

**REPORT OF THE 4th MEETING OF
THE OIC/COMCEC PRIVATE SECTOR TOURISM FORUM**

***“Promoting Muslim Friendly Tourism (MFT) Products and Services
in the OIC Member Countries”
(14-15 January 2016, Istanbul, Turkey)***

1. The 4th Meeting of the OIC/COMCEC Private Sector Tourism Forum was held on 14-15 January 2016 in İstanbul with the theme of “Promoting Muslim Friendly Tourism (MFT) Products and Services in the OIC Member Countries.”
2. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Ramazan Bahadır ÇOKÇEVİK, Deputy Director General from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Turkey.
3. The Meeting agreed on the following Agenda items:
 - International Tourism in the OIC Member Countries: Prospects and Challenges
 - Global/ Regional Trends and Policies in Promoting MFT Products and Services Challenges and Obstacles Facing by the Private Sector of the Member Countries in Promoting MFT Products and Services
 - Success Stories of the Private Sector of the Member Countries in Promoting MFT Products and Services
4. The Meeting was attended by the public and private sector representatives from the following Member States of the OIC:
 - People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
 - Republic of Azerbaijan
 - Republic of Djibouti
 - Islamic Republic of Iran
 - Islamic Republic of Mauritania
 - Federal Republic of Nigeria
 - Republic of Sudan
 - Republic of Turkey
5. In addition to the OIC General Secretariat and COMCEC Coordination Office (CCO), representatives of the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC), Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT) have also attended the Meeting.

(The list of participants is attached in Annex-I).
6. At the outset, Mr. Ramazan Bahadır ÇOKÇEVİK, Deputy Director General from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Turkey welcomed the participants to the meeting and highlighted the importance of tourism sector for the Member Countries and pointed out the crucial role to be played by the OIC/COMCEC Private Sector Tourism Forum for enhancing cooperation among the Member Countries. He expressed that the meeting would pave the way for fruitful exchange of views and cooperation in that respect.
7. In his opening statement, Mr. Selçuk KOÇ, Director at the COMCEC Coordination Office, highlighted the MFT as an important sub-category of tourism for Muslim travellers. He expressed that a growing number of Muslim travelers have become

recently more Halal conscious and prefer Muslim-Friendly services. Mr. KOÇ stated that certain needs and requirements such as certified halal food, clean prayer facilities, iftar and sahoor services during the Holy Ramadhan and recreational facilities with privacy need to be taken into consideration while designing the supply side of MFT. Underlining the importance of the existing tourism cooperation instruments under the COMCEC, such as COMCEC Tourism Working Group and the OIC/COMCEC Private Sector Tourism Forum, Mr. KOÇ stressed that with the enhanced ownership of the Member States and their private sector representatives, the Forum would play a vital role for enhancing cooperation and communication among the private sector representatives of the Member Countries.

- **International Tourism in the OIC Member Countries: Prospects and Challenges**

8. Mr. Cem TINTİN, Researcher at Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESERIC) made a presentation titled “International Tourism in the OIC Countries: Prospects and Challenges.” He shared the figures related to international tourism and Islamic tourism in the Member Countries. He also mentioned about the challenges faced by the Member Countries in MFT and presented some recommendations to address them.

- **Global/ Regional Trends and Policies in Promoting MFT Products and Services**

9. Mr. Rafiuddin SHIKOH, the CEO of the Dinarstandard, made a presentation on global and regional trends and policies in promoting MFT products and services. In his presentation, Mr. SHIKOH has informed the participants about the current momentum and drivers of MFT market, profile of MFT products and services as well as the key challenges and opportunities in this market. It was stressed that MFT is a part of a global Muslim lifestyle economy trend, which includes many core sectors such as food, finance, clothing media, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics. He also stated that despite the Islamic financing limitations, falling oil revenues and lack of standards on MFT, the demand side of this sector is very strong and will continue to increase.
10. Mr. Bilal DOMAH, the CEO of CM Media made a presentation on “Muslim Travel Index Europe”. Mr. DOMAH has informed the participants regarding a research on the muslim consumers’ faith-based preferences. He expressed that, according to the research, providing halal food and appropriate praying facilities are some of the important issues underlined by Muslim consumers.

- **Challenges and Obstacles Facing by the Private Sector of the Member Countries in Promoting MFT Products and Services**

11. Mr. Kemal TOZLU from Adenya Hotel and Mr. Akın ARIKAN, Co-organizer of “Halal Tourism Conference 2016” have made presentations. Mr. ARIKAN stated that as the fourth largest industry in the world, “Halal Tourism” expenditures are expected to reach \$240 billion in five years. He also stressed that muslim travelers prefer to experiencing different destinations with their traditional choices. He stated that this would be an opportunity for every country to benefit from Halal Tourism Market.

12. After the presentations, participants raised their questions and comments. The participants highlighted the following challenges in muslim friendly tourism in the OIC Member Countries:

- Lack of awareness about MFT
- Insufficient investments in muslim friendly tourism
- Inadequate technical know-how and promotional activity in MFT
- Lack of standards and regulations in MFT

- **Success Stories of the Private Sector of the Member Countries in Promoting MFT Products and Services**

13. In this Session, Mr. Yasin DURMAZ from Adenya Hotel made a presentation and shared their experience in muslim friendly tourism.

- **Wrap-up Session:**

Based on the discussions and presentations, the Forum:

- Emphasized the importance of raising the awareness about MFT not only in the OIC Member Countries, but also in Non-OIC World.
- Considering the growing muslim population and their increasing disposable income, underlined the need for developing more MFT products and services.
- Underlined the importance of increasing investments in MFT particularly through utilizing Public Private Partnerships.
- Highlighted the importance of experience sharing, technical cooperation and capacity building programs among the Member Countries in Muslim-Friendly Tourism.
- Emphasized the significance of developing and harmonizing standards in Muslim-Friendly Tourism in the OIC Member Countries and stressed that SMIIC should be utilized for this purpose.
- Also highlighted the importance of the SMIIC's technical committee on tourism for considering the issues related to Islamic tourism standards.
- Highlighted the significance of effective utilization of the existing mechanisms under the OIC/COMCEC for enhancing cooperation in MFT.
- Encouraged the Member Countries to register and participate actively to the COMCEC Tourism Working Group through their relevant national institutions to benefit from the project financing mechanism of the COMCEC Strategy, for developing and implementing multilateral cooperation projects.

14. The meeting ended with vote of thanks.

- **Side Event: B2B Meetings**

15. The private sector representatives of the Member Countries got the chance to conduct B2B Meetings with their counterparts on January 15th, 2016.
