Item 4 of the Provisional Agenda

MARKETS PERFORMANCE AND PROSPECTS

(d) RESEARCH PROGRAMME ON EMERGING MARKETS: THE CHINESE OUTBOUND TRAVEL TO THE MENA REGION

Executive Summary

Note by the Secretary-General

The attached document contains an Executive Summary of a study of the Chinese Outbound market to destinations in the Middle East and North Africa, commissioned by UNWTO as part of an ongoing research programme on emerging markets, with the aim of assisting Members of the Commission in grasping the characteristics and trends of the said market and in formulating effective marketing and promotional strategies that will enable them to increase their share of this fast-growing market significantly.
A. Background

1. Tourism, as one of the world’s largest and fastest growing economic sectors, and a driver of socio-economic growth and development, has increasingly drawn the attention of the world leaders. In 2011, global tourism maintained a steady growth in the context of slow economic recovery. China, as an emerging economy country with rapid development, has shown a significant development in its tourism market and has become the fastest growing tourism generating market in the Asia and Pacific region.

2. The rich history of ancient civilizations, the unique cultural heritage and religious sites all contribute to the reputation of “tourist paradise” of the Middle East and North Africa region, for Chinese tourists. However, UNWTO statistics show that, due to the impact of recent political instability and the global economic crisis, international tourist arrivals to the Middle East and North Africa were down by 7% and 9% in 2011 compared to 2010. Several countries in the region have taken special measures to recover or stimulate demand. Key indicators during the first half of 2012 show clear signs of recovery with double-digit growth in North Africa (+11% up to June) and a return to positive figures in the Middle East (+0.7%). UNWTO forecasts international tourism arrivals to the Middle East and North Africa to grow between zero and 5% in 2012.

3. This study of the Chinese Outbound market to the Middle East and North Africa is undertaken by UNWTO so as to enable MENA destinations and stakeholders to better understand the Chinese tourist consumer behaviour and needs. This will in turn serve as an effective marketing tool for attracting and increasing tourist flows from China to the region.

4. The Chinese outbound tourism market is a primary focus of attention for a number of strategic reasons: China’s per capita GDP reached 5,400 US dollars in 2011, which represents the middle line basis for a sustained growth of China’s outbound travel market, in line with UNWTO’s forecast that by the year 2030 North-East Asia will become the sub region to receive the most international arrivals with 293 million, and by 2020, China will become the largest tourist receiving country and the fourth largest source of outbound travel in the world with 100 million Chinese travelling abroad. Moreover, China has signed bilateral agreements with a number of the Middle East and North Africa’s countries as well as Approved Destination Status (ADP).

5. So as to receive its fair share of the Chinese outbound market, the Middle East and North Africa destinations need to improve its knowledge and understanding of this market, create attractive products and services for Chinese visitors and promote them effectively.

B. Objectives

6. This study aims at guiding and assisting MENA countries in developing an effective regional promotion and marketing strategy to increase their share of the Chinese outbound tourism market.

7. Based on an in-depth research of the Chinese outbound market, the study will provide Arab countries with market intelligence on the trends and characteristics of Chinese outbound travel in general and to the region in particular. The study will focus on different tourist generating
regions in China, identify the market segments and target groups for outbound travel to MENA countries and destinations, and make recommendations on how to develop effective marketing strategies to attract Chinese tourists to the region.

8. On the basis of an in-depth study of the profile of Chinese travellers from different regions or cities, to analyse the characteristics and demands of the Chinese tourists for outbound travel in general and to MENA, in particular and identify the market segments that may be attracted to travel to destinations in the region.

9. Through a series of interviews of the Chinese tour operators and an analysis of tourism products in MENA countries as compared to other long-haul destinations, to develop recommendations on the corresponding marketing strategies and how to package attractive products for Chinese travellers.

C. Expected benefits of the study for MENA destinations

10. The study is expected to provide MENA destinations and tourism stakeholders with the following benefits:

(a) A full and in-depth understanding of the characteristics and trends of China outbound travel market.

(b) Grasp the consumption characteristics and demands of Chinese travellers, acquire a solid knowledge base about the characteristics of different tourist source markets of China, and thus improved ability to formulate targeted marketing and promotion strategies.

