

UN Tourism Regional Commission for the Middle East
Fifty-second Meeting
Kuwait, The State of Kuwait
10th February 2026

CME/52/CR.
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**CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FIFTY-SECOND MEETING
OF THE UN TOURISM REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE MIDDLE EAST**

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- 1) Adoption of the agenda.
- 2) Communication of the Chair (The State of Kuwait)
- 3) Report of the UN Tourism Secretary-General
 - Global Vision and Regional Approach
- 4) Report of the Executive Director
 - a) Implementation of the Programme of Work in the Middle East (2025/2026)
 - i. Overview on the UN Tourism initiatives for Innovation, Education and Investment
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- 5) Brief on the UN Tourism Affiliate Members activities in the Middle East in (2025/2026)
- 6) Member States interventions
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- 8) Other matters

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE REGIONAL COMMISSION

RCME/52/CR/1 (LII)

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Agenda item 1

The Commission,

Having considered the items of the provisional agenda of the 52nd meeting;

Having received no proposals for amendments to the Provisional Agenda;

Adopts the agenda of its fifty-second meeting as it figures in page 2 of this document.

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RCME/52/CR/2 (LII)

COMMUNICATION OF THE CHAIR

Agenda item 2

The Commission,

Having heard the Communication of H.E. Mr. Omar Saud Al Omar, Minister of State for Communications and Information Technology Affairs, Acting Minister of Information and Culture, of the State of Kuwait, in his capacity as a Chair of the Commission,

Having noted with interest his proposal to continue working to strengthen regional cooperation mechanisms to draw a roadmap for the tourism industry in the Middle East aiming to maximize common interests through policy coordination and promotion of regional tourism programmes and products, with a focus on the importance of the human element as an effective tool for achieving tourism sustainability in the region;

1. **Shares his opinion** on the importance of strengthening regional cooperation and developing joint action within the Regional Commission for the Middle East, believing in the vital role it plays in supporting Arab countries to face regional and international challenges in the field of tourism, especially in light of the current geopolitical situation in the region; and
2. **Commends** the UN Tourism's commitment to achieve sustainable tourism development through its initiatives to support the recovery of Tourism, with a focus on the opportunities, challenges and economic prospects in the context of the current situation in the region, as well as in the advancement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and to enhance the capabilities of Member States to develop innovative strategies and plans aimed at improving tourism experiences, consolidating the sustainability of the sector, and enriching the cultural and human experience of tourists and visitors around the world;

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RCME/52/CR 3 (LII)

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Global Vision and Regional Approach

Agenda item 3

The Commission,

Having listened to the presentation made by the UN Tourism **Secretary-General** on her priorities and vision of the Organization to support Member States globally and in the Middle East in particular, in their efforts to promote the tourism sector, guide and coordinate policies and technical assistance for tourism recovery, security, risk and crises management, and to benefit from digital applications in innovation and digital transformation, investments, entrepreneurship, education, employment, safety, security, accessible tourism, social, cultural and environmental sustainability;

1. **Notes with satisfaction** the four priorities of her mandate, both at a global and a regional level, namely;
 - Strong foundations for clearer and more effective governance;
 - Greater and more effective collaboration;
 - Upskilling; and
 - Sustainable Tourism
2. **Thanks** the Secretary-General for her comprehensive remarks on the priorities and vision of UN Tourism management;
3. **Shares her opinion** on the importance of this meeting, being her first UN Tourism institutional meeting during her tenure;
4. **Commends** the UN Tourism's efforts to guide and coordinate policies globally and in the Middle East;
5. **Appreciates** the Organization's recommendations and work to support governments in developing and accelerating recovery policies, through crisis management, mitigation and incentives;
6. **Supports her view** on the importance of education and that investing in education and jobs will yield the highest returns for the future of tourism; and
7. **Expresses the support of Member States** to the Secretary-General in her management of the Organization and her efforts to guide and coordinate policies globally in order to place the sector on the political and economic agenda at the national and international levels, especially within the framework of the United Nations system, to upgrade, resume and recover the sector, and create decent livelihood opportunities for local communities, with a focus on promoting tourism for sustainable development, in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda and Goals..

