



2017
INTERNATIONAL YEAR
OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM
FOR DEVELOPMENT



REPÚBLICA
PORTUGUESA

ECONOMIA



OURÉM
MUNICÍPIO

International Congress on Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage

THE POTENTIAL OF SACRED PLACES AS A TOOL FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Fatima, Portugal, 22-23 November 2017

On the occasion of the centenary of the apparitions of Fatima (1917-2017), the International Congress on Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage will be organized jointly by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the Ministry of Economy of Portugal and the Municipality of Ourém. The Congress will reflect on the potential and the role of religious tourism and sacred places as a tool for socio-economic and cultural development of destinations.

Knowing the motivations that lead millions of peoples to travel to sacred places is an essential condition for the sustainable development of destinations. The visitor of sacred places in general and the one of Fatima in particular, is characterized by a remarkable loyalty to the visited site. Hence, it can be said that tourist's loyalty is in these cases an essential element of the relationship that the religious tourist and the pilgrim establish with the destinations which they are visiting. Thus, a key principle is to preserve the spirit of the destinations, authenticity and integrity in the way that they are managed and promoted while making them accessible for all.

On the other hand, these places of spirituality have the potential to drain part of their tourist flows to other tourist attractions in the region, therefore, with adequate promotion strategies; it is possible to get visitors to lesser known areas and complementary places that are offered in holy places. Additionally, religious tourism destinations are usually less affected by trends and economic crisis.

Taking note of the United Nations (UN) declaring 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, the congress will discuss how effective partnerships, in sacred places, can benefit local communities and encourage their sustainable development and socio-economic empowerment in the long run. It will also discuss the need for specific policies for protection and management of religious and sacred sites that take into account the distinct sacred or spiritual value associated with the place, as a key factor for their conservation.

Preliminary Programme

22 November 2017

09:15 -09:20 Introduction of the International Congress on Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage

Ms. Sandra Carvao, Chief of Communications and Publications at UNWTO

09:20 – 10:00 Opening Ceremony

Mr. Luís Albuquerque, Mayor of Ourém, Portugal

Mr. Carlos Cabecinhas, Rector of the Shrine of Fatima, Portugal

Mr. Taleb Rifai, Secretary-General, UNWTO

Representative of the President of Portugal (TBC)

10:00 – 11:00 High-Level Dialogue

Introduced and moderated by Mr. Taleb Rifai, Secretary-General UNWTO

- H.E. Ms. Marcela Bacigalupo, Minister of Tourism, Ministry of Tourism, Paraguay
- H.E. Mr. John Amaratunga, Minister of Tourism Development and Christian Religious Affairs, Ministry of Tourism Development and Christian Religious Affairs, Sri Lanka
- H.E. Mr Kreshnik Bekteshi, Minister of Economy, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
- H.E. Ms Arlette Soudan-Nonault, Minister of Tourism and Environment, Congo
- Mrs. Aparecida Maria Borges Bezerra, Secretary for Qualification and Promotion of Tourism, Ministry of Tourism, Brazil
- Mr. Evaldas Gustas, Special Advisor of the Secretary General, UNWTO, Former Minister of Economy, Lithuania
- Mr. Andrew Agius Muscat, Secretary General, Mediterranean Tourism Foundation, Malta

11:00 – 11:30 Coffee break

11:30 – 13:00 Session 1: Preservation of sacred traditions and protection of religious sites

Many sacred sites are at risk due to a wide range of pressures and threats, both external and internal. External threats include those related to natural disasters and pollution accentuated by climate change while internal threats could be attributed to social aspects such as vandalism and theft. Tourism could also be partly responsible through overuse and exceeding carrying capacity limits. What can be done to identify, manage and mitigate these threats? Preservation of sacred traditions calls good practices in terms of universal accessibility which reinforces the competitiveness of tourism destinations. Adapting products and services for people with special access needs helps in inclusion and in dignifying tourism experiences. How can religious sites be made accessible without altering their cultural value or affecting their safety condition?

Introduced and moderated by: Mr. Jafar Jafari, Professor, Founding Editor, Annals of Tourism Research

Speakers:

- Mr. Ricardo Faria, Secretary of State of Tourism, Government of Minas Gerais, Brazil
- Dr Jeong-eun Kim, Senior Researcher, Council for Inscription of Buddhist Mountain Monasteries Republic of Korea
- Mr. Vítor Ambrósio, Professor, Estoril Higher Institute for Tourism and Hotel Studies, Portugal
- Dr. Ahmed Hassen, Director, Institute of Ethiopian Studies, University of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- Mrs. Pilar G. Bahamonde, Director, Centro de Estudios Lebaniegos y Torre del Infantado, Sociedad Regional Educación, Cultura y Deporte, Potes, Spain

