



## Message for World Tourism Day 2017

**Hassan Al Ibrahim, Acting Chairman, Qatar Tourism Authority**

### **“Sustainable Tourism – a Tool for Development”**

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to this year’s official World Tourism Day celebrations in Qatar on 27 September. This momentous occasion on the international tourism industry’s calendar bears double significance for Qatar, as it comes at a time when tourism in our country is experiencing exciting and monumental changes.

In recent years tourism has been recognised by our country’s leadership as a critical tool for sustainable development. In fact, tourism has been designated one of the five sectors that will drive economic diversification and ensure the country’s long term sustainability.

The importance of supporting tourism has become ever clearer, and continues to crystallise today. While other sectors suffered setbacks from economic and security challenges in recent years, tourism remained resilient, including in the Middle East, growing by 3% in 2016. This has sent a strong signal to decision makers that tourism must be placed at the forefront of development plans in order to achieve sustainable, long-lasting growth that is safeguarded from turbulence in the world around us.

2017 has also been a critical year for Qatar’s pursuit of this sustainability. We have taken great strides to foster unprecedented long-term growth and shed a spotlight on tourism’s true potential. From cruise tourism to business events, Qatar has been diversifying its source markets, products and services. And all the while, we have been closely examining all the different elements that make up the tourism experience, and exploring how we can enhance them.

The result of this review process, which we conducted in collaboration with partners across Qatar’s public and private sectors, is a new chapter in Qatar’s national tourism sector strategy. And so there is no better time for us to host the official celebrations of World Tourism Day 2017 under the theme “Sustainable Tourism – A Tool for Development.” Not least because attendees of the celebration will be the first to witness the launch of the next chapter of our journey towards 2030, which brings into focus our vision for a tourism sector that is authentic, diverse, and accessible to visitors from all around the world.

On behalf of the government of the State of Qatar, I would like to convey our sincere thanks to the UNWTO for giving us the opportunity to gather industry partners from across the world for WTD. Together we will celebrate our sector’s contribution to long term development and seek out ways to capitalise on the potential of ongoing tourism projects to achieve sustainability for our nations.