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RCME/52/CR 4 (LII)

REPORT OF THE UN TOURISM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

- a) Implementation of the Programme of Work in the Middle East (2025/2026)
 - i. Overview on UN Tourism initiatives on Innovation, Education and Investment
- b) Report of the UN Tourism Director of the Regional Office for the Middle East

Agenda item 4

The Commission,

Having listened to the presentation made by the **UN Tourism Executive Director**, on the implementation of the Organization's General Programme of Work (PoW) in the Middle East within its General PoW for 2025 - 2026;

Having listened also to the presentation made by the **UN Tourism Director** of Innovation, Education and Investment on UN Tourism initiatives and activities in the field of Innovation, Education and Investment in the Middle East region,

Having listened also to the presentation made by the **Director of UN Tourism Regional Office for the Middle East** in Riyadh on the initiatives and activities of the UN Tourism Regional Office for the Middle East in Riyadh,

1. **Adopts** the reports and **commends** the quality of the regional activities carried out or included in the implementation of the General PoW for the period 2025 - 2026;
2. **Notes with satisfaction and hope** that the Middle East has been a leader in the recovery process among all regions, being the first region in the world to recover to pre-pandemic figures;
3. **Looks forward** to a continuous increase during 2026 and to a more diversity of typical visitor groups for the region, including tourists coming for leisure, wellness, medical tourism, and MICE;
4. **Commends** UN Tourism initiatives in the areas of education, scaling up innovation and digital transformation, which is one of the priorities of the Organization's General PoW on international and regional levels;
5. **Looks forward to** intensifying cooperation with regional organizations, exploring ways and mechanisms to strengthen the investment portfolio, coordinating activities related to the Programme of Work in the region, and exploring possibilities for cooperation with new partners from the region;
6. **Commends** the role of the Regional Department for the Middle East and the Regional Office for the Middle East in Riyadh in responding to the specific needs of the Member States in the region, supporting their focus on tourism as an important source of income, job creation and diversification of their national economies, by supporting and implementing the Organization's activities in the region and benefiting in particular, from the profile and size of the UN Tourism international presence and network of partners in the Middle East;
7. **Invites** Member States to intensify their outreach to the Regional Department for the Middle East and to take advantage of its diverse activities in order to enhance confidence in the tourism sector, achieve the success of tourism resumption and recovery initiatives, the creation of an enabling environment for investment in tourism projects, and the sector's contribution to the creation of decent employment opportunities, especially for young people, and the development of local communities; and

8. **Urges the Member States** to participate in the international events to be held within the framework of the Organization's General PoW during the second half of this year.

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RCME/52/CR 5 (LII)

REPORT ON THE UN TOURISM AFFILIATE MEMBERS ACTIVITIES
IN THE MIDDLE EAST - 2025/2026

Agenda item 5

The Commission,

Taking note of the report on the UN Tourism Affiliate Members activities in the Middle East for the period 2025-2026,

Having listened to the report delivered by the Director of the Affiliate Members and Public-Private Collaboration Department and by the representative of the Board of Affiliate Members and its 1st Vice-Chair, the representative of the UN Tourism Affiliate Member, Saudi Tourism Authority,

Having been informed of the increase of the number of Affiliate Members from the region last year;

1. **Welcomes** the continued and increasingly structured integration of Affiliate Members into UN Tourism's agenda, reflected through their active participation in initiatives aligned with the priorities of the Organization;
2. **Notes with appreciation** the efforts undertaken to strengthen governance and quality engagement for Affiliate Members, which have contributed to increased satisfaction, stability and credibility of the Affiliate Membership;
3. **Acknowledges** the positive evolution of the Affiliate Membership in the Middle East, which currently accounts for 10% of the global Affiliate Membership, supported by a strengthened, quality-oriented admission process;
4. **Recommends** the further integration of Affiliate Members' expertise and engagement into UN Tourism's technical programmes, policy discussions and the Programme of Work 2026–2027, to foster collaboration, innovation, concrete delivery and alignment with organizational priorities;
5. **Welcomes** the transparent, participatory, and transparent process undertaken for the elections of the 2026–2029 Board of Affiliate Members, reinforcing sound governance and active regional leadership within the Affiliate Membership;
6. **Encourages** the Member States to continue strengthening cooperation with the Affiliate Members to maximize synergies, support public private collaboration, and further enhance the contribution of the Middle East region to the objectives of UN Tourism.

