

ICMT/1-2000/REP.1 FINAL

**REPORT OF THE MEETING OF  
THE FIRST ISLAMIC CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS OF TOURISM  
OF THE OIC MEMBER STATES  
ISFAHAN, ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN,  
5-6 Rajab 1421H (3-4 OCTOBER 2000)**

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1. The meeting of the First Islamic Conference of Ministers of Tourism of the OIC Member States was held in Isfahan, Islamic Republic of Iran, on 3-4 October, 2000 (5 - 6 Rajab, 1421H).
  
2. The meeting was attended by the following Member States:
  - Republic of Azerbaijan
  - State of Bahrain
  - People's Republic of Bangladesh
  - Brunei Darussalam
  - Arab Republic of Egypt
  - Republic of Guinea
  - Islamic Republic of Iran
  - Republic of Indonesia
  - Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
  - Republic of Kazakhstan
  - State of Kuwait
  - Kyrgyz Republic
  - Republic of Lebanon
  - Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriyah
  - Malaysia
  - Kingdom of Morocco
  - Republic of Mozambique
  - Sultanate of Oman
  - Islamic Republic of Pakistan
  - State of Qatar
  - Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
  - Republic of Senegal
  - Republic of Sierra Leone
  - Republic of Sudan
  - Syrian Arab Republic
  - Republic of Tajikistan
  - Republic of Turkmenistan
  - Republic of Turkey
  - Republic of Tunisia
  - United Arab Emirates
  - Republic of Yemen
  
3. The following state participated as observer:
  - Republic of Bosnia Herzegovina

4. The meeting was also attended by the representatives of the General Secretariat of the OIC and those of the following subsidiary organs and specialised as well as affiliated institutions of the OIC and of the other international organizations:
- Islamic Institute of Technology (IIT)
  - Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRTCIC)
  - Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA)
  - Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI).
  - World Tourism Organization(WTO)
  - Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO)

*A list of participants is attached as Annex-I (No. ICMT/1-2000/LIST).*

5. The inaugural session began with recitation of the verses from the Holy Qur'an.
6. At the inaugural session, a message from the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, H.E. Mr. Seyyed Mohammad Khatami, was read out. In his message, the President drew attention to the call on the faithful, in the holy Qur'an, to study the heavens and travel to other lands as a means to gain a better understanding of the world around us and stressed on the profoundly meaningful correlation between thought and civilization as well as travel and migration. Stressing the importance of the Conference, he said that it could promote on the one hand the culture of dialogue and open new frontiers of economic cooperation among the Member States on the other hand. He expressed the hope that the Conference would adopt recommendations that would provide mechanisms for the promotion of tourism with the Member States utilizing optimally its material capacities and spiritual heritage.

*A copy of the message of H.E. Mr. Seyyed Mohammad Khatami, the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, is attached as Annex-2 (No.ICMT/1-2000/IRAN/SP.2)*

7. Extending a hearty welcome to the delegations, the Governor General of the Isfahan province, H.E. Mr. Sayyed Jafar Mousavi, said that the Conference created an opportunity for the OIC Member States to undertake measures for the development of tourism and to strengthen the solidarity and better understanding among them. Referring to the dialogue among civilizations proposed by the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, he said that development of tourism in the OIC Member States could serve as an important vehicle for promoting this cause contributing to international peace and understanding.

*A copy of the statement by H.E. Sayyed Jafar Mousavi is attached as Annex-3 (No.ICMT/1-2000/IRAN/SP.1).*

8. H.E. Ambassador Thierno Nabika Diallo, Assistant Secretary General for Economic Affairs at the OIC General Secretariat, read out the statement of H.E. Dr. Azzedine Larakai, Secretary General of the OIC, who could not attend the meeting due to unavoidable circumstances. The Secretary General expressed his profound admiration for the abiding interest that H.E. the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran demonstrated in the activities of the OIC. Speaking on the increasing importance

of tourism as the most significant growth industry today, he said that it acquired added importance considering its role as a tool for promotion of transnational understanding, apart from the possibility of being an important source of earning for the OIC Member States. Drawing attention to the OIC Plan of Action to Strengthen Economic and Commercial Cooperation Among the Member States, which incorporates tourism as an area of cooperation, he said that it provided not only conceptual details on the matter but also elaborate programmes of action. He suggested that the Plan of Action could serve as the basis for the deliberation in the Conference and hoped that the Conference would undertake a comprehensive consideration of the subject leading to important conclusions.

