

Tourism Ministers to Debate Barriers to Travel



Reducing visa constraints, simplifying entry processes and developing policies that improve connectivity across borders are the topics on the agenda for the world's Tourism Ministers as they meet at the annual UNWTO & World Travel Market (WTM) Ministers' Summit next month (London, United Kingdom, 6 November 2012).

Building on the historic G20 Leaders' Declaration, which commits to work on "travel facilitation initiatives in support of job creation, quality work, poverty reduction and global growth", and under the theme, Open Borders and Open Skies: Breaking Barriers to Travel, the 2012 UNWTO & WTM Ministers' Summit will seek to shed light on how countries can work together to ease entry procedures for tourists as a means to stimulate economic growth and create jobs.

"While important steps have been taken over the past few years to facilitate travel, millions of people continue to face unnecessary barriers to travel such as overly complicated and expensive visa processes," said UNWTO Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai.

"These obstacles are not just barriers to travel; they are barriers to economic growth at a time when we need it most. UNWTO and World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) research shows that facilitating visas among the G20 countries would create an additional five million jobs by 2015, for example. The Ministers' Summit is our chance to push ahead with the necessary travel facilitation measures that will allow tourism to continue generating jobs and prosperity worldwide," he added.

Reed Travel Exhibitions Chairman World Travel Market Fiona Jeffery said: "The UNWTO & WTM Ministers' Summit has played a central role in the past six years in bringing the private and public sector together to discuss the key issues facing this global sector.

"This year will be no different with leaders from both tourism ministries and industry debating the key issues and plotting a path for the future."

Confirmed panelists comprise the Ministers of Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Indonesia, Mexico, the Philippines, South Africa and the United Kingdom. Private sector representation includes the President and CEO of WTTC, the Chairman of the Executive Board of TUI Travel, the Vice President of International & Public Affairs of Etihad, the CEO of Ethiopian Airlines, the Director of Government and Industry Affairs of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and the Senior Vice President, Corporate and Government Affairs of Travelport. Joining them in the debate will be over 70 Tourism Ministers from around the world.

Charles Hodson, anchor of CNN's flagship business programme 'World Business Today', will moderate the Summit.

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