INTERVENTIONS OF MINISTERS AND HEADS OF DELEGATIONS

Agenda item 6

The Commission,

Having heard the interventions of the Ministers and Heads of Delegations on UN Tourism's General Programme of Work (PoW) for the period 2025-2026;

Having been informed about Member States' priorities and future aspirations;

Having noticed with interest that there is a growing consensus among stakeholders in the field of tourism on the need to continue adopting the flexibility of the sector with a focus on investment initiatives, innovation, digital transformation and human capital training, as well as to supporting the sector and enhancing its competitiveness at the regional and global levels;

1. **Thanks** the Ministers and Heads of Delegations for their valuable interventions and relevant comments on the UN Tourism PoW for the period 2025-2026, as well as on their priorities and related national initiatives;
2. **Looks forward to** fostering cooperation with the Member States and UN Tourism Secretariat to explore ways and means of strengthening the investment portfolio and enhancing sports tourism in the region, as well as exploring the possibilities of intra-cooperation and with new partners, in the region and worldwide;
3. **Pays tribute to** the proposal of many Member States on the need of continuing cooperation and coordination, working together, and moving rapidly, fairly, and with unified efforts to support the Tourism Sector at a national and global levels;
4. **Encourages** Member States to communicate continuously with the Regional Department for the Middle East at UN Tourism Secretariat to coordinate on their priorities and joint projects to support the tourism sector;
5. **Praises** the UN Tourism Secretariat for its efforts in supporting Member States and the industry in general to continue the recovery of tourism, as well as working for a more sustainable, inclusive and flexible sector.

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**PLACE AND DATE OF THE FIFTY-THIRD MEETING
OF THE UN TOURISM COMMISSION FOR THE MIDDLE EAST**

Agenda item 8

The Commission,

Having considered the candidatures submitted by the **Republic of Iraq** and the **State of Libya** to host the fifty-third meeting of the UN Tourism Commission for the Middle East;

Recalling that in accordance with Resolution 662(XXI), the General Assembly explicitly requests Member States wishing to host a UN Tourism meeting to provide the conditions established in the template agreement annexed thereto; which defines the legal framework governing the holding of the UN Tourism meetings outside the Headquarters;

Further noted that the Member States acceptance of the standard conditions laid out in the model agreement in the Annex is a preliminary requirement for the submission of a valid candidacy to host a General Assembly session in accordance with Resolution 750(XXIV);

Further recalling that Member States must adhere to the legal framework for the holding of UN Tourism meetings outside the Headquarters and provide the conditions established in the abovementioned model agreement;

Having heard the request made by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia during this meeting to host the Fifty-third meeting of the UN Tourism Regional Commission for the Middle East;

1. Warmly thanks the Government of Libya for submitting its candidacy to host the Fifty-third meeting and **gratefully accepts** this kind invitation to host its Fifty-third meeting at a date and venue to be determined later, in coordination with the Chair and UN Tourism Secretary-General;

2. Notes with satisfaction that the **State of Libya** has undertaken in writing to comply with the legal framework for hosting UN Tourism meetings outside the Headquarters and the provision of the necessary conditions established in the abovementioned model agreement; and

3. Thanks the **Republic of Iraq** and the **Kingdom of Saudi Arabia** for withdrawing their candidatures.

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VOTE OF THANKS

RCME/52/CR 8 (LII)

**VOTE OF THANKS TO
THE HOST COUNTRY AND TO THE ORGANIZATION**

Having considered the various items on the agenda of its fifty-second meeting in the best possible conditions of efficiency and comfort;

1. **Expresses** its utmost appreciation and thanks to the government and people of the **State of Kuwait** for the warm hospitality and for the arrangements made for the holding of this meeting, and
2. **Thanks** the UN Tourism Secretary-General, the team of the Regional Department for the Middle East and other officials of the Organization for the success of the meeting and for their continuous support to Member States.

