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**FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS
OF THE
SEMINAR ON
«DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN THE MUSLIM WORLD»**

ORGANISED BY

***THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTRY AND MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF
THE TURKISH REPUBLIC OF NORTHERN CYPRUS***

UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE OIC

AND IN COLLABORATION WITH

THE ISLAMIC CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE

AND

THE ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT BANK GROUP

**GIRNE, TRNC
15-17 APRIL 2009**

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF

THE SEMINAR ON

“DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN THE MUSLIM WORLD”

In compliance with the relevant resolutions of the 35th session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the OIC, held in Kampala, Republic of Uganda in June 2008, the Deputy Prime Ministry and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus under auspices of the OIC and in collaboration with the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade, the Islamic Development Bank Group and the other OIC institutions, organized a Seminar on “Development of Tourism in the Muslim World” from 15th to 17th April 2009 in Girne, TRNC.

OBJECTIVES OF THE SEMINAR:

The main aims of this Seminar are:

- To gather experts from Member States, and the OIC institutions as well as from international and regional organisations in order to make an appraisal of the tourism sector in the OIC Member States;
- To examine the ways and means likely to promote the best practices in this field and give impetus and facilitate intra-OIC tourist flows;
- To formulate a set of concrete recommendations aimed at helping decision-makers to provide for the required intra-OIC tourism facilitation measures;
- To identify the most promising cooperation fields and market openings in this sector that can contribute to the growth of intra-OIC tourist flows and to the development of intra-OIC partnership and investment.

1. The Seminar was attended by participants from the following Member States of the OIC:

- Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
- Republic of Azerbaijan
- People’s Republic of Bangladesh
- Burkina Faso
- Union of Comoros
- Republic of Gabon
- Republic of The Gambia
- Malaysia
- Islamic Republic of Mauritania
- Republic of Niger
- Islamic Republic of Pakistan
- Republic of Sierra Leone
- Republic of Sudan
- Republic of Tajikistan
- Republic of Turkey
- Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (observer)

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

- OIC General Secretariat.
- Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC).
- Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA).

- Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT).
- Islamic Development Bank (IDB).
- The Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO).
- The Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI).

(The Agenda and The list of participants are attached in Annex-I and Annex-II).

A/ OPENING SESSION:

3. After the recitation of verses from the Holy Koran, H.E. Associate Prof. Turgay Avci, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the TRNC, delivered an inaugural speech, in which he expressed his gratitude and deep appreciation to H.E. Prof. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, the Secretary- General of the OIC as well as to the Islamic Center for the Development of Trade, Islamic Development Bank, other OIC concerned institutions and to all Participants for their support and contribution.

H.E. Mr. Avci drew attention to the fact that the decision to hold this seminar in North Cyprus was taken at the 35th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the OIC held in Kampala, Uganda in June 2008. H.E. Mr. Avci stressed his belief that the seminar deliberations will yield significant conclusions, which would bear important outcomes for the development of tourism throughout the Muslim World.

H.E. Mr. Avci referring to the full fledged negotiations, which commenced on 3 September 2008 between the two sides in Cyprus, stated that the Turkish Cypriot side is committed to a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem under the UN good Offices Mission and on the basis of the UN Parameters, namely bizonality, political equality, equal status of the two Constituent States forming a new partnership and the continuation of the effective guarantee of Turkey.

Furthermore, H.E. Mr. Avci expressed the Turkish Cypriot side's conviction that at a time when efforts for a comprehensive settlement continue, initiatives aimed at ending the isolations imposed on the Turkish Cypriot people would motivate the Greek Cypriot side to make real progress in negotiations. H.E. Mr. Avci pointed out that the all-encompassing embargoes ranged from denying the right to representation in international fora; hampering all cultural and sporting relations; and curtailing trade and tourism between North Cyprus and the rest of the world. In this connection, H.E. Mr. Avci expressed that with the support of the Muslim Ummah, embargoes imposed on and difficulties encountered by the Turkish Cypriot people will be overcome, including the issue of direct flights.

In conclusion, H.E. Mr. Avci extended his country's profound gratitude to all Islamic countries and Ummah, who have lent their valuable moral and material support and he added that it is his belief that this meeting will further strengthen the solidarity and cooperation between the Turkish Cypriot people and the brotherly member states of the OIC.