(c) Enhanced cooperation between National Tourism Organizations of MENA countries and destinations with Chinese tour operators to develop suitable travel products for the Chinese travellers and organize more attractive Chinese tour itineraries to MENA.

(d) The National Tourism Organizations and travel suppliers of MENA destination countries will better serve Chinese travellers to meet their needs in order to enhance the attraction of the Middle East and North Africa’s destinations for the Chinese travellers.

D. China Outbound Travel Market Overview

11. The economic growth and residents’ income improvement are the fundamental driving forces for tourism industry development. China’s per capita GDP was more than 3000 US dollars for the first time in 2008, and achieved 5400 US dollars in 2011, surpassing the middle line for sustained growth of leisure and travel consumption. In addition, influenced by the stable increase of Chinese currency exchange rate, the further relaxation of visa policies of many destination countries and other favourable factors, Chinese outbound departures and consumption scale will continue to maintain a high rate of growth.

12. China Tourism Industry 12th Five-Year Development Plan was officially released in December, 2011. The Plan will serve as guidelines for China’s tourism development in the next five years. The Plan clearly indicates the development goals of Chinese outbound tourism market; in 2015, the number of outbound tourists will reach 88 million, an average annual growth rate of 9%.
13. In 2011, Chinese outbound departures reached 70.25 million people in total, representing a growth of 22.85% compared with the same period of 2010. This made great contribution to the tourism industry recovery of the Asia and Pacific region and even of the whole world. The outbound departures for official purposes amounted to 6.13 million, attaining year-on-year growth of 4.31% and occupying 8.73% of all outbound departures. The outbound departures for private purposes increased to 64.12 million, which represented year-on-year growth of 24.48% and occupied 91.27% of all outbound departures.

14. However, the majority of Chinese outbound tourists visit China’s Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, and some neighbouring countries and regions such as Korea and South East Asia. Tourists visiting Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan occupy 71% of all outbound departures.

15. The number of Chinese tourist arrivals in the Middle East and North Africa is still very modest, representing less than 1 per cent of total arrivals in that region. However, there was a trend of a strong growth in the last decade. Between 2000 and 2011 tourist arrivals from China increased more than fivefold, growing an average 19% annually. An estimated 54,000 Chinese travellers visited the region at the start of the decade according to data from destination countries reported to UNWTO. By the year 2004 this figure had more than doubled, reaching 120,000 tourists, and by 2008 it had risen to 285,000, a growth of 137% in four years. The number of Chinese tourists to the MENA region declined in the year 2009 as a result of the global economic crisis, though quite moderately (-3%). In 2010, again it surged (+32%) surpassing 362,000 arrivals. Then in 2011 it fell slightly to 351,000 due to the upheavals in the region caused by the Arab Spring.

16. With nearly 194,000 tourist arrivals in 2011, Dubai (United Arab Emirates) is the preferred destination for Chinese tourists in the MENA region, followed by Egypt (48,600; 106,200 in 2010) and Saudi Arabia (24,400). Dubai alone accounts for over half (55%) of all Chinese travel to MENA, while the other two countries represent 14% and 7% respectively.
## International Tourist Arrivals in the Middle East & North Africa (MENA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>Series¹</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
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<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>change</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total Arrivals</td>
<td></td>
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<td>33,636</td>
<td>38,379</td>
<td>45,201</td>
<td>50,747</td>
<td>52,508</td>
<td>61,901</td>
<td>56,108</td>
<td>'11/'10</td>
<td>2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chinese/ Total (%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
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<td>0.6</td>
<td>-3.2</td>
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<td>Chinese Arrivals (approximate)</td>
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<td>362.5</td>
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<td>11.0</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>-51.6</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>68.5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) 2012, based on national sources ©

¹Arrivals in the above destination countries were provided by local sources based on different measurements (TFr, VFr, etc).