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LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

1- Full Members / الأعضاء الفاعلين

1. Kingdom of Bahrain / مملكة البحرين

H.E. Mrs. Fatima Jaafar Al Sairafi Minister of Tourism falsairafi@mt.gov.bh	سعادة/ فاطمة بنت جعفر الصيرفي وزيرة السياحة
H.E. Mr. Salah Ali Al-Malki Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the State of Kuwait eyahia.kw@mofa.gov.bh	سعادة/ صلاح علي المالكي سفير مملكة البحرين لدى دولة الكويت
Ms. Fatima Malik AbuAlFath Manager, Minister Office Ministry of Tourism fabualfath@mt.gov.bh	الأستاذة/ فاطمة ملك أبو الفتح مديرة مكتب وزيرة السياحة وزارة السياحة
Mrs. Noora Khamis Al-Saadoon Director of Policies and Planning Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority nalsaadoon@btea.bh	الأستاذة/ نوره خميس السعدون مدير إدارة السياسات والتخطيط هيئة البحرين للسياحة والمعارض
Mr. Mohamed Sanad Director of Tourism Monitoring Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority msanad@btea.bh	الأستاذ/ محمد سند مدير إدارة الرقابة السياحية هيئة البحرين للسياحة والمعارض

2. Arab Republic of Egypt / جمهورية مصر العربية

H.E. Mr. Sherif Fathi Attia Minister of Tourism and Antiquities minister@mota.gov.eg	معالي/ شريف فتحي عطيه وزير السياحة والآثار
H.E. Mr. Mohamed Gaber Abu El Wafa Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the State of Kuwait	سعادة/ محمد جابر أبو الوفا سفير جمهورية مصر العربية لدى دولة الكويت
Mrs. Rana Gohar Advisor to the Minister for Communication and External Relations, and General Supervisor for International Relations and Agreements Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities ranagohar2018@gmail.com	الأستاذة/ رنا جوهر مستشار الوزير للتواصل والعلاقات الخارجية، والمشرف العام على الإدارة العامة للعلاقات الدولية والاتفاقيات وزارة السياحة والآثار
Mr. Ahmed Nabil Assistant to Minister for Aviation Affairs and Follow Up Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities ahmednabil3@hotmail.com	الأستاذ/ أحمد نبيل معاون الوزير لشؤون الطيران والمتابعة وزارة السياحة والآثار

The Republic of Iraq / جمهورية العراق

H.E. Mr. Naser Ghanem Murad Chairman of Iraqi Tourism Board tourism_iraq@yahoo.com	سعادة/ ناصر غانم مراد رئيس هيئة السياحة العراقية
Mr. Ali Yaseen Abdu Alredha Director of International Relations Iraqi Tourism Board tourism_iraq@yahoo.com	الأستاذ/ على ياسين عبد الرضا مدير العلاقات الدولية هيئة السياحة العراقية
Mr. Emad Sakban Mohamed Division Manager of Mixed Enterprises Iraqi Tourism Board tourism_iraq@yahoo.com	الأستاذ/ عماد صكبان محمد مدير قسم الشركات المختلطة هيئة السياحة العراقية

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan / المملكة الأردنية الهاشمية

H.E. Mr. Yazan Mohamed Al Khodeir Secretary-General Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities yazan.alkhadir@mota.gov.jo	سعادة/ يزن محمد الخضير أمين عام وزارة السياحة والآثار
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The State of Kuwait / دولة الكويت

