

Training Course on “Halal Tourism and Muslim-Friendly Hospitality Services”

22 – 26 March 2021, 10:00 AM, Turkey Time

Opening Statement of H.E. Mr. Nebil DABUR Director General of SESRIC

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

**Excellences, Dear Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,
السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته**

Very Good Day to all of you

- **I am pleased to welcome you all to the training course on “Halal Tourism and Muslim-Friendly Hospitality Services”, which we are organising within the framework of our Centre’s Tourism Capacity Building Programme (Tourism-CaB).**
- **Let me, at the outset, express my sincere thanks and appreciation to H.E. Dato’ Dr. Mohmed Razip HASAN, the Director General of Islamic Tourism Centre in Malaysia, for accepting our invitation to contribute technically to this training through nominating competent experts to provide this important training course for the benefit of the staff at the National Tourism Office of Comoros.**
- **My sincere thanks and appreciation are also extended to H.E. Mr. Mohamed RACHIDI, the Executive Director of the National Tourism Office of Comoros, for accepting our proposal to organize**

this training course virtually online for the benefit of the staff of their Esteemed Institution through video conferencing platform.

- **We are organising this training course with a view to enhancing knowledge exchange and sharing of expertise among the national institutions of our member countries working in the domain of tourism, especially during these difficult times of the global COVID-19 pandemic crisis in which the tourism sector has been severely affected.**

Dear Participants,

- **As we all know, in recent decades, tourism has become one of the main economic activities and an important source of foreign exchange earnings, economic growth and employment in many countries around the world where almost 10% of the world total GDP is generated by this sector.**
- **According to the last year's edition of SESRIC report on "International Tourism in the OIC Countries", tourism earnings in OIC member countries were recorded at 182 billion USD in 2018. The contribution of international tourism to the total GDP of the OIC member countries as a group recorded, on average, at almost 9% in 2018. However, this trend has been**

disrupted by COVID-19 pandemic with an anticipated loss of 39 to 58 billion USD in the total tourism receipts of the OIC member countries.

- In fact, the OIC countries, as a group, have a significant potential for the development of a sustainable tourism sector due to their rich and diverse natural, historical, cultural, and religious tourism attractions.**
- However, many OIC countries are still facing a number of challenges that hinder the development of sustainable tourism sector. These challenges range from political and security instability to the lack of adequate tourism investment and efficient tourism infrastructures and from the lack of tourism destination management and marketing policies and strategies to the inefficient diversification of tourism products and services.**
- In this context, it is worth mentioning that one of the high potential tourism segments that has recently emerged in the international tourism market over the last two decades is the “Muslim Friendly Tourism” or what is also called “Halal Tourism”, which is the subject of this training course.**
- The concept of “Muslim Friendly Tourism” or “Halal Tourism” goes beyond simply removing alcohol from the hotel facilities or**

providing a prayer rug in a hotel room. It is a broad concept that covers many pillars starting from organizing tours by observing prayer times to designing family friendly common facilities with some privacy in hotel establishments.

- Since an increasing number of Muslims across the world prefer using tourism facilities that are Sharia'h compliant and provide services in line with the Islamic principles, the trend of Halal tourism services goes up both globally and within the OIC member countries. According to the latest available data, 140 million international Muslim tourists were recorded in 2018, and this number is expected to reach 230 million by 2026.**
- So, in order for OIC countries to utilize the potential of such an increasing trend of Muslim Friendly Tourism, there is a need for raising awareness and collaboration among all public and private tourism stakeholders working in the domain of tourism, including tour operators, hotel managements, relevant ministries, religious authorities and academicians. Therefore, this topic has become an important issue at the OIC agenda in the domain of tourism cooperation.**

Dear participants,

- **Our Centre (SESRIC) has over the years initiated and implemented many programmes and activities in the domain of tourism within the scope of its mandated areas for the benefit of the OIC member countries.**
- **Within the framework of its Tourism Capacity Building Programme (Tourism-CaB) SESRIC has been organising since 2015 training courses, training workshops, symposiums and study visits on various technical aspects related to tourism sector development with a view to enhancing the technical capacities and share experience and best practices among the national institutions working in the domain of tourism in OIC countries.**
- **SESRIC also prepares various technical background reports and research studies to analyse the current situation of tourism development at the OIC level and to suggest appropriate policy actions that need to be taken in order to face the challenges and strengthen the intra-OIC cooperation in tourism sector.**
- **In this context, I would like to inform you that SESRIC prepares the regular technical background report titled “International Tourism in the OIC Member Countries: Prospects and Challenges”, that is submitted to the Sessions of the OIC Islamic**

Conference of Tourism Ministers since the first Conference in 2000.

- **SESRIC also prepared the “Strategic Roadmap for Development of Islamic Tourism in OIC Member Countries”, a technical document which was adopted by the 10th Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers (ICTM) held in Dhaka, Bangladesh in 2018.**

Dear Participants,

- **It is during these difficult times that the OIC member countries need to show solidarity and joint Islamic action more than ever before to slowdown and eradicate the effect of the pandemic on their economies. And, in particular to strengthen and revive the tourism sector and ensure sustainable Halal Tourism services.**
- **I believe that this training course, which aims at providing insights on the new trends, the opportunities and challenges in developing and marketing Halal tourism, will make a positive impact and add value to the work and experience of all the participants.**
- **Before concluding, I would like to thank you all once again and wish you a fruitful exchange of experiences and a successful training throughout the upcoming days.**

Thank you, والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته