

REPORT

The 1st Meeting of the OIC/COMCEC Private Sector Tourism Forum

(İzmir, 7-8 December 2012)

1. The 1st Meeting of the OIC/COMCEC Private Sector Tourism Forum was held on 7-8 December 2012 in İzmir.
2. The meeting was chaired by H.E. ŞAHİN, Deputy Undersecretary of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Turkey.
3. The Meeting agreed on the following Agenda items:
 - Sustainable and Community Based Tourism in the World and the OIC Region: Policies, Strategies and Tools
 - The Role of Private Sector in Sustainable Tourism and Community Based Tourism
 - Any Other Business
4. The Workshop was attended by the public and private sector representatives from the following Member States of the OIC:
 - The Republic of Albania
 - Azerbaijan Republic
 - The Arab Republic of Egypt
 - Islamic Republic of Iran
 - The Republic of Iraq
 - The Republic of Kazakhstan
 - The Republic of Kyrgyzstan
 - Malaysia
 - The Republic of Senegal
 - The Republic of Turkey
 - The Republic of Uzbekistan
5. In addition to the OIC General Secretariat and the COMCEC Coordination Office (CCO), representatives of the following institutions took part in the meeting:
 - Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC);
 - Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT);
 - United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Turkey;

(The list of participants is attached in Annex-I).

6. At the outset, H.E. Faruk ŞAHİN, Deputy Undersecretary of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Turkey, delivered his opening speech. H.E. ŞAHİN pointed out the growing importance of tourism sector in the world as well as in the OIC region. H.E Şahin also highlighted that sustainable tourism plays a crucial role for enhancing competitiveness of countries in the global tourism market.
7. In his opening statement, Mr. Selçuk KOÇ, Director at the COMCEC Coordination Office, underlined the importance of “the OIC/COMCEC Private Sector Tourism Forum” in enhancing the cooperation among the private sector representatives of the Member States and thereby increasing the intra-OIC tourism. He also stressed that this Forum would be very instrumental to improve the quality of tourism products and services as well as increase the competitiveness of the enterprises in the member states. He further stated that COMCEC would continue to extend its full support to the cooperation exertions within the framework of this Forum.
8. Mr. Abdunur SEKINDI, the representative of the OIC General Secretariat, welcomed the participants to the meeting and underscored the importance that the OIC attaches to the tourism sector as one of the major economic activities through which it can achieve its objectives such as poverty eradication and increasing intra-OIC trade. He further emphasized the importance of private sector involvement in the OIC activities.

First Working Session: Sustainable and Community Based Tourism in the World and the OIC Region: Policies, Strategies and Tools

9. At the outset, Mr. Umut ÜNAL, the representative of SESRIC, made a presentation on the current situation and common challenges of the OIC Member Countries in the field of tourism. In his presentation, he provided among others, the figures on the intra-OIC Tourism including tourist arrivals and tourism receipts.
10. As the keynote speaker, Dr. Gül GÜNEŞ, made a presentation on sustainable development for tourism destinations. In her presentation, she mentioned some case studies related to sustainable tourism. She stressed the importance of local authenticity for the development of sustainable tourism in the OIC countries. Furthermore, she pointed out that sustainability should be given due regard for all type of tourism activities.
11. Ms. Arzu Emel YILDIZ, from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Turkey, made a presentation on sustainable tourism, focusing on green star certification projects. In her presentation, she provided main figures regarding the tourism sector in Turkey. In her presentation, she particularly touched upon the details of the “Environmentally Friendly Accommodation Facility Certification Project” of Turkey with related to sustainable tourism.

12. On behalf of the UNDP Turkey, Ms Pelin KIHTIR ÖZTÜRK presented two UNDP Projects, namely “Alliances for Culture Tourism in Eastern Anatolia” and “Tourism Development in Eastern Anatolia” implemented in Kars and Çoruh Valley, in Turkey, respectively.
13. Following the presentation of the UNDP, Mr. Muhamad Fadhli B. ZAINUL ABIDIN from Malaysia shared his country’s experience in sustainable tourism and presented the Malaysian project namely “Home-Stay Programme”. He concluded his presentation with some figures demonstrating the success of this sustainable tourism programme in terms of both tourist arrivals and tourism revenues.
14. Lastly, Mr. Dilmurad SABIROV from Uzbekistan presented his country experience in Sustainable Tourism and highlighted the importance of joint tour programmes among the member countries to increase intra-OIC tourist arrivals.

Second Working Session: *The Role of Private Sector in Sustainable Tourism and Community Based Tourism*

15. The Second working Session started with the presentations of Association of Turkish Travel Agencies (TURSAB) and Turkish Hoteliers Federation (TUROFED) on Turkish experience in sustainable tourism. In the presentations, the contribution of sustainable tourism development to the private sector and the vitality of sustainable and community based tourism for the future of the industry were underlined.
16. Following the presentations, the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran mentioned about the necessity of developing joint advertising programmes in tourism.
17. Lastly, the participants deliberated on sustainable and community based tourism and shared their experience and knowledge in this regard.

18. RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on the discussions and presentations, the Forum:

- Emphasized the significance of sustainable and community based tourism for the OIC region and raising awareness of all relevant stake holders in the member countries.
- Underlined the importance of developing joint tour and advertising programmes.
- Welcomed the offer of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Turkey to organize a training program on “Management of Hotels and Travel Agencies” in April 2013.

- Called upon the member countries and their private sector entities to actively participate in the following tourism events to be organized by the ICDT:
 - The 2nd OIC Tourism Fair (Cairo, Egypt – 20-23 December, 2012)
 - The 1st OIC Trade Handicraft Exhibition of the OIC Member States (Casablanca, Morocco – 11-14 April, 2013)

19. The meeting ended with vote of thanks.