H.E. Mr. Omar Saud Al-Omar Minister of State for Communication Affairs and Information Technology, and Acting Minister of Information and Culture o.alomar@mcit.gov.kw	معالي / عمر سعود العمر وزير الدولة لشؤون الاتصالات وتكنولوجيا المعلومات ووزير الإعلام والثقافة بالوكالة ووزير الدولة لشؤون الشباب
H.E. Dr. Naser Ahmed Muhaisen Undersecretary Ministry of Information Saadaladwani@outlook.com	سعادة/ د. ناصر أحمد محيسن وكيل وزارة الاعلام
Mr. Salem Fahd Alwatyan Assistant Undersecretary for the Assisting Services Sector Ministry of Information	السيد/ سالم فهد الوطيان وكيل وزارة الاعلام المساعد لقطاع الخدمات المساندة
Mr. Saad Hammoud Al Edouani Director of the Office of Undersecretary Ministry of Information Saadaladwani@outlook.com	السيد/ سعد حمود العدوانى مدير إدارة مكتب وكيل وزارة الاعلام
Mr. Osamah Hamad Abdel Mohsen Al-Mekhyal Assistant Undersecretary for the Tourism Sector Ministry of Information toursimkw@gmail.com	السيد/ أسامه حمد عبد المحسن المخيال الوكيل المساعد لقطاع السياحة بالتكليف وزارة الإعلام
Mr. Hamad Mohamed Abdel Wahab Head of Research and Studies Department Ministry of Information toursimkw@gmail.com	الأستاذ/ حمد محمد عبد الوهاب رئيس قسم البحوث والدراسات وزارة الإعلام

The Lebanese Republic / الجمهورية اللبنانية

H.E. Mrs. Laura El Khazen Lahoud Minister of Tourism stephanel.beaino@lebanon-tourism.com	معالي/ لورا الخازن لحود وزيرة السياحة
Eng. Joumana Kebrit Acting General Director for Tourism Affairs Ministry of Tourism joumana.kebrit@gmail.com	المهندسة/ جمانة كبريت مدير عام الشؤون السياحية بالإنابة وزارة السياحة
Mr. Ghassan Haddad Advisor – Director of the Minister's Office Ministry of Tourism ghassan.haddad@lebanon-tourism.com	الأستاذ/ غسان حداد مستشار – مدير مكتب وزيرة السياحة وزارة السياحة

The State of Libya / دولة ليبيا

H.E. Nasserдин Milad Al-Fizzani Minister of Tourism and Handicrafts nasserдин.alfazzni@gmail.com	معالي/ نصر الدين ميلاد الفزاني وزير السياحة والصناعات التقليدية
Mr. Khaled Emhamad Mohamed Minister's Advisor Ministry of Tourism and Handicrafts khalid.mohamed@tourism.gov.ly	الأستاذ/ خالد امحمد محمد مستشار الوزير وزارة السياحة والصناعات التقليدية
Mr. Mosab Beshir Malek International Cooperation Director Ministry of Tourism and Handicrafts msbmalk754@gmail.com	الأستاذ/ مصعب بشير مالك مدير مكتب التعاون الدولي وزارة السياحة والصناعات التقليدية

Sultanate of Oman / سلطنة عمان

H.E. Mr. Saleh Amur Al-Kharusi Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the State of Kuwait kuwait@fm.gov.om	سعادة/ صالح بن عامر الخروصي سفير سلطنة عمان لدى دولة الكويت
Dr. Saeed bin Khalfan Al Mushrafi Assistant Director of Projects and Product Development Ministry of Heritage and Tourism smsharafi@mht.gov.om	الفاضل/ د. سعيد بن خلفان المشرفي مدير عام مساعد للمشاريع وتطوير المنتج وزارة التراث والسياحة
Mr. Omar Salim Alabdulsalam Assistant Director of the Department of Organizations and International Cooperation Ministry of Heritage and Tourism oabdulsalam@mht.gov.om	الفاضل/ عمر بن سالم آل عبد السلام مدير مساعد لدائرة المنظمات والتعاون الدولي وزارة التراث والسياحة

