

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

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

**Session 2: Religious heritage and tourism routes – promoting cross border cooperation**

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**Bio:**

Dina Emil Tadros, attended Sacre Coeur Heliopolis School, and Graduated from Ain Shams University in Electrical Engineering.

She started her own travel agency in 1996 with an Italian Partner, Michel Stefanelli. Her travel agency is one of the few specialized on the Biblical and cultural Tours in Egypt. She also worked as advisor for HE Hisham Zaazoua for the Coptic heritage and was a part of the Holy Family Journey Committee. She collaborated in the event of launching the program of the Holy Family on the 21st of October 2014. One of her main aims is to succeed in popularizing the idea that Egypt is a Holy Land and to create a new sales channel.

**Abstract:**

Religious tourism is a very important type of tourism, unfortunately a bit underdeveloped in this part of the world, despite the fact that this is the place that carries the heritage of the 3 Godly religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Within this area prophets have been travelling a lot, and some of the greatest ones, recognized by all religions, like Abraham, Joseph, Moses and Elijah visited Egypt coming through different places like Jordan, Syria, Palestine, Iraq and Lebanon. Following these prophets on their paths is a most interesting and enlightening journey, that fills hearts, minds and spirits with the flavor of the

challenge and Holiness that these prophets experienced while following God's word.

Furthermore, later on, a most important event came: a visit to Egypt by Jesus Christ. This visit of the Holy Family is characterized by a very special story with Joseph and Mary carrying baby Jesus fleeing to Egypt, thus avoiding the killings of young boys, entering from north Sinai and then moving all the way up the Nile valley to Asyut in upper Egypt (south). A most amazing journey through the Holy land of Egypt.

So, reviving these routes is a very important step, not only from a religious point of view, but also from an economic and cultural point of view in the whole area. A mutual cooperation between all countries of the area will only lead to a boost in their economy as well as a worldwide awareness of precious sites and new tourist destinations.

Last but not least, this revival of the religious tourism in Egypt specifically will have a great impact on the life quality of people living in poor areas alongside the different routes, creating for them working opportunities and encouraging them to develop the already existing handicrafts typical to the culture, in addition to all other related businesses that are bound to be developed.