



## Media Report



# Media Report On the Occasion of World Tourism Day 27 September 2011

September | **2011**

## **The World Tourism Day**

The World Tourism Day aims at raising awareness of the international community and emphasizing the importance of tourism, and its social, cultural, political and economic values. The world celebrates the World Tourism Day on 27 September each year since 1980, by organizing activities appropriate to the topics chosen by the General Assembly, for the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), which is based in Madrid, Spain. Its membership includes 161 nations and more than 300 affiliate members representing the private sector, educational institutions, tourism associations and local tourism authorities.

The theme of this year's World Tourism Day, "Tourism – linking cultures", highlights the powerful role of tourism in building international understanding and mutual respect.

## **The importance of the tourism sector**

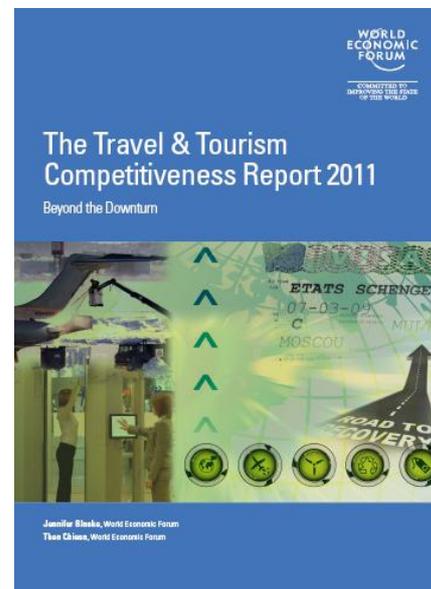
Since the early sixties of last century, global tourism has been growing speedily, taking advantage of the rapid developments in air transport, maritime and land transport. Today tourism is an integrated industry which embodies planning, investment, construction, marketing and promotion. It is an industry with multiple stages, which interacts with and depends on other sectors of the economy. Tourism is a catalyst in the process of economic development, and in supporting infrastructure.

The level of performance in tourism sector depends on raising performance and productivity in other related sectors, as well as development of supporting services, in infrastructure-related sectors such as transport, communications, electricity and water. However, the construction and development of modern touristic sites and facilities should not be accompanied by difficulties related to comfort, cost or time.

There is a close relationship between the development tourism sector, and economic development, due to the importance of tourism in generating large amounts of foreign currency earnings, creating employment opportunities, as well as attracting additional investments necessary for the development of basic services in areas adjacent to the touristic sites; and hence spurring the development of other sectors. Developed countries, thus, pay much attention to the promotion of tourism, and introduce additional attractions and activities to cater for the needs of the different categories of tourists, which consequentially would raise the contribution of this sector to GDP.

Despite the fact that developing countries have a lot of cultural and touristic sites, which are competitive in terms of their low prices, but their share in global tourism is still very small, due to obstacles, restrictions, lack of investment in infrastructure and basic services, lack of specialized human

cadres, absence of clear visions and specific policies for development and marketing of tourism in these countries.



## The competitiveness of travel and tourism sector

The World Economic Forum, has for the past 4 years, issued the “Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report”, in cooperation with many international organizations, offering significant data and statistics on travel and tourism, which provides a platform for multi-stakeholder dialogue to ensure effecting development of Travel & Tourism industry and raise competitiveness of different countries in this sector.

The report ranks nations according to the “Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index” (ITCI), which measures factors and policies relating to travel and tourism sectors, and which affect competitiveness of countries in this sector.

The general index is made of three main sub-indices: (1) the regulatory framework index; (2) the business environment and infrastructure index; and (3) human, cultural, and natural resources index.

Each of these three indices includes a set of variables, comprising laws and regulations, environmental sustainability, security, health, travel and tourism

priorities, the infrastructure of air and road transport, tourism, information and communications technology, human resources, etc...

The Report particularly highlights Switzerland's success at taking the leading position in the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI) rankings for the third year in a row as it recorded 5.68 points, followed by France 5.5 points, Austria, Sweden, United States, Britain, Spain, Canada and Singapore.

