

**Report of the 11th Meeting of the
OIC/COMCEC Private Sector Tourism Forum
(7 November 2023, Virtual Meeting)**

1. The 11th Meeting of the OIC/COMCEC Private Sector Tourism Forum was held on November 7, 2023 as a virtual meeting with the theme of "The Prospects and Challenges of Climate-friendly Tourism in the Era of Sustainability".
2. The meeting was chaired by Ms. Bařak ÖNSAL DEMİR, Coordinator of Multilateral Relations Branch at the Directorate of EU and Foreign Relations in the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Turkey.
3. The Meeting agreed on the following Agenda items:
 - State of Climate-friendly and Sustainable Tourism in OIC Member Countries
 - Activities to promote climate-friendly and sustainable tourism
 - Adaptation of private sector and regulations in tourism
 - International and inter-sectoral joint strategies.
 - Awareness raising among local communities and travelers.
4. The Meeting was attended by the public and private sector representatives from the following Member and Observer States:
 - Republic of Albania
 - Republic of Azerbaijan
 - Burkina Faso
 - Republic of Côte d'Ivoire
 - Arab Republic of Egypt
 - Republic of Gambia
 - Republic of Indonesia
 - Republic of Iraq
 - Kingdom of Jordan
 - State of Kuwait
 - Malaysia
 - Maldives
 - Republic of Mali
 - Kingdom of Morocco
 - Republic of Mozambique
 - Federal Republic of Nigeria
 - Islamic Republic of Pakistan
 - State of Palestine
 - State of Qatar
 - Republic of Sierra Leone
 - Kingdom of Thailand

- Republic of Togo
- Turkmenistan
- Republic of Türkiye
- United Arab Emirates
- Republic of Uganda
- Republic of Uzbekistan

5. In addition to the COMCEC Coordination Office (CCO), representatives from the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC), UNDP Türkiye, Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), ICCIA, SMIIC, World Tourism Organization, and some other guests attended the Meeting.
6. At the outset, Ms. Başak ÖNSAL DEMİR, Coordinator of Multilateral Relations Branch at the Directorate of EU and Foreign Relations in the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Türkiye, delivered an opening speech and welcomed the participants to the meeting.
7. In his opening statement, Mr. Can AYGÜL, the Head of the Department at COMCEC at the COMCEC Coordination Office (CCO), has drawn attention to such challenges of climate change as reducing economic growth and causing political instability in many nations. Indicating that creation of a strategic plan to cope with challenges of climate change would include both public and private sector representatives as well as tourist, Mr. Aygül stated that the efforts to make tourism sector sustainable and develop eco-friendly tourism destinations would ensure the protection of environment, creation of new employment opportunities for local communities and improvement of new and modern infrastructure, all of which would contribute to social welfare and source efficiency.
8. In her opening statement, Ms. Gözde ŞAHİN, Acting Director of Dire Deputy General Director of Directorate of EU and Foreign Relations, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Republic of Türkiye, has stated the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic as an unexpected challenge on the global tourism industry and highlighted Turkey's efforts, including economic support and the Safe Tourism Certification Program, leading to a successful recovery with over 50 million visitors in 2022. Indicating that the focus is now shifting towards a sustainable and inclusive tourism industry, Ms. Şahin has drawn attention to the importance of addressing climate change challenges. She has emphasized the significance of using local resources, preserving heritage, and creating climate-friendly tourism experiences in collaboration with communities. Expressing for urgent measures to prioritize a green transformation due to the direct impact of climate change on the travel sector, Ms. Şahin has highlighted the promotion of climate-friendly practices for both environmental and economic benefits. She also expressed that the OIC/COMCEC Private Sector Tourism Forum is acknowledged as a valuable platform for international collaboration and knowledge exchange in developing innovative and responsible tourism products and services.

