

**RESOLUTION ON TOURISM DEVELOPMENT
ADOPTED BY THE FIFTH SESSION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE OF TOURISM MINISTERS**

BAKU, REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

**18-19 SHA'BAN 1427H
(11-12 SEPTEMBER 2006)**

The Fifth Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers (ICTM) held from 18-19 Sha'ban 1427H (11-12 September 2006), in Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan, Recalling Resolution No 28/10-E (IS) of the Tenth Islamic Summit Conference held in Putrajaya, Malaysia, on 20 and 21 Shaaban 1424H (16-17 October 2003);

Further recalling Resolution No 17/33-E of the 33rd Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM), held in Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan, from 23 to 25 Jumada Ala-Awwal 1427H (19 to 21 June 2006);

Recalling also Resolution No. 3/33-C "On the Islamic Conference Youth Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation" adopted by the 33rd session of the ICFM held on 23 to 25 Jumada Ala-Awwal 1427H (19-21 June 2006) in Baku, Azerbaijan;

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;

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 (SESRTCIC), 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 to the Fifth Session of ICTM held in Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan, on 4-6 July 2006, and *endorses* the specific actions taken by some Member States at individual or collective levels.

3. *Thanks* the Republic of Senegal for following up on the resolutions adopted by the Fourth Session of the Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers, and for submitting an exhaustive report thereon.

4. *Thanks* the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting the Meeting of Experts on the implementation of OIC Plan of Action in the area of tourism held in Tehran on 11-14 July 2005 and *also thanks* the IDB for sponsoring this meeting.

5. Thanks the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco for hosting the workshop on “The Role of Tourism in Promotion of Economic Cooperation among the OIC Member States” organized by ICDT in collaboration with IDB and other OIC and international institutions on 14-15 June 2005 in Casablanca.
6. 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.
7. Invites the international community to establish greater understanding among all cultures on the basis of mutual respect to the individualities of each people.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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 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, (WTO) and OIC institutions to support these regional projects as they can contribute significantly to the economic development of the Member States and to the alleviation of poverty.
 - c. Recommends the convening of an Expert Group meeting as soon as possible for the purpose of identifying these regional projects.
11. 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.
12. The Conference commended the action plans of the ISESCO which contain programmes in favor of cultural tourism and its development. It expresses its appreciation of the results achieved by these programmes, which have contributed actively to the enhancement of coordination and consultation on the policies adopted by the Member States in the sectors of tourism, cultural heritage and handicrafts, as well as on the training of human resources, promotion of training centers and the exchange of experiences in this domain. The Conference called upon Member States to benefit from the ISESCO programme to celebrate and support the capitals of Islamic culture as inputs for the promotion, marketing and advancement of tourism in the Islamic world.
13. Calls for more active participation of the private sector in Member States in the field of tourism development, including participation in tourism fairs to be organised on the sidelines of the sessions of the Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers.
14. 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**. It further invites the Member States and relevant institutions to support the proposed Company and also calls for the adoption of an open visa for the movement of businessmen among the OIC Member States.
15. Thanks ICDT for its efforts to organize, in cooperation with IDB, ICCI and other private sector institutions concerned, a Tourism Fair in the OIC Member States once every two years.

In this connection, the Conference thanks the Government of the Republic of Turkey for hosting the First Tourism Fair on 24-26 November 2005 in Istanbul, welcomes the offers made by the Governments of the Republic of Lebanon, the Arab Republic of Egypt and Syrian Arab Republic to host the Second, Third and Fourth Fairs respectively; and calls upon Member States and private sector to actively participate in the Second Tourism Fair of the OIC Member States to be held in Beirut in Biel Centre, Republic of Lebanon in June 22 to 24, 2007. Also expresses thanks to the Government of Lebanon for its continued effort to meet all the conditions required for the success of the Second Fair of Tourism at the date and venue indicated above, despite the difficult circumstances recently witnessed by the country.

16. Calls on Member States to take an active part in the food festival that will be organized in Kish Island, Islamic Republic of Iran, in December 2006.

17. Reiterates its call for 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.

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

19. Notes with appreciation the paper submitted by the SESRTCIC on the situation and development of international tourism in OIC Member States, and commends the rich statistical booklet on tourism in Member States issued by the Centre.

20. Thanks the SESRTCIC for its invaluable contributions to the organization of various workshops and expert group meetings on tourism in such a manner that helps member States identify each other's potentials, including the establishment of continued cooperation among them in this field.