The State of Qatar / دولة قطر

Mr. Omar Al Jaber Chief of Tourism Development Sector Qatar Tourism oaljaber@visitqatar.qa	الأستاذ/ عمر عبد الرحمن الجابر رئيس قطاع تنمية السياحة قطر للسياحة
Mr. Ibrahim Alfadala Director of the Office of the Chief of the Tourism Development Sector Qatar Tourism ialfadala@visitqatar.qa	الأستاذ/ إبراهيم الفضالة مدير مكتب رئيس قطاع تنمية السياحة قطر للسياحة
Mr. Mohamed Al-Mahmeed Acting head of international Cooperation Head of Tourism Investment Promotion Section Qatar Tourism malmahmeed@visitqatar.qa	الأستاذ/ محمد المحميد رئيس وحدة التعاون الدولي بالإنابة رئيس قسم ترويج الاستثمار السياحي قطر للسياحة
Ms. Nayla Al-Qahtani Legal Specialist, International Cooperation Qatar Tourism nalqahtani@visitqatar.qa	الأستاذة/ نائلة القحطاني أخصائي قانوني في وحدة التعاون الدولي قطر للسياحة

Syrian Arab Republic / الجمهورية العربية السورية

Eng. Ghiath Al Farah Deputy Minister for Development Affairs and Tourism Investment galfarrah@gmail.com	المهندس/ غياث الفراح معاون وزير السياحة لشؤون التطوير والاستثمار السياحي
Eng. Khalid Zuhair Falyoun Director of Planning and Statistics Ministry of Tourism khaledfaluon2030@gmail.com	المهندس/ خالد زهير فليون مدير التخطيط والاحصاء وزارة السياحة

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia/ المملكة العربية السعودية

H.E. Mr. Ahmed bin Aqil Al Khateeb Minister of Tourism barrid@mt.gov.sa	معالي / أحمد بن عقيل الخطيب وزير السياحة
H.H. Prince Sultan bin Saad Al Saud Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the State of Kuwait	سمو الأمير سلطان بن سعد آل سعود سفير المملكة العربية السعودية لدى دولة الكويت
Ms. Hawazin Naseef Deputy Minister for International Affairs Ministry of Tourism	الأستاذة/ هوازن ناصيف نائب الوزير للعلاقات الدولية وزارة السياحة

Mr. Majed Almutairi General Manager of Multilateral Affairs Ministry of Tourism mutirim@mt.gov.sa	الأستاذ / ماجد المطيري مدير عام العلاقات متعددة الأطراف وزارة السياحة
Mr. Waleed Almotaery Multilateral Affairs Specialist Ministry of Tourism almotaerywh@mt.gov.sa	الأستاذ/ وليد المطيري أخصائي العلاقات متعددة الأطراف وزارة السياحة
Mr. Mohamed Alshubaili Chief of Protocol Ministry of Tourism Moh.shubaily@gmail.com	الأستاذ/ محمد الشبيلي بروتوكول الوزير
Mr. Yousef Labban General Manager of Corporate Communication Ministry of Tourism labbany@mt.gov.sa	الأستاذ/ يوسف لبان مدير عام الاتصال المؤسسي
Mr. Majed Al Dulaimi Photographer dulaimim@mt.gov.sa	الأستاذ/ ماجد الدولي مصور

United Arab Emirates / الإمارات العربية المتحدة

H.E. Abdulla Bin Touq Al Marri Minister of Economy and Tourism aalsharhan@economy.ae	معالي/ عبد الله بن طوق المري وزير الاقتصاد والسياحة
Mrs. Anoosha Al Marzooqi Chief of the Minister's Office Ministry of Economy and Tourism AAIMarzooqi@moet.gov.ae	السيدة/ أنوشة المرزوقي كبير موظفي مكتب الوزير وزارة الاقتصاد والسياحة
Mr. Mohammed Theyab AlAhababi Director of Tourism Development Department Ministry of Economy and Tourism MTAlAhababi@moet.gov.ae	الأستاذ/ محمد ذياب الأحبابي مدير إدارة تنمية السياحة وزارة الاقتصاد والسياحة
Mr. Mohamed Al-Naggar Tourism Affairs Expert Ministry of Economy and Tourism MElnaggar@moet.gov.ae	الأستاذ/ محمد عبد الحميد النجار خبير الشؤون السياحية وزارة الاقتصاد والسياحة
Mr. Ibrahim Saeed AlAlawi Senior Administrative Officer – Protocol Ministry of Economy and Tourism ialalawi@moet.gov.ae	الأستاذ/ إبراهيم سعيد العلوي اداري رئيسي مراسم وزارة الاقتصاد والسياحة