## The competitiveness of travel and tourism sector in UAE

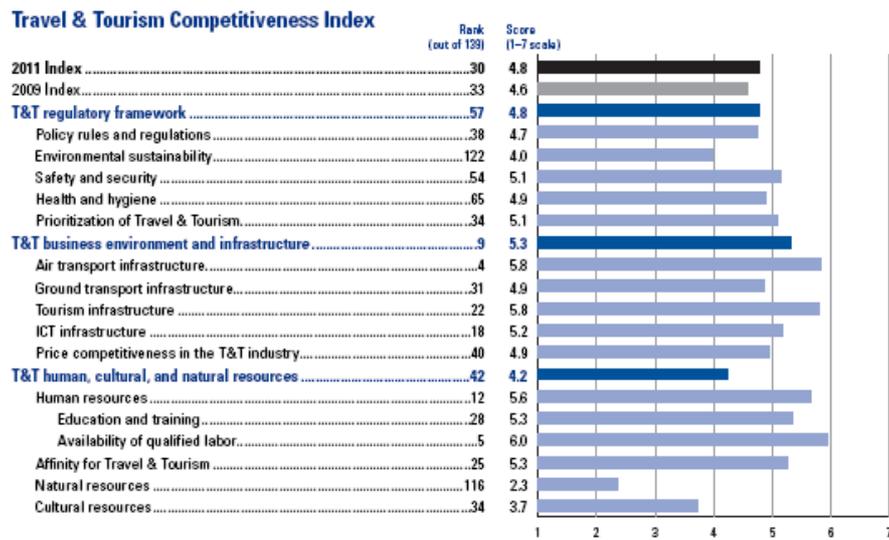
The UAE government under the leadership of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, (may God protect him), and his perceptive vision for building a sound and sustainable economic environment, attaches great importance to the travel and tourism sector as a tool for strengthening the country's position on the international tourism map. The UAE has been ranked 30<sup>th</sup> among 139 countries covered by the "Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2011", issued by the World Economic Forum under the theme "Moving beyond the Downturn". The UAE ranked first in the Middle East among countries with most advanced travel and tourism sectors, having achieved 4.78 points.

### The Ranking of the Middle East Region according to the Report

Country/Economy	OVERALL INDEX			T&T regulatory framework		T&T business environment and infrastructure		T&T human, cultural, and natural resources	
	Regional rank	Overall rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score
United Arab Emirates	1	30	4.78	57	4.77	9	5.32	42	4.24
Bahrain	2	40	4.47	62	4.66	20	5.06	78	3.69
Qatar	3	42	4.45	43	5.02	34	4.69	90	3.64
Israel	4	46	4.41	41	5.04	42	4.33	65	3.67
Tunisia	5	47	4.39	31	5.17	54	4.05	59	3.94
Oman	6	61	4.18	61	4.67	47	4.18	76	3.69
Saudi Arabia	7	62	4.17	81	4.39	41	4.35	70	3.77
Jordan	8	64	4.14	37	5.09	72	3.61	74	3.73
Lebanon	9	70	4.03	78	4.42	63	3.86	69	3.80
Egypt	10	75	3.96	70	4.53	74	3.59	71	3.77
Morocco	11	78	3.93	69	4.55	77	3.50	73	3.74
Kuwait	12	95	3.69	109	3.94	60	3.92	126	3.19
Syria	13	105	3.49	101	4.17	109	2.91	113	3.39
Algeria	14	113	3.37	112	3.87	110	2.89	116	3.35
Iran, Islamic Rep.	15	114	3.37	131	3.43	103	3.03	91	3.64
Libya	16	124	3.25	122	3.64	107	2.92	125	3.19

The report estimated the contribution of travel and tourism sector to the State's GDP in 2010 to be around 16.6%, amounting to \$42.56 billion (AED156.3 billion). Noting that Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Sharjah accounted for 93% of the total contribution of tourism sector in the country's GDP, The report predicts that the average growth of the sector's contribution to the GDP in UAE, will be more than 8.1% annually during the period from 2011 to 2020, indicating that the total number of workers in this sector, exceeds 429 thousand persons, comprising 13.8% of the total labor force in the country. The report predicts that the demand for jobs in the tourism sector will grow by 5.7 percent per year until 2020.

## The UAE Indicators



The progress of the UAE and its stance ahead of many of the ancient tourism destinations, despite the moderate natural resources of tourism sector in UAE, is mainly due to the improved classification of cultural resources, as UAE had stepped up in this sub-index from the 84<sup>th</sup> rank in 2009, to 34<sup>th</sup> position this year, backed by the unique characteristics for tourists and travelers in the “familiarity index”, as it was ranked 25<sup>th</sup> globally.



The continuing development of tourism infrastructure in UAE has enhanced the country's ranking and position, especially in the structure of the air transport sector as, it ranked 4<sup>th</sup> globally in the competitive index. The UAE has assumed the place globally in destinations marketing campaigns, through its distinguished presence in major travel and tourism international exhibitions. It also occupied third place for government priorities in this sector.

Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority (ADTA) statistics show that the number of hotel guests and hotel apartments in Abu Dhabi has risen by 10% during the first four months of this year, compared to the same period last year. This was accompanied by an increase of 26% in the number of hotel nights and an increase in occupancy levels, revenue and average periods of stay.

In Dubai, the hotels registered a growth of 14% in the number of visitors in the first quarter of this year, compared to the same period last year, and achieved an occupancy rate of 81%.