4. H.E. Ambassador Tori Limangana, the deputy Secretary General for Economic Affairs read out the message addressed to participants by H.E. Prof. EKMELEDDIN IHSANOGLU, the OIC Secretary General. H.E. the Secretary General expressed his

thanks and deep appreciation to the Government and People of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus for kindly hosting and successful organization of this Seminar and for the warm welcome and generous hospitality extended to all delegations.

Prof. Ihsanoglu expressed his hope that this Seminar will adopt dynamic decisions in order to make an appraisal of the tourism sector in the Muslim World, examine ways and means likely to promote the best practices in this field and formulate a set of concrete recommendations to increase the flows to tourism in the Muslim World. He pointed out that the development of cooperation and the tourism sector in the Muslim World is firmly bound on a direct course towards achieving the objectives of The OIC Ten-Year Programme of Action, adopted by the third OIC extra ordinary Islamic Summit Conference held in Makkah Al Moukaramah in December 2005 in particular in the domains of the promotion of intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, communication and exchange of information, strengthening of international and inter-institutional cooperation inside and outside the Muslim World.

H.E. the Secretary General pointed out that this Seminar constitutes one of the milestones in ending the unjust isolation and embargoes imposed upon our Turkish Cypriot brothers and give the participants, including investors and businessmen, an appropriate opportunity to appreciate the beauty of this country and the potential it offers for fruitful cooperation in all domains.

5. Mr. Allal RACHDI, Director General of the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade took the floor to convey his deep gratitude to the TRNC Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs for organising this event under its patronage and extended also his warm welcome to participants. The choice of Tourism, added Mr. RACHDI reflects the great importance given to the Tourism sector in the OIC agenda, in view of the role played by this sector at the level of Member States' economies and which contributes to improving the standard of living of populations through the reduction of unemployment and poverty. One should also keep in mind that this sector attracts investments in infrastructure and contributes to enhancing the importance of the historical monuments and archaeological sites and contributes to opening up the rural areas. He therefore underlined that this seminar would be for the economic operators of the private and public sectors a good opportunity to exchange their views, present the national experiences of the different countries in this field and to examine the ways and means likely to promote tourism in the Muslim World.

(Copies of the Speeches are attached in Annex-III)

B/ PROCEEDINGS OF THE SEMINAR AND SYNTHESIS of DEBATES:

6. The proceedings of the seminar continued on in plenary session at which, experts representing the following Member States and Organisations made presentations:

- “The WTO negotiations in the Tourism Sector”, presented by Mr El Hassane HZAINÉ, ICDT.
- “World Tourism Industry, new trends and challenges”, presented by Mr Nazmi BULDANLIOGLU, Eastern Mediterranean University, TRNC.
- “International Tourism in the OIC countries : prospects and challenges”, presented by Mr Haytham ZEINELABDIN (SESRIC) ;
- “Role of the private sector in the promotion of cooperation in the tourism sector among the OIC Member States”, presented by Attia NAWAZISH ALI (ICCI);
- “The role of preservation of architectural heritage in the development and promotion of tourism in the OIC Member States”, presented by Mr. Amir PASIC (IRCICA);
- “Promotion of tourism culture in the Islamic world” presented by Mr Mustapha EID (ISESCO);
- National experience of the Kingdom of Morocco
- National experience of Tunisia
- National experience of the Republic of Turkey
- National experience of Republic of Tunisia
- National experience of Islamic Republic of Mauritania
- National experience of the Republic of Niger.
- National experience of The Gambia
- National experience of the TRNC
- National experience of the Republic of Azerbaijan
- National experience of the Republic of Tajikistan
- National experience of the Union of Comoros

(Copies of the presentations are attached as Annex IV)

C/ RECOMMENDATIONS:

7. The participants note with satisfaction the richness of these presentations which eventually prove the potential of tourism in the Muslim World and following examination of all information and proposals presented to the seminar agreed upon the following recommendations:

- i) To call upon the OIC institutions, each in its own field of specialization, to give special attention to the joint ventures initiated by the OIC Member States in the tourist sector (Feasibility studies, promotion at the level of the funding parties etc.).
- ii) To call on the ISESCO and IRCICA to initiate an awareness program of the importance of cultural tourism as a means of dialogue between civilizations and to improve the image of Islam in the world. The private sector, the international organizations and concerned donor institutions and organizations may also contribute to such a program.
- iii) To invite Universities within OIC Member States to organize executive training sessions in the field of tourism in collaboration with the relevant OIC institutions.