Data is only comparable across time for each destination, caution should be exercised when comparing data between destinations. Abbreviations of data series: TF = Arrivals of non-resident tourists (excluding same-day visitors) at national frontiers, VF = Arrivals of non-resident visitors at national frontiers, THS = Arrivals of non-resident tourists in hotels and similar establishments, TCE = Arrivals of non-resident tourists in all types of commercial accommodation, n = by nationality; r = by country of residence. Data for some destinations may include Hong-Kong (China) and/or Macau (China) and/or Taiwan (pr. of China). Total figures are an approximation by UNWTO based on available information.

17. Group tour is still the first choice of Chinese outbound tourists, considering safety, convenience, cultural difference and other factors regarding outbound travel. However, in general, group tour themes will be more diversified, the tour contents will be more detailed, and the service will be more standardized. In the past, group tour themes largely confined in traditional sightseeing tours, but recent years have witnessed more diversified group tour products.

18. As more and more high-end tourists seek for personalized travel experience, customized tour products and private customized travel consultancy services are increasingly becoming the hot spots and focus in the outbound travel market. The consumers are mainly high-end people including corporate clients, business groups, stars, repeat customers of group tours and so on.

19. China has vast territory and the economic development is uneven. According to two key indicators- urban residents per capita GDP and the number of the middle class and wealthy
families, China's outbound tourist source market can be divided into three major regions. The first-tier tourist source region covers Beijing, Shanghai, Guangdong, Tianjin, Jiangsu, and Zhejiang, and the per capita GDP is over 7000 US dollars. The second-tier tourist source region consists of Liaoning, Jilin, Heilongjiang, Inner Mongolia, Hebei, Shanxi, Anhui, and the per capita GDP is over 5000 US dollars. The third-tier tourist source region mainly includes Guizhou, Yunnan, Tibet, and the per capita GDP is over 3,000 US dollars.

E. Characteristics of Chinese Outbound Travel Market to MENA

20. According to the statistics from the Exit and Entry Administration of Ministry of Public Security, the number of Chinese outbound departures to Africa as their first arrival destination rose from 58,647 in 2001 to 1,011,500 in 2011, an increase of 16 times. It is worth mentioning that there were also some Chinese tourists traveling to Africa via other destinations, who were not included in the statistics. Therefore, the total number of Chinese departures to Africa is definitely over the above mentioned number.

21. The Middle East and North Africa, as emerging destinations of China's outbound travel market, have experienced 10 years’ development, and are entering the development stage from the initial stage. The development stage indicates that, Chinese tourists' knowledge of the Middle East and North Africa (except Egypt and UAE) is not sufficient, and the promotion effort of Middle East and North Africa countries in China is not enough.

22. By May 2012, among 19 countries involved in the MENA region, 8 countries had become ADS country (China's outbound travel destination); they are Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia, Syria, Oman, Morocco, United Arab Emirates and Lebanon. Among the 8 countries, Egypt is the first one to apply for and become ADS country in 2002. Chinese outbound travel agencies have organized and conducted group businesses with these countries accordingly.

23. Chinese tourists travelling to North Africa mainly visit Egypt. From 2009 to 2010, Chinese outbound tourists to Egypt organized by Chinese outbound travel agencies kept on increasing in number. In 2011, influenced by the Egyptian political instability and other factors, the number of Chinese outbound tourists to Egypt organized by Chinese outbound travel agencies showed decrease for the first time. But the number of Chinese tourists to Egypt is still far more than to other MENA countries. With the gradual stability of the Egyptian politic environment and the restoration of social order, the number of Chinese tourists to Egypt will show explosive growth.

24. In the preliminary stage of the Middle East as a Chinese outbound travel destination, the market is dominated by groups for official visit and business exhibition purposes which occupy 90%. In the last two years, especially after the United Arab Emirates becoming ADS country on September 15, 2009, the United Arab Emirates Tourism Bureau has strengthened its promotion effort in China, established extensive and in-depth cooperation with China outbound travel agencies, and increased direct flight connections. Therefore, since 2011, the ratio of Chinese tourists travelling to Dubai for shopping and leisure has increased significantly. The number of tourists increased 15% to 30% during long holidays including National Day and the Spring Festival holiday. The CNTA statistics show that Chinese outbound departures to Dubai, United Arab Emirates grew 28% during the seven day holiday of Chinese New Year 2012.

