

BAKU DECLARATION

ADOPTED BY THE FIFTH SESSION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE OF TOURISM MINISTERS

18-19 SHA'BAN 1427H
(SEPTEMBER 11-12, 2006)
BAKU, REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

We, the Ministers in charge of Tourism of the Member States of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Heads of Delegation participating in the Fifth Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers held in Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan on 18-19 Sha'ban 1427H (September 11-12, 2006),

Inspired by the Makkah Al-Mukarramah Declaration adopted by the Third Islamic Summit Conference held in Makkah Al-Mukarramah/Taif, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in January 1981,

Taking note of the OIC Plan of Action to Strengthen Economic Cooperation among the Member States adopted by the 3rd Islamic Summit Conference, held in Makkah Al-Mukarramah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in January 1981, the revised version of the Plan adopted by the 7th Islamic Summit Conference held in Casablanca, Kingdom of Morocco, in December 1994, as well as the relevant resolutions and declarations adopted by the Islamic Summit Conferences and the Islamic Conferences of Foreign Ministers aimed at strengthening cooperation among the Member States in the area of tourism,

Reaffirming our commitment to the implementation of the Kuala Lumpur Programme of Action for the Development and Promotion of Tourism among the Member States adopted at the Second Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in October 2001, as well as of resolutions and declarations of the Islamic Conferences of Tourism Ministers,

Being committed to policy of openness and close cooperation with the world's relevant international organizations operating in the field of tourism and cultural exchanges, such as UNWTO and UNESCO,

Reiterating that Islam is a religion of Peace and advocates such principles as appreciation of human values, tolerance with regard to religion and races and peaceful coexistence of all nations,

Encouraged by the continued growth in the world tourism industry, which if sustainably developed and managed can serve as an efficient mean for poverty eradication and achievement of Millennium Development Goals by the Member States,

Recognizing the strong interlinkage between tourism and many other sectors of national economies, as well as the vital role the tourism can play in integrating the economies of the Member States,

Admitting the increasing interconnection between tourism and diplomacy and the vital role the latter can play in promoting tourism potential of the Member States,

Mindful that terrorism, conflicts, territorial occupation, natural disasters, epidemics and economic crises seriously harm the economic development and negatively affect the tourism potential of the Member States,

Also mindful of the important role of tourism for intercultural exchanges, preservation and popularization of Islamic historical and cultural heritage, promotion of better knowledge and mutual understanding among civilizations, as well as the role the tourism can play in overall improvement of the image of Islam,

Hereby decide to:

1. Incorporate the tourism development in the national development plans of the Member States in order to ensure the peoples' right to travel and to leisure recognized by the international community.
2. Join efforts towards increasing the tourism flow among the Member States and development of transport routes and strengthening cooperation in multimodal destination services in this regard.
3. Create favourable environment for and elaborate investment projects of intra- and inter-regional scope in the sector of tourism and related activities and fulfill their realization, inter alia, through wide dissemination of

necessary information for broader attraction of relevant OIC and international financial institutions and private sector for partnership in their implementation.

4. Call upon the Member States to actively participate in tourism fairs held in OIC countries in order to promote development of the tourism market.
5. Pay special attention to policy of promotion and development of youth tourism, including establishment of national committees on youth tourism in the Member States, and creation of necessary affordable facilities towards this end.
6. Strengthen policies for the development of rural, ecological, cultural and other types of tourism that would embrace the principles of sustainable tourism, contribute to conservation and protection of natural and cultural heritage, and serve economic and social development of and poverty reduction in local communities of the Member States.
7. Implement projects aimed at sustainable tourism development of coastal and other areas in Member States.
8. Establish and implement policies at all levels aimed at sustainable human resource development in the area of tourism and promote greater exchanges among the relevant educational institutions of the Member States.
9. Call upon the non-OIC countries to facilitate visa issuance procedures in order to serve development of tourism and cultural exchanges, which are indispensable elements for better mutual understanding and sustainable dialogue among civilizations.
10. Condemn any manifestation of terrorism and aggressive separatism and stress the importance of expeditious solution of conflicts, all of which have detrimental impact on tourism and on the exercise of peoples' right for leisure and travel, in accordance with the norms and principles of international law, particularly those related to the territorial integrity and inviolability of internationally recognized borders of a state.
11. Strongly condemn the illegal exploitation of natural resources and the destruction of cultural and historical monuments in the territories of Azerbaijan occupied by Armenia, as well as the deliberate destruction of Islamic cultural and historic monuments in the territory of Armenia.
12. Call upon the relevant OIC subsidiary, specialized and affiliated organs or institutions and invite the private sector to support the development of tourism for the sake of its greater contribution to economic and social development of the Member States.