- iv) To call on the OIC Member States to coordinate their negotiating positions during the current WTO Trade negotiations.
- v) To develop joint regional projects in tourism like the project on the Silk Road and the regional project of trans-border protected parks and areas in West Africa.
- vi) To encourage the establishment of alliances between tourism operators in the OIC Countries, particularly, the official tourism promotion bodies, with a view to strengthening joint tourism marketing and promoting cooperation efforts at the sub-regions level as well as at the level of the OIC regions as a whole.
- vii) To call on Member States to diversify tourism products by the inclusion of socio-cultural programs and traditional activities involving local communities. In this regard efforts should be made to improve planning, management and marketing of ecotourism, not only as a sector with a great potential for economic development, especially, in remote areas where few other possibilities exist but also as a significant tool for conservation of the natural environment and the sustainable tourism development.
- viii) To call on Member States to participate actively and massively in the 2nd Tourism Fair of Islamic Countries to be organized by the Republic of Lebanon and the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade in Beirut from 26th to 28th June 2009.
- ix) To establish and facilitate linkages in air, land/rail and sea and multimodal transportation with a view to facilitating access from one destination to another within the OIC region and from the rest of the World. In this context efforts should be made to establishing alliances among the airlines of the OIC Countries with the possibility of having an open-sky policy and direct flights between their capitals and major cities.
- x) To take necessary measures to facilitate the entry and movement of tourists among the OIC Member States and enhance intra-OIC tourism through, inter alia, simplifying administrative and legal travel procedures.
- xi) To recognize and highlight the important role of the private sector in the promotion of tourism. It called upon the ICCI to continue with its efforts for greater interaction among the private sector and to particularly promote cooperation with the private sector of Northern Cyprus.
- xii) To call on the private sector to actively participate in the International Tourism Promotion Company established by the ICCI.
- xiii) To focus on the development of niche tourism in OIC Member States that will enhance tourism product diversification.
- xiv) To stress the importance of exchange of experiences and expertise among OIC countries in the fields of restoration and preservation of Islamic cultural heritage as well as in training of professional personnel for the tourism industry.
- xv) Invites the Member States to exchange business delegations with the Turkish Cypriot side with a view to exploring the opportunities of economic cooperation, investment in the areas such as direct transport, tourism, information and to develop cultural relations and sports contacts with the Turkish Cypriot people and to encourage cooperation with the Turkish Cypriot universities, including the exchanges of students and academicians.
- xvi) To convene a follow-up meeting, including Representatives from the Government of the TRNC, OIC General Secretariat, ICDT, IRCICA, SESRIC, ICCI and IDB in order to review the implementation of the recommendations of the seminar.

-While implementing the recommendations adopted by this seminar there is a need to create synergies with the previous resolutions adopted by the OIC for the development of tourism in the OIC Member States as well as the “Framework of Development and Cooperation in the Domain of Tourism between OIC Countries” which was endorsed by the 24th Session of the COMCEC held in Istanbul in October 2008.

Vote of Thanks:

8. The participants expressed their profound gratitude to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus for hosting the Seminar on the Development of Tourism in the Muslim World and all the facilities accorded to all delegations since they arrived in the country.
9. The participants also expressed their gratitude to the Government and people of TRNC for the warm welcome and generous hospitality extended to the participants and for the excellent arrangements made to ensure the success of the Seminar.
10. The participants expressed their thanks to H.E. Prof. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, the Secretary General of the OIC, for his dedicated and tireless efforts for the successful organization of this Seminar. The participants also expressed their thanks to the General Secretariat of the OIC and its concerned institutions, which participated in the Seminar, for their effective contribution to the Seminar.