25. Since 2010 when North African countries had political unrest, tourists to North Africa for official visit and business investigation purposes have declined in number. However, the Middle East
countries, such as the United Arab Emirates, have rapid economic development. Particularly, Dubai has world-class convention and exhibition equipment and service capacity, and hosts many international conferences and exhibitions. With the increase of the international exchange and business cooperation between China and the Middle East, the MICE market has great growth potential.

F. MENA’s destinations have a strong growth potential in the Chinese outbound market

26. Chinese Tourists visiting the Middle East and North Africa can be generally divided into three types. The first type is those who have a rich outbound travel experience and have previously been to Europe, America or Asian countries, and hope to try some fresh and unfamiliar destinations. The second type is those tourists who travel abroad for the first time; they have specific travel demands and are interested in knowing the rich and splendid history and civilization and visiting unique heritage sites. The third type is those public and business travellers who have trade business with the Middle East and North African countries of rich natural resources and good investment environments, and those travellers for international conferences and exhibitions.

27. There are significant differences between tourist attractions in North Africa and those of the Middle East. Accordingly, Chinese citizens’ travel demands towards the Middle East and North Africa represent different values. Whereas main attractions in North Africa’s destinations for Chinese tourists include natural scenery, rich history and cultural heritage, those of the Middle East, particularly GCC countries, also include modern tourism facilities and services. For example, Dubai is famous for luxury hotels, high-quality shopping centres and world-class recreational activities, which meet Chinese middle- and affluent-level people’s aspirations for leisure and shopping.

28. Egypt is the first choice destination country of Chinese tourists visiting North Africa. Most outbound travel to Egypt is from China’s three leading cities and surrounding regions – Beijing, Guangdong and Shanghai. In 2011, The Chinese tourists to Egypt organized by the travel agencies in Beijing, Guangdong and Shanghai reached 26,715 people, representing 54% in all Chinese outbound tourists organized by China’s travel agencies.

29. Most of Beijing tourists are very interested in the historical and cultural heritage of North African destinations, such as Egypt in particular; Shanghai tourists are in favour of shopping and leisure, and are interested in Dubai in the Middle East; Guangdong visitors search enriching family holiday experiences and many of them prefer tour products offered in Egypt or Dubai.

30. Because many Chinese tourists are not aware of living conditions in MENA countries, before departure, most of them assume that they may find poor health standards and are worried about safety and security issues. However, after the completion of travel, they are very satisfied with the services provided, and few of them complain. They especially favour the unique tourism resources in the Middle East and North Africa, and are willing to experience, in an in-depth manner, the local culture and folk activities.

31. Most Chinese tourists’ favourite destinations in the Middle East and North Africa are Egypt and the UAE. The reason is that these two destinations have launched more promotion in China. In the eyes of Chinese tourists, these tourism destinations have relatively advanced tourism facilities and services.
32. Chinese tourists’ expectations on and demands for North Africa and the Middle East include:

(a) to provide more tourism information of North Africa and the Middle East destination countries, preferably in Chinese language;
(b) to open direct flights from China to North Africa and the Middle East countries;
(c) to ensure visitors’ safety in North Africa and the Middle East destinations;
(d) to provide Chinese language services especially professional Chinese tour guides;
(e) to provide diet suitable for Chinese tourists.

G. Factors constraining Chinese tourists’ travel to MENA

33. Since 2010, the political transformations in Tunisia and Egypt and the civil wars in Libya and Syria have all caused immense impacts on the Chinese outbound tourism market to the region. Particularly, the negative reports on the Middle East and North Africa situations from all kinds of Chinese media have brought about worries for many Chinese citizens when thinking of visiting countries or destinations in the MENA region, and have kept down their enthusiasm on travelling to those countries.

34. Currently, there are very limited resources for Chinese people to learn about the MENA countries (Egypt and United Arab Emirates excluded), and they barely have any information related to the MENA destinations.

35. China is far away from the MENA region; therefore there is a need to increase direct flights or provide more comfortable flight connections that minimize the travel time and improve the efficiency of long-distance travel. Chinese tourists could therefore have more choices and enjoy more convenient flying services.

