

**International Conference on Religious Tourism:  
*Fostering sustainable socio-economic development in host communities***

**Bethlehem, State of Palestine, 15-16 June 2015**

**Session 1: Understanding religious tourism - motivations and trends**

**H.E. Mr. Nayef H. Al-Fayez, Minister of Tourism and Antiquities of Jordan**



**Bio:**

H.E Mr. Nayef al Fayez has been the Jordanian Minister of Tourism since 25 October 2011. On 11 October 2012, he was reappointed as Minister of Tourism and Antiquities as well as Minister of Environment. In 2014, he was also appointed as Chairman of the National Company for Tourism Development.

His Excellency was appointed Managing Director of the Jordan Tourism Board in 2007, and served until 2011. Prior to that, he served as an advisor in the Prime Minister and was the Managing Director of the Dead Sea Institute Project from 2005-2007.

Mr. Al-Fayez began his professional career at the Royal Hashemite Court serving as Assistant Chief of Royal Protocol for His Majesty, the late King Hussein (1994-1999) and for His Majesty, King Abdullah II (1999-2005). During that time he also served as the Director of the office of His Royal Highness Prince Feisal Bin Al-Husseini, and as the Head of Her Majesty Queen Rania Al-Abdullah's Protocol.

A graduate of Brigham Young University, Mr. Al-Fayez holds a Bachelor's degree in Political Science, and a Master's Degree in International Relations. He has been decorated with a number of Jordanian and foreign medals.

## Abstract:

The Kingdom of Jordan is a location steeped in religious history; a location that holds great significance to Muslims and Christians alike from all around the world. Jordan is a site of equal religious significance, the birthplace of Christianity, the Baptism Site, Bethany Beyond the Jordan, located in the Kingdom of Jordan; a land immersed in religious history, documented in the pages and verses of the New and Old Testaments and the Holy Quran. Jordan's religious legacy spans through centuries of history, through prophets and people, civilizations and cultures that have passed through our great Kingdom and through the coexistence of its modern day people. It is blessed to have been witness to many major biblical actions and battles and events of historical figures of Islam. Jordan has been working diligently to share its message of tolerance and coexistence to the rest of the world as our sites act as beacons calling people from every walk of life, of every faith and nationality to walk the paths of religious figures as they forge their own pilgrimage paths through Jordan. This has been done through marketing Jordan as a religious tourism destination all around the world whether through hosting religious leaders from churches and congregations from all of our source markets or through working with Palestine to promote Jordan as a part of Hajj to countries like Malaysia, Indonesia and Turkey. These partnerships will hopefully help in promoting Jordan as a religious tourism destination as significant to pilgrims now as it was during the time of the prophets.