

AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

4th Tourism and the Media Conference

Tunisia, 13 November 2015

UNWTO Secretary-General Taleb Rifai

**HE Salma Elloumi Rekik, Minister of Tourism and Handicrafts of
Tunisia**

Ministers and Representatives of UNWTO Member States

UN Resident Coordinator

**Dear Jim Bittermann, Senior European Correspondent for CNN
International**

Friends of the media

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Friends,

- On behalf of the World Tourism Organization of the United Nations, it is a great pleasure to welcome you all to the 4th edition of the UNWTO Tourism and Media Conference.

- I would like to say that am particularly pleased to welcome you to Tunis and I would like to express our utmost appreciation to HE Salma Elloumi Rekik, Minister of Tourism and Handicrafts of Tunisia, and to her team, for hosting us in this amazing country.

Dear Minister

- Tunisia is an example to the world in the way it is consolidating its democracy as recognized by the recent award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the National Dialogue Quartet.
- This is without a doubt a tribute to the people of Tunisia and a vote of trust in the capacity of the Tunisian people to drive this country in the path of progress and development.

Dear Friends

- It is undeniable that Tunisia has been facing extraordinary challenges; challenges which have impacted its tourism sector; yet we should never forget that what we face today is a global threat that requires a global response.
- We at UNWTO are fully confidence in the ability of Tunisia's tourism sector to overcome the current challenges and regain

momentum – Tunisia is a destination of excellence and a long-term leader in the region and the world.

- The tourism sector in Tunisia has always shown its strength and resilience and this time will be no different.
- The government has announced several measures to support the sector in this hard moment and is looking toward the future.
- I particularly welcome the work of the Ministry, in coordination with the private sector, aimed at planning the actions to be implemented in the coming five years and which will allow for Tunisia to regain its natural place among the leading tourism destinations in the world.
- Markets are changing rapidly and destinations need to innovate in promotion, product development, and business models. Tunisia has understood these challenges and is moving ahead.
- Yet, most important of all, Tunisia is an example to follow when it comes to supporting the tourism sector at the highest political level – the most important factor to support the tourism recovery.

Dear Friends,

- Media constitute major stakeholders for the tourism sector, not only in terms of disseminating information, but also with regard to connecting with the public to promote a better understanding of the sector and the principles of sustainable tourism development.
- This series of "Tourism and the Media" Conferences was launched by UNWTO four years ago to promote a better understanding between tourism and media stakeholders and create synergies for the benefit of both.
- In line with this objective, today we will be looking at key issues such as the various angles of tourism media coverage, the challenges that media professionals face in their work when addressing tourism-related stories and conversely the challenges tourism stakeholders face in dealing with the media.
- We will look particularly into crisis communications tools, processes and mechanisms and how to create synergies between the media and tourism stakeholders in times of difficulty.
- I trust this event will allow us to open new avenues of cooperation and find ways in which we can build new partnerships.

- I would like to close by thanking once again the Ministry of Tourism and Handicraft of Tunisia and ensure that we are here to support you and work with you.
- I would also like to thank all our distinguished speakers, and among them Jim Bittermann, Senior European Correspondent for CNN International - thank you CNN for the continuous support to the tourism sector, to our work at UNWTO and for joining us this year again for this Conference.
- Thank you all participants which join us from around the world and to our friends here in Tunisia.
- I wish you a successful and productive event, confident that this will see the birth of new and strong partnerships between tourism and media.

Thank you