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Chairman of Qatar Tourism Authority speaks at Minister's Summit in London

As part of World Travel Market's Ministers' Program, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) partnered for the third time with World Travel Market (WTM) to host a half day Ministers' Summit at this year's event in London on Tuesday 10 November on "Roadmap for Recovery: Sustainable tourism in challenging times".

The program was organized along three critical panel sessions, each one addressing travel and tourism in light of the global economic crisis and examining new solutions to overcome serious long term issues such as climate change and poverty.

The conference was addressed by Dr. Taleb Rifai, the Secretary General of the UNWTO, who outlined latest trends in global tourism as well as challenges the industry must face.

Mr. Ahmed Al Nuaimi, Chairman of Qatar Tourism Authority (QTA) addressed the congress of tourism ministers and senior government officials yesterday on the subject of positioning travel and tourism in the global agenda.

Joining the Chairman on the panel were H.E. Dato Sri Dr. Ng Yen Yen, Minister of Tourism, Malaysia; H.E. Mr. Predrag Nenezic, Minister of Tourism, Montenegro; and Mr. Jean-Claude Baumgarten, President of WTTC.

The panel was moderated by Mr. Jose Luis Zorenda, Executive Vice President, Exceltur.

"Qatar has embraced tourism as an absolute necessity for our national future for two primary reasons: international dialogue and sustainability," said Mr. Al Nuaimi.

"By encouraging tourism as a cross-cultural dialogue, we promote economic stimulation both within our nation and with our international partners."

The panel debate concentrated on how the private sector is handling the economic downturn and the partnership between government and business.

Tourism can be used as a major tool to rebuild and stimulate economies suffering from the economic downturn. Tourism is a well-known generator of employment.

"Investment in the education, training and development of the tourism labor force is critical to secure the future of the industry and to provide reassurance and safety to our visitors,"

said Mr. Al Nuaimi.

Qatar Tourism Authority is working closely with regional counterparts to develop training workshops for participants from around the GCC, and works closely with the local universities offering degrees in hospitality to provide internships and job opportunities.

Mr. Al Nuaimi also pointed to the direction Qatar has taken to become a premier business destination, and a desired destination for exhibitions and conferences in the region.

"Qatar has invested domestically and internationally to encourage tourism in our nation. While the majority of our visitors come for business, we are an open country and we encourage travelers from our region and abroad to explore our unique heritage. We welcome business in Qatar and we encourage our visitors to return frequently."

Staged annually in London, WTM is a four day business to business event presenting a diverse range of destinations and industry sectors to UK and international travel professionals. The event will run through November 12.