According to the “World Tourism Organization”, the number of tourists in the Middle East dropped by 7%, due to the recent events in the region, where the number of international tourists in the first four months of this year, amounted to 268 million tourists, compared to 256 million at the same period last year, growing by 4.5%. However, the UAE bucked the general trend in the Middle East, and recorded an increase in number of tourists

### **The most important tourism events in Abu Dhabi:**

Abu Dhabi hosts many tourism activities including:

- Abu Dhabi Adventure Challenge
- Al Ain Aerobatic Show
- Abu Dhabi Golf Championship
- International Culinary Arts Festival - Abu Dhabi
- Abu Dhabi International Triathlon Championship
- Abu Dhabi Desert Rally Challenge
- Summer in Abu Dhabi
- Rally Abu Dhabi
- Abu Dhabi Yacht Show
- Red Bull Air Race Abu Dhabi
- Gulf Incentive, Business, Travel and Meetings Exhibition
- World Green Tourism - Abu Dhabi

In addition, Abu Dhabi hosted many international sporting events such as Formula 1, and the FIFA Club World Cup which attracted many tourists from different countries of the world.

## **Pilot projects in Abu Dhabi:**

### **Sowwah Island:**

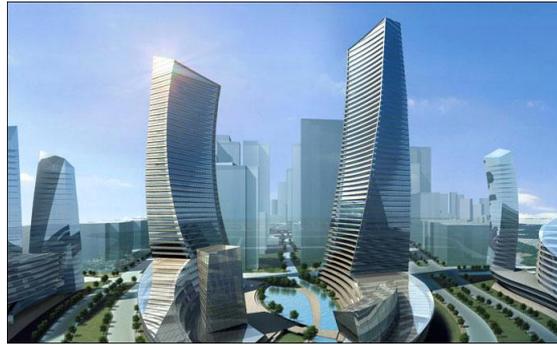
Sowwah Island is the heart of the new central business district in Abu Dhabi. The project provides a unique mix which includes high-end residential and commercial units, luxury business hotels, shops, department stores, medical centers, public facilities, gardens and open parks. The island will receive 75,000 employees every day in addition to 30,000 residents. The island's strategic location near the intersection of Reem Island, Port Zayed and the downtown area on the island of Abu Dhabi, constitutes the finest international standard multi-use area of business. The island features a fantastic central location with its fine transport infrastructure, which includes 13 bridges, metro-transportation system, quick trains, and pedestrian-friendly road network, integrated with Abu Dhabi network of roads and highways, giving more enhanced and smooth access to the island. The aesthetic design and architecture is made according to the highest international standards in terms of quality, effectiveness and sustainability.

The first phase of project development, have reached advanced levels, and the most important key achievements in this phase, is the first class business center, Sowwah square, the new headquarters for the Abu Dhabi Securities Market, Rosewood Hotel Abu Dhabi, and the Four Seasons Hotel Abu Dhabi, Hotel Viceroy Hotel Abu Dhabi and Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi.

### **Reem Island:**

Reem Island is located 600 meters from the coast of Abu Dhabi. The island development project is a largest and impressive tourism project, as a landmark and an important site of attractions in Abu Dhabi. In addition to being a first class commercial and residential destination in Abu Dhabi, the Island will provide a unique surrounding that combines the splendor of nature and urban modernity.

Reem Island will host iconic hotels, restaurants, parks, museums, aquarium, and amusement parks for children. The Island too, will care for a nature reserve.



### **Saadiyat Island:**

The rich diversity Saadiyat Island lies just 500 meters away from the coast and it is expected after the completion of the development process, to be a global touristic destination and a unique spectacular cultural landmark. Saadiyat occupies an area of 27 square kilometers, divided into seven distinct areas, with a developed area of 2600 hectares.

The Cultural District on Saadiyat Island, hosts the largest concentration of cultural institutions in the region, and is expected to become one of the most important cultural destinations in the world, and a key center for arts and culture in the Arab World. The Island includes: Zayed National Museum, the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, the Louvre Abu Dhabi, the Maritime Museum and Performing Arts Centre.

The island has a rich natural environment, and will be distinct place with its hotels, resorts, luxury residential and recreational facilities, business centers, golf courses, beach and cultural and architectural landmarks. There is no doubt that these features will make Saadiyat Island the focus of attention of tourists from around the world.

### **Yas Entertainment Island:**

Yas Island project is one of the most distinctive touristic projects, which will magnetize international attention. The recreational facilities spread over an area of 25 km<sup>2</sup>. Out of the total area of the Island nearly 17 km<sup>2</sup>, has been used for development projects.

The island is home to global car race track, luxury hotels, theme parks, yacht marinas and a golf course. The first phase of the project included the Yas Marina Circuit, seven hotels, the Yas Marina Yacht Club, Yas Links Golf Course, which is the first golf course of its kind in the region, and "Ferrari World Abu Dhabi," the largest covered theme park in the world which is inspired by the Ferrari cars. The iconic red roof of the Ferrari City extends over an area of 200 thousand square meters and holds the largest Ferrari logo in the world. The total area of covered region is 86 thousand square meters, enough to build seven football pitches full inside.



All of this encourages us to say that Abu Dhabi turn in the near future into one of the most attractive tourist destinations both regionally and globally.