to the government and people of the Republic of Azerbaijan 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 conference.

35. At the Closing Session the Conference decided to send a message of thanks to His Excellency Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The text of the message is attached in **Annex-XIII**).