The Republic of Yemen / الجمهورية اليمنية

Mr. Entesar Ali Al-Hadali Executive Director, Tourism Promotion Board Ministry of Culture and Tourism alhadalientesar3@gmail.com	الأستاذة/ انتصار علي الهدالي المديرة التنفيذية لصندوق الترويج السياحي وزارة الثقافة والسياحة
Mr. Yusuf Abu Ras Director-General of Public Relations and International Cooperation Ministry of Culture and Tourism yusef36@hotmail.com	الأستاذ/ يوسف أبو راس مدير عام العلاقات العامة والتعاون الدولي وزارة الثقافة والسياحة
Mr. Abdullah Ahmed Yahya Al-Hamed Consultant Ministry of Culture and Tourism alhamed@atsi-socotra.com	الأستاذ/ عبد الله احمد يحيى الحامد خبير استشاري وزارة الثقافة والسياحة

2- Affiliate Members / الأعضاء المنتسبين

Affiliate Members	Participants	المشاركون	الأعضاء المنتسبين
Saudi Tourism Authority	Mr. Abdullah Alhagbani Chief of Partnership and Regulatory Affairs ahagbani@sta.gov.sa	السيد/ عبد الله الحقباني الرئيس التنفيذي للشركات والشؤون الخارجية	الهيئة السعودية للسياحة
	Ms. Dalal AlMoammar Manager, International Affairs Dmoammar@sta.gov.sa	الأستاذة/ دلال المعمر مدير الشؤون الدولية	
Chameleon Strategies	Mr. Jens Thraenhart CEO jthraenhart@gmail.com	الأستاذ/ جينس ثرانهارت الرئيس التنفيذي	كاميليون للاستراتيجيات
Amadeus	Mr. Alexander Rayner Director Government and Destination Relations alexander.rayner@amadeus.com	الأستاذ/ الكسندر راينر مدير العلاقات الحكومية والوجهات السياحية	أماديوس
Amadeus IT Group	Mr. Alfonso Sasselli Head Industry Partnerships and Business Development Middle East Alfonso.Sasselli@amadeus.com	الأستاذ/ ألفونسو ساسيلي رئيس قسم الشراكات الصناعية وتطوير الأعمال لإقليم الشرق الأوسط	مجموعة أماديوس لتكنولوجيا المعلومات
Booking.com	Mr. Carlo Olejniczak VP and Managing Director EMEA carlo.olejniczak@booking.com	الأستاذ/ كارلو أولينسك نائب الرئيس والعضو المنتدب – أوروبا والشرق الأوسط وأفريقيا	بوكينج.كوم