36. The tourism suppliers at MENA countries are not well equipped in terms of receiving Chinese tourists. For example, in the Chinese long holidays such as National Day holiday (7 days around October 1) and Spring Festival holiday (7 days around the Chinese Lunar New Year), many Chinese tourists travel to MENA countries, but there are far less qualified Chinese-speaking tour guides who know well about the local condition to serve Chinese tourists, consequently, the provision of conveniently customized services for Chinese tourists is not guaranteed.

37. Currently the MENA tourism products for Chinese travellers are not featured with highlights and clear themes. And there has not been any tourism product specially designed to fit each target customer group.

H. Chinese tour operators and agencies organizing outbound travel to MENA

38. From the perspective of Chinese outbound tour operators, they maintain that MENA countries have rich tourism resources, such as a long history and splendid culture, beautiful natural landscape, high-end and luxury hotels, shopping malls and entertainment facilities, representing a huge potential of tourism development.
39. There are over 200 tour itineraries to MENA on the Chinese market, and the main MENA destinations are Egypt and United Arab Emirates. These itineraries are demanded by Chinese travellers because of the unique tourism attractions of destinations, the great efforts of National Tourism Organizations to promote their destinations in China, the relatively higher Chinese awareness of these destination countries, the supply of mature travel itineraries and tourist services in line with the Chinese travellers' expectations.

40. Compared with other long-haul products (such as Europe, Australia and New Zealand, the Americas), the competitive advantages of the Middle East and North Africa countries' tour products lie in the uniqueness and broad variety of tourist attractions (rich history of ancient civilizations, world famous heritage sites, unique natural scenery, vibrant societies and cultures, high-quality and luxury hotels, shopping malls and entertainment facilities, etc.). Besides, they have convenient visa application. As for the weaknesses, MENA countries' market recognition is much lower than Europe and the United States; Chinese tourists are not familiar with the tourism supply of most MENA countries or destinations, with few exceptions, including Egypt and Dubai. The negative publicity is more than the positive. Besides, the political instability and security issues have hampered Chinese tourists to the Middle East and North African countries. In addition, compared to the new products of Europe and the United States, during the tourist seasons, the Middle East and North Africa countries' aviation capacity is not enough, and the tourism facilities are varied in standard, and there is a lack of Chinese language staff.

41. After Egypt and UAE, Chinese travel agencies plan to develop some emerging destinations including Tunisia, Jordan and Oman.

42. The Middle East and North Africa tour products, based on meeting the mass group travel demands, are developing towards depth and diversification. At present, in-depth tour products in one country or region (such as Egypt, Dubai in United Arab Emirates), and tour products in two and three countries and regions (such as Egypt + Turkey, Dubai + South Africa, South Africa + Egypt + Turkey) are the main tour products. Furthermore, some Chinese travel agencies explore, in an in-depth manner, the features of these conventional tour products, and highlight the product themes, such as historical monuments, luxury hotels, luxury cruises, wild self-driving. Besides, they design suitable products to target the high-end and niche segment markets, to meet the diversification and personalization of travel demands.

43. According to Chinese travel agencies operating the Middle East and North Africa tours, to make the Middle East and North African countries become Chinese tourists' favorable destinations requires the national governments of the Middle East and North Africa countries to attach importance to China, and to increase investment to expand the Chinese tourist source markets. Meanwhile, this also requires the tourism bureaus, airlines and tour operators in the Middle East and North African countries to strengthen cooperation.

44. Chinese travel agencies expect the tourism bureaus in the Middle East and North Africa destination countries to strengthen their effort on conveying positive image and promotion in television, print and online media in China. Special attention should be given to the aspects which tourists are more concerned about including safety, health, and tourism resources, so as to increase market awareness. Many approaches can be adopted, such as advertising, tourism campaigns, road shows, presentations, organizing FAM trips and other activities; cooperation with airlines to open direct flight routes; joint promotion of the airlines and hotels. Travel agencies are required to strengthen their personnel training, to increase the number of Chinese tour guides, and in particular to employ some high-quality part-time tour guides to meet the
requirements during the tourist seasons. Travel agencies also need to develop in-depth cooperation and exchanges with Chinese counterparts to jointly develop and provide the in-depth featured tour products to meet the needs of Chinese tourists.

