UNWTO & Arabian Travel Market
Ministerial Forum on
Tourism’s contribution to sustainable and inclusive economic growth and diversification in the MENA region

Under the patronage of
H.E. Eng. Sultan bin Saeed AlMansoori,
Minister of Economy of the United Arab Emirates

An official event of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development 2017
With over 1.2 billion people travelling internationally last year, six billion travelling domestically and hundreds of millions working in the sector, tourism has become an undisputed vehicle of advancing the global economy, representing 10% of the world’s GDP, 30% of services exports and one in every eleven jobs.

UNWTO forecasts international Tourist arrivals to reach 1.8 billion by 2030, with an average of 43 million additional international travelers entering the market each year.

Bearing in mind the outstanding performance of Tourism in the MENA region over the past two decades and in spite of the disruption of international tourism flows to some destinations in the region, in recent years, UNWTO forecasts international tourist arrivals to the region to grow steadily, well above the world’s average and reach 195 million by 2030.

Tourism is in focus across the region, particularly in the GCC countries, where it is establishing itself as a pillar and key driver of the modern “post-oil” economies of those countries.

In addition to generating foreign exchange earnings and creating jobs, Tourism promotes trade and investment and significantly contributes to the development of other sectors of the economy - such as construction, manufacture, retail and financial services - and it also contributes significantly to the socio-economic integration of countries of the MENA region.

Particularly noticeable is the fact that the region has emerged as a major hub for the global airline industry, facilitating passenger travel across a number of countries. Huge investments in world-class airports and large fleets of new planes have played an important role in attracting commercial traffic. Increased business activity, upcoming large-scale events and targeted promotions are also fueling investment in Tourism.

The UNWTO & Arabian Travel Market Ministerial Forum on Tourism’s contribution to sustainable and inclusive economic growth and diversification in the MENA region, to be held Under the patronage of H.E. Mr. Sultan bin Saeed Al Mansouri, Minister of Economy of the United Arab Emirates, will bring together Ministers of Tourism and industry leaders in the MENA region to consider ways and means of capitalizing on Tourism growth in the region and building a sustainable ecosystem for the sector that would unlock its contribution to the fulfillment of their national agendas for GDP growth and economic diversification, innovation, entrepreneurship and productivity, job creation, human capital and infrastructure development, investment and export promotion.
Welcome by Moderator introducing speakers: Ms. Becky Anderson, Anchor, CNN International

Opening Session

- H.E. Eng. Sultan bin Saeed AlMansoori, **Minister of Economy of the United Arab Emirates**
- Mr. Taleb Rifai, Secretary-General, **World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)**
- Mr. Simon Press, **Senior Exhibition Director, Reed Exhibitions**

Keynote address

- H.R.H. Prince Sultan bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, President of the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage, Saudi Arabia

Panel Debate

A. Ministers/Heads of NTAs and NTOs:

- Shaikh Khaled Bin Hmoud Al Khalifa, Executive Director for Bahrain Authority for Tourism and Exhibitions
- H.E. Mr. Mohamed Yehia Rashed, Minister of Tourism of Egypt
- H.E. Mrs. Lina Mazhar Annab, Minister of Tourism and Antiquities of Jordan
- H.E. Mr. Avedis Guidanian, Minister of Tourism of Lebanon
- H.E. Mrs. Malthi Saif Majid Al Mahrouqi, Undersecretary, Ministry of Tourism of Oman
- H.E. Mrs. Salma Elloumi Rekkik, Minister of Tourism and Handicrafts of Tunisia
- H.E. Mr. Khalid Jasim Al Midfa, Chairman of Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority, United Arab Emirates
- H.E. Mr. Haitham Mattar, CEO of the Ras Al-Khaimah Tourism Development Authority, United Arab Emirates

B. Private sector:

- Mr. Adel Al Redha, Executive Vice President & Chief Operations Officer, Emirates Airline
- Mr. Vijay Poonicosamy, Vice President, Etihad Airways
- Mr. Eyad Jasim Al Kharafi, Chairman of Traveler’s Guild, Al Kharafi Group, Kuwait
- Mr. Antonio Peña, Director, JSF T&T School
- Mr. Abdullah Bin Nasser Al Dawood, CEO, Al Tayyar Group
- Mr. Ivan Jakovljevic, Travel Industry Director, MENA region, Google
- Mr. Yousef Wahbah, Partner & Leader, Real Estate & Hospitality, MENA region, Ernst & Young
- Mr. Antonio Lopez de Avila, Director Tourism Innovation Centre, IE (Instituto de Empresa), Spain
- Mr. Carl Obst, Director, Institute for the Development of Environmental-Economic Accounting
- Mr. Antoine Medawar, Vice President for the MENA Region, AMADEUS

Conclusion by Moderator and closing remarks by UNWTO Secretary General
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