Q & A Session

13:00 – 14:30 Lunch break

14:30 – 14:45 **Welcome remarks by H.E. Mr. Manuel Caldeira Cabral, Minister, Ministry of Economy, Portugal**

14:45 – 15:15 **Key Note speech:** Ms. Noga Collins-Kreiner, Professor, Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, University of Haifa, Israel, Vice-President of the Israeli Geographical Association (IGA)

15:15 – 16:45 Session 2: Role of religious tourism in sustainable economic growth and social inclusiveness of local communities

Sacred places are characterized by seasonality and strong visitor affluence in certain times of the year that poses many challenges. It is necessary to develop strategies to manage this affluence while assuring tourists of the quality of the visit. Safeguarding cultural heritage to the satisfaction of local communities is a priority for the long-term sustainable development of the religious sites. How can governments, religious authorities and tourism operators optimize benefits that religious tourism generates?

Introduced and moderated by: Mr. Kevin Griffin, Lecturer in Tourism, Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland

Speakers:

- H.E. Ms. Marcela Bacigalupo, Minister of Tourism, Ministry of Tourism, Paraguay
- Ms. Susana Ibáñez Rosa, Secretary-General for Tourism, Ministry of Tourism and Sport, Junta de Andalucía, Seville, Spain: Case study of Seville
- Ms. Anna Sidorenko, Programme Specialist, Europe and North America Unit, UNESCO World Heritage Centre
- Ms. Maria da Graça Mouga Poças Santos, Professor, Polytechnic Institute of Leiria and researcher at CICS.NOVA.IPLeiria, Portugal
- Mr. Patrick Torrent, President, Network of European Regions for Competitive and Sustainable Tourism (Necstour)

Q & A Session

16:45 Closing remarks by the Master of Ceremony and end of the first day sessions

23 November 2017

09:50 Opening of the second day of the Congress by the Master of Ceremony

10:00 – 11:30 Session 3: Potential synergies for religious tourism development through cultural routes and network of destinations

Cultural and religious routes are important tourism products which attract pilgrims around the globe and they suggest that experiences along the way are as important as the destinations themselves. As tourism routes sometimes cross several countries or regions, they stimulate entrepreneurial opportunity through the development of ancillary products and services and hence are potential drivers for local economic development, offering opportunities for forming partnerships between different regions. How can the government and the local authorities work together to develop a portfolio of strategic actions designed to a detailed plan that will enable to sustain and promote the tourism routes?

Introduced and moderated by: Mr. Stefano Dominioni, Executive Secretary, Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (EPA) Director, European Institute of Cultural Routes (EICR), Council of Europe

Speakers:

- Mr. David A. Mason, Professor, Korean Cultural Tourism at Sejong University, Seoul, Honorary Ambassador of the Baekdu-daegan Mountain-Range, tour-guide, lecturer and author on traditional cultural sites, Republic of Korea
- Mr. Xosé Manuel Santos Solla, Professor, University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain

- Mr. Carlos de Oliveira Fernandes, Professor, Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Castelo, Portugal
- Mr. Carlos Costa, Professor, Aveiro University, Portugal
- Mr. Hans Morten Løvrød, Head of National Pilgrim Center, Trondheim, Norway

Q & A Session

11:30 – 13:00 **Session 4: The future of religious tourism: innovative marketing and use of technology**

New communication technologies have been quickly adopted by religious tourism. The information and communication technologies (ICTs) provide new opportunities of increasing interest and awareness about religious heritage and enhancing the representation of religious practice. To what extent do the technological innovations and digital evolution impact on and contribute to the promotion of religious tourism?

Introduced and moderated by: Ms. Silvia Aulet Serrallonga, Professor and Researcher, Faculty of Tourism of the University of Girona, Spain

Speakers:

- Mr. Josep Altayó, General Manager of Montserrat: “Improving visitor’s management through new technologies: the case of Montserrat”, Barcelona, Spain
- Mr. Simon Carter, Head of Collections, The Chapter House, St Paul's Churchyard, London. United Kingdom: “Glories in Gold and Glass: Maximizing the benefits of a digitization project with Google Art at St Paul’s Cathedral, London”
- Ms. Karin Elgin-Nijhuis, Senior Associate, TEAM Consulting
- Ms. Mona Odeh Salem Salah, Advisor, Mediterranean Tourism Foundation, Malta
- Mr. Alexander Pinto, CEO, JiTT.travel, Portugal

13:00 – 13:30 Closing Remarks

Mr. Luís Albuquerque, Mayor of Ourém, Portugal

Mr. Bartłomiej Walas, Advisor for Tourism of the mayor of Krakow, Poland

Mr. Taleb Rifai, Secretary-General, UNWTO