9. In her opening statement, Ms. Başak ÖNSAL DEMİR, also the Moderator, stressed the importance of the Forum meetings as a platform to exchange the views of public and private sector representatives to be able to identify the potential collaboration areas and the current needs for welfare and development. Emphasizing the current era's focus on sustainability, defining development based on ecological, economic, and ethical criteria, Ms. Demir has stated that tourism is recognized as a contributor to all 17 sustainable development goals, particularly in inclusive economic growth, sustainable consumption and production, and the sustainable use of oceans and marine resources. Drawing attention to the global crisis, including regional conflicts, economic recession and climate change issues, Ms. Demir underlined the climate change as a serious threat to both developing and mature destinations worldwide, impacting communities. She expressed that achieving environmental sustainability and green transition is acknowledged as challenging issue which requires a scientific perspective, policy regulation, budgets, know-how, and long-term commitments.
10. Mr. Dirk GLASSER, Director at the Department of Sustainable Development of Tourism in the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), made a presentation entitled “Climate Action in Global Tourism Sector”. He stressed the importance of commitments in sustainability from both member states and tourism sector stakeholders as well as UNWTO. Expressing the urgency of transformation in tourism sector, Mr. Glasser warned the risks posed by unsustainable actions. He shared UNWTO’s recommendations for climate action in the tourism sector in addition to its works and achievements in sustainability.
11. Mr. Davron ISHNAZAROV, Researcher at Economic and Social Research Department in Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC) shared some significant information and details about strategies and actions in OIC countries and SESRIC’s efforts in his presentation entitled “Sustainable Tourism in OIC Member Countries”. He stressed the importance of Tourism Industry to OIC countries and some challenges faced in member states including limited strategies, weak adoption of innovation and know-how, lack of unified standards and diversifications, and underutilization of sustainable tourism. Mentioning also about SESRIC’s programs and trainings on sustainability, Mr. Ishnazarov expressed the importance of improving coordination among public institutions, standards on managing protected areas and developing joint tourism promotion strategies in sustainability and climate friendly tourism.
12. Ms. Saniye Pınar MUTLU, Director in Türkiye Tourism Promotion and Development Agency shared Türkiye’s experiences and activities in the field of sustainability and transformation in her presentation titled “Sustainable Destination Management: Transformation of Tourism Industry and Destinations”. She mentioned Türkiye’s National Sustainable Tourism Program and importance of using education and

awareness as a basis for policy making, measurement and evaluation, and certification for businesses and government agencies and other types of organizations.

13. Ms. Aslı ÇAKIN, Project Manager in United Nations Development Programme (UNDP Türkiye) shared information about a sustainable and green destination model developed with the partnership of ENERJİSA, Sabancı University and UNDP Türkiye in her presentation entitled “Centre for Tourism Practices Based on Sustainable Energy (SENTRUM)”. She explained why tourism is important as a means to improve lives, livelihoods, and contribute to the achievement of the sustainable development goals. Ms. Çakın also mentioned about transformation achieved by SENTRUM project in Küçükköy, Türkiye, including a Net Zero Energy Building, application of energy-efficient technologies and practices reducing coal consumption, use of renewable energy systems.
14. Mr. Ranto GULTOM, Head of Sustainable Tourism Village Certification in Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy of Republic of Indonesia, talked about Indonesia’s practices in sustainable tourism and the country’s performance in Travel and Tourism Development Index in his presentation entitled “Sustainable Tourism Development in Indonesia: Initiatives and Programs”. He expressed importance of Tourism Village - Community Based Tourism as a responsible tourism action. Mr. Gultom also shared the benefits of Tourism Village Certification including awareness raising and responsible development.
15. Ms. Başak ÖNSAL DEMİR, the Moderator, concluded the meeting by thanking all of the distinguished participants and speakers for their invaluable efforts and contributions. She wrapped up the previous sessions and presented the conclusions.
16. The participants highlighted the following items to develop and promote a climate friendly tourism:
 - Environmental sustainability and taking necessary measures for green transition in tourism and travel has been the most challenging dimension for destinations and policy makers, requiring scientific perspective, data, policy, regulation, budget, know-how and long term commitment.
 - Green transformation in tourism has been possible only through the widespread and willful support of all actors at all levels. Multilateralism and knowledge sharing is key to develop a sustainable and holistic tourism strategy.
 - Successful implementation of climate friendly policies, adopting regulations and making responsible public investments require communication with private sector and participatory framework.

- Public and private sector, SMEs and travelers share responsibility in developing more sustainable tourism and travel.
- Raising awareness about sustainability and adoption of measures also helps to preserve local communities, traditional life styles, and wildlife, natural and cultural heritage.
- In OIC countries, in order to cope with lack of awareness, experience, or strategic policies we need to develop more trainings and capacity building projects.
- In order to harness the full potential of sustainable tourism in OIC, joint international promotion and marketing activities shall be developed.

17. The meeting ended with vote of thanks.