21. Urges the SESRTCIC 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 respond to the relevant questionnaires circulated to them by the SESRTCIC noting that the rate of response to its questionnaires has been below expectation.

22. Reaffirms its support for the Regional Project initiated by 9 member countries, 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. 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, appeals to IDB to consider the financing proposal submitted to it in order to explore which fields it can finance according to its rules and regulations, and calls on the other financial institutions and potential donors to extend the necessary support.

23. Commends the project to build a database on the Islamic architectural heritage, launched through the generous initiative of HRH Prince Sultan Bin Salman Bin Abdulaziz, Secretary General of the Supreme Commission for Tourism of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, who presented the idea during the Third Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers, held in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which was approved by the Fourth Conference held in Dakar; thanks IRCICA for the initial conception of the project; praises the personal generous initiative of HRH Prince Sultan Bin Salman Bin Abdulaziz, Chairman of the Heritage Foundation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, to provide funding for the Islamic Heritage Database project; and mandates IRCICA to take the necessary measures to implement the project in coordination with His Royal Highness and the Heritage Foundation.

24. Expresses its appreciation of the accomplishments of the IRCICA and commends the progress made in the fields of tourism development and cultural heritage and notes with appreciation that the Centre realised many relevant projects in this regard;

25. Praises the initiative of the IRCICA in Documenting and Recording the Archeological Sites and Historical Monuments in Islamic Countries and use of the Geographic Information System (GIS) to build up a database on Islamic architectural heritage; and urges Member States to support the project through providing the necessary funding as well as any available information on their architectural sites and landmarks;
26. Praises the launching by IRCICA of a comprehensive program of seminars and workshops to be devoted to the cultural and architectural heritage of Al-Quds and Palestine to be organized jointly with the University of Al-Quds;
27. Takes note with appreciation of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's confirmation of organizing the International Conference on Tourism and Handicrafts from 16 to 23 Shawwal 1427 H (7-13 November 2006) in Riyadh in collaboration between the Supreme Commission for Tourism of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Research Center for Islamic History, Arts and Culture (IRCICA); and urges all Member States to participate actively in the Conference and the accompanying events.
28. Invites the Member States to communicate to the OIC General Secretariat the steps taken to implement the Charter for the Preservation of Architectural Heritage, which was adopted by the fourth session of the Conference, within a period of six months as of now.
29. 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.
30. 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.
31. Commends ISESCO's Program to celebrate the Islamic cultural capitals and notes with appreciation the activities and events organized in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on the occasion of the selection of Makka Al Mukarama as Cultural capital of the Islamic World for year 2005.
32. 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.
33. Requests also all relevant OIC institutions to include an item on "Promotion of youth tourism in the OIC countries" in their activities, whenever applicable;
34. Requests the IDB to consider assisting the ICYF-DC in implementation of this project by supporting the capacity building process for the establishment of the networks suggested by ICYF-DC within the Member States, as well as consider providing support for holding the first networking meeting of national youth organizations in November 2006 in Baku, Azerbaijan;
35. Condemns all Israeli actions and endeavors to judaize Al-Quds Al-Sharif, as well as settlements and the construction of the Separation Wall around the City, and stresses the need to preserve its Arab and Muslim identity and maintain it as the capital of the State of Palestine.
36. Expresses concern over the devastating effects of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories on the Palestinian people and their economic infrastructure particularly the tourism sectors; strongly condemns Israeli aggression, the persistent settlement policy, and the construction of the separation wall; and invites Member States to provide every possible material and technical assistance to Palestine; in this connection, encourages tourism offices and institutions in OIC Member States to cooperate with Palestinian tourism offices and institutions in support of the Palestinian tourism sector.
37. The Conference 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.

38. 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.
39. Expresses the view that acts of terrorism hinder the development and promotion of tourism and condemns them in all their manifestations.
40. Also calls for the elimination of discriminatory measures against Muslim travellers.
41. Welcomes the offer of the Republic of Turkey to host an Experts Group Meeting on Tourism Development during the First Quarter 2007 and invites the Member States to actively participate in the meeting.
42. Appreciates the offer of the Syrian Arab Republic to host the Sixth Session of the Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers (ICTM) in 2008, and invites the Member States to actively participate in the Conference. Also appreciates the interest of Brunei Darussalam to host the Seventh Session of ICTM in 2010. Welcomes 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.
43. Expresses 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.
44. Further expresses 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.
45. Requests the OIC Secretary General to implement this resolution and report on its implementation to the next ICTM.