

## **The Report of the First D-8 Tourism Investment Forum ( Tehran, 2 March 2009)**

At the First D-8 Ministerial Meeting of Tourism Cooperation in Tehran in May 2008, it was agreed to promote tourism cooperation among the D-8 member countries. It was also in this meeting that the initiative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to host the First D-8 Tourism Investment Forum in Iran with the aim of exchanging views on the latest issues, developments and trends in the fast growing areas of tourism and seeking the possibility of formulating a concrete D-8 cooperation program on investment in tourism industry and business was welcomed and appreciated by the member countries.

Based on the above, the Islamic Republic of Iran hosted the First D-8 Tourism Investment Forum in Tehran on 2 March 2009. The Forum was attended by delegates from the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Republic of Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Malaysia, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Republic of Turkey , the representative from Nigeria and the Director of D-8 Secretariat. The full list of the delegations is attached as Annex I.

The Forum aimed at exploring and drawing cooperation on Tourism Investment within the D-8 member countries as mandated by the First D-8 Ministerial Meeting of Tourism Cooperation in Tehran and endorsed by the 6<sup>th</sup> D-8 Summit held in Kuala Lumpur.

The Forum was chaired by Dr. Hadi Soleimanpour Advisor to the Vice President and the Head of the ICHTO. In his welcoming remarks, Dr. Soleimanpour stated that based on the decision of the First D-8 Ministerial Meeting on Tourism Cooperation in Tehran on May 2008, which was endorsed by the 6<sup>th</sup> D-8 Summit, we have gathered together to establish cooperation on tourism among the D-8 member countries. We are of the view that there are ample opportunities in tourism cooperation within the D-8 member countries. Nowadays, tourism is a fast growing industry worldwide and can play an imminent role in improving the economic development and poverty alleviation of the developing world in general and the D-8 member countries in particular. He further stated that there is a need to enhance tourism joint actions on the areas of common interest.

H.E. Mr. Fazeli, the Vice President of the Cultural Heritage, Handicraft and Tourism Organization of the Islamic Republic of Iran in his inaugural statement expressed his appreciation to all participants attending the Forum and expressed hope that with a constructive exchange of views on this important subject, the Forum will produce new ideas for the attainment of common D-8 objectives. He emphasized that the main objective of holding this Forum is to identify potentials and constraints of the member countries in joint investment in tourism industry, formulate efficient rules and regulations that can support and facilitate sustainable cooperation in this field. He expressed optimism that the outcome of the Forum will lead to the adoption of recommendations that would strengthen tourism cooperation within the D-8.

### **Adoption of the Agenda**

The Forum adopted its agenda (Annex I).

During the Forum, delegates from the Republic of Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Malaysia and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan presented their country reports on the latest development and activities in tourism industry.

### **The Forum agreed on the followings:**

- Given the existence of capacities of the member countries in the area of tourism investment, the Group proposed that the Secretariat should prepare a complete report about challenges, barriers and capacities of tourism cooperation within the D-8 member countries and provide it to the members. Member countries are invited to provide relevant information in this regard to the Secretariat within three months.
- The Forum agreed that the functions of D-8 tourism investment fund should include, inter alia, supporting activities such as :
  - 1- financial support for operationalizing data bank
  - 2- capacity enhancement and training on Tourism.
  - 3- providing part of the loan facilities interest rates, extracted from the execution of the investment project.
- The member countries agreed on establishing Data Bank for Investment in Tourism Industry, and asked the Secretariat to

prepare the unified format of compiling related information and do the necessary arrangements for insertion of the said information into the D-8 website. In this regard, the member countries are requested to send their proposals to the Secretariat.

- On possibility of having a Joint Tourism Investment Company, Member Countries agreed to forward their views on the establishment of a mechanism to assist private sectors to find out suitable projects to invest. The member countries are invited to provide relevant information and suggestions to the Secretariat then the Secretariat with the assistance of Turkey will compile and circulate for the consideration by next meeting.
- On the Rules and Regulations governing investment in Tourism Industry, the meeting agreed that member countries are requested to submit their relevant regulations to the Secretariat and the latter is called upon to prepare a comparative report on common regulations facilitating investments in D-8 within three months.
- The meeting welcomed the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran to prepare a study report on the possibility of the reduction of tariffs for handicrafts and cultural products within D-8.
- The Forum agreed to provide their views on the Tourism Action Plan based on D-8 10 year Road Map regarding tourism to the Secretariat to be circulated among member countries for consideration of the next meeting.
- The meeting agreed on the proposal made by Iran to conduct a joint marketing, investment and destination management system within D-8.

The private sector of the Islamic Republic of Iran presented two mega projects namely Shandiz Selected International Tourism Site(SSITS) and T.S.I, as examples of promoting industry investment sector in Iran. The D-8 member countries are invited to consider the participation of their private sectors.

The delegations expressed their deep appreciation to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the great hospitality and excellent arrangements made for the successful Forum.