

EGYPT: DEVELOPMENTS NEEDED



Egypt has always been a popular tourism destination. It offers wonderful cultural experience as well as the possibility to enjoy swimming and sunbathing. The tourism industry is very important for Egyptians as it creates approximately 20 per cent of Egypt's foreign currency revenue. Egyptian officials endeavor to widen the sector even further. The government plans to increase the tourism earnings by 26 per cent to 12 billion dollars by 2011. Last year (2007) the country was visited by 11 million people, the plan is to lure 14 million tourists in 2011. The developments should also include the creation of eco-tourism and medical tourism facilities. The government wants to attract foreign investors to participate in the development.

Even now major developments in the transportation could be seen. Maritime transport, civil aviation, rail and road networks and urban transport are all due to undergo reconstruction. Transportation is vital to Egyptian economy as the exports and imports as well as the tourism industry depend on it. The Egypt's railway system is 155 years old and it desperately needs reconstruction. The recent fatal accidents provided the impulse needed to start major improvements in the infrastructure. The goal is to considerably improve the efficiency and safety of the railroads.

Despite the bombings that took place in the country, Egypt is still popular with tourists. Foreigners, especially Americans and Europeans come here because the exchange rate is still very favorable and Egypt is cheap for them. In fact, the tourism industry is growing here. For example the city of Hurgada is becoming increasingly popular. Another popular destination is a village called Marsa Alam that gained immense popularity after opening its international airport in 2001.

Egypt experiences problems with the growing population, low education levels and unemployment. The increasing number of foreign investments is thus regarded as an important help and a boost to the economic situation.

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