3- International Organizations/ المنظمات الدولية

Organization	Participants	المشاركون	المنظمة
Arab Tourism Organization	H.E. Hisham Zaazou Secretary-General info@atoorg.org Dr. Walid El-Hennawy Assistant Secretary-General Dr.welhennawy@atoorg.org	معالي / هشام زعزوع الأمين العام الدكتور / وليد الحناوي الأمين العام المساعد	المنظمة العربية للسياحة
League of Arab States	Mr. Bahgat Abul Nasr Director of Transport and Tourism Department tratou.dept@las.int bahgat.abounasr@las.int	الدكتور/ بهجت أبو النصر مدير إدارة النقل والسياحة	جامعة الدول العربية
Gulf Cooperation Countries Council	Ms. Jasem Al Budaiwi Secretary-General Sgo@gccsg.org	معالي/ جاسم البديوي الأمين العام	مجلس التعاون لدول الخليج العربية
	Mr. Abdallah Algarbou General Manager Office of the Secretary-General Aaljarboua@gccsg.org	المهندس/ عبد الله الجربوع مدير عام مكتب الأمين العام.	
	Mr. Fahad Almutairi Media Advisor for the Secretary-General fmalmutairi@gccsg.org	الاستاذ/ فهد المطيري المستشار الاعلامي للأمين العام	
	Mr. Saad Alkharashi Economic Advisor to the Secretary-General skharashi@gccsg.org	الاستاذ/ سعد الخراشي المستشار الاقتصادي للأمين العام	
	Mr. Sultan Albalawi Chief of Protocol kdalsubaie@gccsg.org	الاستاذ / سلطان البلوي رئيس المراسم	

4. World Tourism Organization (UN Tourism) منظمة الأمم المتحدة للسياحة

H.E. Ms. Shaikha Alnuwais Secretary-General ofsg@unwto.org	معالي/ شيخة النويس الأمين العام
Ms. Natalia Bayona Executive Director nbayona@untourism.int	الأستاذة/ ناتاليا بايونا المديرة التنفيذية
Ms. Linh Vu Khan Principal Advisor to the Secretary-General lvu@untourism.int	الأستاذة/ لين فو خان كبير مستشاري الأمين العام

Mr. Ghalib Lone Director of Communication ghaliblone@gmail.com	الأستاذ/ غالب لون مدير إدارة الاعلام
Mr. Samer Al-Kharashi Director of the Regional Office for the Middle East salkharashi@untourism.int	الأستاذ/ سامر الخراشي مدير المكتب الإقليمي للشرق الأوسط
Antonio Lopez de Avila Director of Innovation, Education and Investments alopezdeavila@untourism.int	الأستاذ/ أنطونيو لوبيز دى أبيلا مدير إدارة الابتكار والتعليم والاستثمار
Mrs. Hanane Louzari Technical Coordinator Regional Department for the Middle East hlouzari@untourism.int	الأستاذة/ حنان لزاري منسقة تقنية الإدارة الإقليمية للشرق الأوسط
Ms. Mirhane Abdel Fattah Senior Project Specialist Regional Department for the Middle East mfattah@untourism.int	الأستاذة/ ميرهان عبد الفتاح أخصائية مشاريع أولى الإدارة الإقليمية للشرق الأوسط
Ms. Fadwa Radi Senior Project Specialist Regional Department for the Middle East fradi@untourism.int	الأستاذة/ فدوى راضي أخصائية مشاريع أولى الإدارة الإقليمية للشرق الأوسط
Mr. Kamal Bagerli Multimedia Specialist Communications kbaghirli@unwto.org	الأستاذ/ كمال باغيرلي إدارة الاعلام والمطبوعات
Ms. Ana Catalina Hernandez Senior Specialist Innovation, Education and Investments ahernandez@untourism.int	الأستاذة/ أنا كاتالينا هيرنانديز أخصائية أولى إدارة الابتكار، التعليم والاستثمار
Ms. María Jara Catón Calderón Conference Services Department mjara@untourism.int	الأستاذة/ ماريا خارا كاتون كالديرون إدارة خدمات المؤتمرات
Ms. Paula de Blas González Senior Education Specialist Innovation, Education and Investments pdeblas@untourism.int	الأستاذة/ باولا دى بلاس أخصائية تعليم أولى إدارة الابتكار، التعليم والاستثمار
Mr. Javier González-Lliberós Vilarrasa Senior Project Specialist Innovation, Education, Investments jgonzalez@untourism.int	الأستاذ/ خافيير جونزاليس ليبيروس فيلاراسا أخصائي مشروعات أول إدارة الابتكار، التعليم والاستثمار
Ms. Lara Kabbara Regional Office in Riyadh lkabbara@untourism.int	الأستاذة/ لارا كباره المكتب الإقليمي بالرياض