45. At present, the number of direct flights from mainland China to the Middle East and North Africa is limited, which restrict Chinese travel agencies’ itineraries design to MENA, and is negative to the consolidation and expansion of the tourism resources and tour products between the Middle East and North Africa countries.

I. The Chinese outbound travel market to MENA has a great potential for growth

46. With the increase of Chinese per capita consumption level and the outbound travel experience, there are more tourists seeking quality tours. The demand for leisure and holiday become the mainstream. The Middle East and North Africa countries’ tour products involving deep cultural connotation and ecological resources will receive more attention by Chinese tourists. It is expected that over the next five years, the Middle East and North Africa travel markets’ overall share will increase, and will gradually become mainstream destination markets and occupy higher market share.

47. In long-haul travel markets, the Middle East and North Africa countries are facing competition from Europe, the Americas, Oceania and other destinations. In terms of African destinations, the Middle East and North Africa countries are also faced with the competition from other African countries (such as South Africa, Kenya, etc.). In addition, Chinese tourists have a limited interest in travelling to MENA countries, except Egypt and UAE, which also restricts MENA countries’ entry and expansion in the Chinese outbound market. Facing these opportunities and challenges, to develop regional market access and promotion strategies is necessary and imminent for the Middle East and North African countries.

48. Chinese tourists travelling to the Middle East and North Africa mainly visit Egypt, UAE. These two countries have high reputations, unique tourism resources, mature tour routes, fine tourism facilities, and high-quality Chinese tour guides. These factors, coupled with the tourism bureaus’ great promotion in China, bring the high market recognition, and lead the countries to be popular among Chinese tourists.

49. In the next five years, the Middle East and North Africa tour products will show a ‘pyramid’ development tendency. The basic part is single destination tours and affordable two country connected tours, to meet the mass needs; the middle part is featured and high quality Free Independent Travel tour products, to meet the demands of middle income tourists; the top part is the high-end, luxury and customized tour products.

50. Egypt, as the first choice destination for Chinese tourists visiting North Africa, will attract increasing number of Chinese tourists, as long as it has political stability, enough air transport capacity and quality services. It can be optimistically expected that the number of Chinese tourists will enjoy a steady increase over the next five years.

51. In the next five years, Chinese will also travel to MENA destinations for cultural tourism and MICE, in addition to leisure holidays and business.
52. With the popularity of the Internet and the convenience of information access, the experienced travel enthusiasts in pursuit of individuality will prefer independent and semi-independent travel, when they choose to visit a destination in the MENA region.

53. From the perspective of tourist source regions, MENA countries have opened direct flight routes with some Chinese provinces and municipalities. It can be expected that the second and third tier tourist source markets will pay more attention to the Middle East and North Africa destination countries.

54. Due to the debt crisis in Europe and America, the Chinese government is guiding the trade-oriented enterprises to expand their businesses into emerging markets. It can be expected that economic cooperation and exchanges between China and MENA countries would be further strengthened.

J. Marketing Strategy for MENA Destinations

55. If MENA countries intend for more market shares in the Chinese outbound travel market, the tourism organizations of these countries should firstly pay more attention to developing the market in China. They need to increase the number of service staff in the tourism industry, strengthen the Chinese language trainings for their tourists receiving personnel, enhance promotions in the Chinese market, establish effective sales channels, facilitate communication and exchanges among tourism operators from MENA countries and China, and make proper development strategies for the Chinese market.

56. In the Chinese tourist-generating market, MENA countries could be divided into three types according to the tourist attraction in the destination countries, transportation convenience (e.g. flights) and their ADS status, and hence different marketing strategies should be adopted. The first-type of destination countries are the popular ones in the Chinese tourist-generating market, including UAE and Egypt, which have already had a sound foundation in the Chinese tourist-generating market; the second type refers to other ADS countries, including Tunisia, Jordan, Morocco, Oman, Lebanon and Syrian Arab Republic; and the third type includes those non-ADS countries, including Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Palestine, Yemen, Algeria, Libya, Mauritania and Sudan.