*A copy of the Statement of the Secretary General is attached as Annex 4 (No. (No.ICMT/1-2000/SG/SP.1).*

9. The Secretary General of the World Tourism Organization, H.E. Mr. Francesco Frangialli, said that during the past fifty years tourism as a rapidly growing service sector galvanized economic development in many parts of the world. He said that the Conference represented a resolve on the part of the participating countries to join in the "tourism revolution" that was sweeping through all the regions of the world. He observed that the countries benefitting from this trend discovered that where tourism advanced, poverty retreated. He warned against irreversible deterioration of sites, over-use of natural resources, impairment of biodiversity, degradation of historic monuments and debasement of moral values that may result from tourism. Referring to the adoption of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism adopted last year, he said that it called for the sustainable development of tourism ensuring respect for the host communities and natural environment. He mentioned that many Member States of the OIC were among the first to encourage the unanimous adoption of the Code.

*A copy of the Statement of The Secretary General of the World Tourism Organization is attached as Annex No.5 (NO.ICMT/1-2000/WTO/SP.1)*

10. H.E. Dr. Mohajerani Ataollah Mohajerini, Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance of the Islamic Republic of Iran, spoke on the importance of tourism in promoting cultural exchanges and said that the OIC Member States were endowed with the necessary resources and potentials. Referring to the 7 per cent share of the OIC Member States in world tourism, he called for a strategy for the promotion of tourism in the OIC Member States seeking to identify the main obstacles to this goal. He also called for "high quality tourism" that ensures sustainable development and protection of natural and cultural heritage. He proposed that a permanent committee of the OIC Member States be formed to resolve all issues concerning tourism.

*A copy of the Statement of the Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance of the Islamic Republic of Iran is attached as annex 6 (No.ICMT/1-2000/IRAN/SP.3)*

11. The working session was opened by H.R.H. Prince Sultan bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Secretary General of the Supreme Commission for Tourism and leader of the delegation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (as the interim Chairman in his capacity of the representative of the country holding the Vice Chairmanship of the 27<sup>th</sup> Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers held in Kuala Lumpur).

12. The Conference unanimously elected H.E. Dr. Ataollah Mohajerani, Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance and head of the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran as the Chairman of the Conference, on the basis of a proposal by the interim Chairman. The other members of the Bureau were elected as follows:

*Vice-Chairmen:*                 *Republic of Lebanon*  
   *Republic of Mozambique*  
   *State of Palestine.*

*Rapporteur:*                    *Republic of Tajikistan.*

13. The Conference adopted its agenda and work programme contained in documents Nos. ICMT/1-2000/DA.1/FINAL and ICMT/1-2000/WP.1/FINAL, *copies of which are attached as Annex-7*
14. The Report of the meeting of the Senior Officials, which was held on 02 October, 2000, was presented by the Chairman of the meeting, H.E. Engineer Mohammad Moezzoddin, Deputy Minister and President of the Iran Touring and Tourism Organization. The report contained, inter alia, a reference to the following reports submitted for the consideration of the Conference:

- i) Tourism Development in the OIC Countries submitted by Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRTCIC)*
- ii) Tourism Related Services, OIC Member States and GATS submitted by Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT); and*
- iii) Tourism – An Instrument to Economic Progress submitted by Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI)*

*Copy of the report (No. ICMT/1-2000/SO/REP.1/FINAL) of the Meeting of the Senior Officials is attached as Annex-8.*

