

**Talking Points
Talal Abu Ghazaleh**

**Geneva December 19, 2017
Palais De Nations**

**Closing ceremony of the international year for sustainable
tourism**

-“The Way Forward- Our Journey to 2030”

What a great theme Mr. Secretary-General

-In one of my capacities at the UN then:

I witnessed the birth of the 2000 millennium goals

and similarly the 2015 SDGs

Not much was achieved by the year 2015

because of no adequate action plans.

-Fortunately, we have now one UN leader,

H.E. Taleb Rifai, who albeit is leaving,

wants to charter an action plan to 2030.

This is true leadership!

-Permit me to start by congratulating

on well deserved honor by our chairman

H.E. King Salman Ben Abdulaziz, King of Saudi Arabia

decorated H.E. Taleb Rifai with a rare and high decoration. Great honor for UNWTO too.

-I am also humbled to stand here and salute majesty, royalty, excellencies and honorable colleagues.

-Mr. Secretary-General, please permit me to claim the honor of speaking on behalf of the distinguished Special Ambassadors and say:

1- Thank you Dr. Rifai for so designating us.

2 - We promise that we shall strive to be worthy of your confidence in us.

3 - As most junior member, I call on my senior Special Ambassadors, for a meeting at the end of the closing remarks, to outline our action plan.

Hoping that the SG will chair us.

4 - I personally believe that the future of tourism lies in enabling ICT capacities

5 - Accordingly, we should harness those powers for smart tourism.

6 - Mr. Secretary-General at our meeting in China you mandated TAGOrg to establish the UNWTO “Global Smart Tourism Center” (UNWTO - GSTC).

This center will be supported by:

- TAG University for Applied Business and IT
- TAG Training Academy
- Our 110 Offices worldwide

7 - I kindly ask you, Dr. Taleb Rifai, in your personal capacity, to be the honorary chair of the center. We need you.

8 - I also call on my honorable colleagues, the Special Ambassadors, to accept my invitation to be founding members of the HLAB of the Center.

In closing, I believe that the way forward in our journey to 2030, is smart tourism. I call on all of you to guide me and support me in this endeavor.

Thank you