57. The first group of destinations is relatively well-known and mature. However, the attractions in the two countries are different for Chinese tourists, and therefore require slightly different marketing strategies.

58. For Egypt, political stability and safety are the priorities. In the first-tier customer market, the tourism products should be updated regularly and existing tourism products should be further differentiated and enriched. In addition, more direct flights should be added, or the chartered flight business with Chinese travel agencies should be increased to ensure the provision of the necessary air carrying capacity in peak seasons. Furthermore, market development strategy should focus on the second-tier customer market such as Shanxi, Sichuan, Chongqing and Hunan.

59. For the United Arab Emirates, it is suggested that local travel agencies increase communication activities and exchanges with Chinese travel agencies, so as to enhance the quality and ability of these agencies. Provision should be made for sufficient Chinese-speaking tour guides and
the quality of services provided to Chinese groups, especially during the peak season, should be improved. Chinese labels should be added to local tourism facilities and customized quality services to Chinese tourists, including food, should be provided.

60. The United Arab Emirates is one of the world’s fastest-growing MICE tourism destinations, known for its high profitability and significant economic benefits. Its MICE tourism industry is increasingly popular, and provides substantial business opportunities for the whole MENA region.

61. The second group of destinations is attractive to the Chinese market but these destinations are still not well-known, although they are in ADS countries. These countries are categorized into two groups given the consideration that Chinese people are more concerned with security issues: one is the political stable countries, and the other is political unrest and war concerned countries.

62. For Morocco, Jordan and Oman, these countries are relatively stable politically, and safety and security can be guaranteed. It is recommended that they strengthen their promotion and marketing in the main tourist sources (i.e. Beijing, Shanghai and Guangdong) to increase their visibility to the Chinese public. At the same time, these countries should also improve tourism facilities such as hotels, train more Chinese-speaking service staff, carry out in-depth exchanges and cooperation with Chinese travel agencies, and design and promote travel products of high quality and featured highlights that go along with the requirements of Chinese travellers.

63. As for Tunisia, it has already spread out promotion campaigns in China in the past years, but quite a number of negative news reports have appeared since its political unrest two years ago. Therefore, it is suggested that the National Tourism Organization takes the lead in establishing its positive image through appropriate communication and promotion campaigns that would ease the worries of Chinese travellers.

64. For countries that do not face travel safety issues, in the second group of destinations, it is recommended that they take advantages of bilateral cooperation in the sectors of energy, agriculture and trade with China, and expand business travel with Chinese enterprises and government departments.

65. For the third group of destinations, the first thing they should do is to apply for ADS status, if they intend to penetrate China’s outbound tourism market.

66. In the development of the regional market entry strategy, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt could play the role of important hubs for Chinese tourists to spread to other MENA countries. If we take the United Arab Emirates, for example as the hub, it could develop joint promotions with other MENA countries in the Middle East to market their tourism resources. If we take Egypt as the hub, its market attention and advanced flight service could be spread to other MENA countries in North Africa and Mediterranean areas. Countries which are little known to the Chinese travellers should, in a first phase, take part in joint promotions rather than intend to promote their destinations in China separately.

67. For the MENA destinations which have no established office for tourism promotion in China, they can entrust representation companies in China to assist them develop the promotion and marketing at the primary stage to enter into the Chinese market in the shortest time, then they
can choose appropriate ways for promotion respectively, such as establishing an office, or setting up the tourism section in their embassy, or promoting by foreign chamber of commerce in China.

68. As long-haul destinations, MENA countries not only have to face competition from developed destinations in the tourist-generating market of China, such as Europe, America, Oceania, but also the competition from their neighbouring countries in Africa (e.g. South Africa and Kenya). Currently, apart from Egypt and the United Arab Emirates, Chinese tourists are not paying enough attention to MENA destinations and travel routes, and they even carry some apprehensions towards some countries. In view of the above-mentioned challenges and opportunities, it is very necessary for MENA countries and tourism suppliers to jointly develop, as soon as possible, collaborative market entry and joint promotional strategies for the Chinese tourism generating markets.