15. In the general debate, statements were made by the representatives of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Republic of Tajikistan, Syrian Arab Republic, Republic of Mozambique, Republic of Lebanon, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Sudan, Arab Republic of Egypt, Republic of Turkmenistan, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Republic of Yemen, Republic of Turkey, State of Bahrain and Kingdom of Morocco.
16. The general debate highlighted the following points:
- i) Tourism is an important area of cooperation for the Member States, which necessitated a strategy for collaborative action with a view to enlarging their share of the world tourism market.*
  - ii) The OIC Member States have wealth of natural and cultural heritage, which have potentials for diverse tourism products that may be developed through mutual cooperation among the Member States.*
  - iii) Apart from being an economic activity, tourism needs to be developed with an awareness of the necessity to protect the natural and cultural environment of the host communities in the OIC Member States.*

- iv) *It is essential that tourism should be developed with an awareness of the need for sustainable development. This awareness has been demonstrated by the OIC Member States in their initiatives in the adoption last year of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism by the World Tourism Organization.*
- v) *Tourism amongst the OIC countries is an important area, which leads to the promotion of solidarity of the Ummah. It, therefore, needs special attention with a view to facilitating transnational movement of tourists amongst the OIC Member States.*
- vi) *The private sector should play an important role in the development of tourism in the OIC Member States.*
- vii) *Building of the necessary infrastructure for tourism in the OIC Member States, particularly training and human resources development, is an area of activity where priority needs to be assigned*
- viii) *The mass media and other channels of mass communication play an important role in the promotion of tourism in the OIC Member States, particularly in projecting the positive image of the OIC Member States. At the same time, there is also a need to combat the efforts at projecting negative image of the OIC Member States.*
- ix) *The Least Developed Countries of the OIC requires special attention in respect of development of tourism.*

17.(a) The statements made in the general debate reflected appreciation for the proposals elaborated in the report of the meeting of the Senior Officials. These proposals are recapitulated as follows:

- i) *Joint efforts at collective marketing for the promotion of the various tourist attraction and tourism products in the OIC Member States in the world tourism market with the establishment of joint tourists centres in selected target markets;*
- ii) *Promotion of package tours among the OIC Member States, particularly religious and cultural tourism among the OIC Member States, with special concessional air fare for tourists from the OIC Member States and other related facilities aimed at promoting such tourism;*
- iii) *Establishment of an investors' forum for the promotion of investment in the tourism sector in the OIC Member States;*
- iv) *Enhancement of the role of the Islamic media in projecting the OIC Member States as important tourist destinations;*
- v) *Formation of a federation of tourism associations of the OIC Member States;*
- vi) *Joint action by the OIC Member States for the protection of environment as well as cultural and natural heritage of Member States, particularly in the context of the Global Code of Ethics for tourism;*
- vii) *Regular holding of ministerial conferences as well as expert-level meetings on tourism with adequate follow-up action;*
- viii) *Establishment of a common web-site and a TV channel on information and tourism in OIC countries for easy access; and*
- ix) *Promotion of joint training facilities for the OIC Member States in the field of tourism.*

17(b) Within the framework of the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and industry, the Conference requests the Islamic Chamber to set up its Council for Tourism. This

Council will comprise of the Associations of Tourism Agencies, institutions and organs working in this sector to promote and activate tourism in OIC Member States

18. The Conference adopted a resolution on tourism contained in Document No. ICMT/1-2000/RES.1/FINAL, *a copy of which is attached as Annex-9.*
19. The Conference also adopted the Isfahan Declaration contained in Document (No. ICMT/1-2000/ISFA/DEC.1/FINAL), *a copy of which is attached as Annex-10*
20. The Conference welcomed the offer of the Government of Malaysia to host the Second Islamic Conference of Ministers of Tourism to be held in Kuala Lumpur in October, 2001.
21. The meeting expressed its deep appreciation to the Government and people of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the warm welcome and generous hospitality extended to the delegates and for the excellent arrangements made for the meeting.
22. The participants congratulated the Chairman of the Conference for the excellent manner in which he conducted the deliberations.