

This closing statement was prepared by the co-chairs of the 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference on *Responsible Tourism in Destinations, Living Landscapes of Oman* held in Muscat 10-12 October 2010 and presented to the conference by His Excellency Mohammed bin Hamoud al Toobi, Undersecretary, Ministry of Tourism

## CLOSING STATEMENT

### **An invitation to take responsibility and work together for sustainable development through tourism ~ Muscat, 12 October 2010**

On the occasion of the Sultanate of Oman's Ministry of Tourism hosting the 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference on *Responsible Tourism in Destinations, Living Landscapes of Oman* in Muscat (10 -12 October 2010):

- **Welcoming** and recognising the contributions of 380 delegates from 34 countries;
- **Valuing** the guidance and input of UNWTO, UNEP, IUCN and ICRT for co-chairing;
- **Learning** from many presentations, case studies and debates; and
- **Recognising** that the scale of the challenges is increasing.

The Conference invites all stakeholders to consider their share of responsibility to contribute to sustainable development through tourism taking account of the four Conference themes and outcomes:

1. **Livelihoods, local economic development and human resources** to be at the centre of any sustainable tourism strategy. We urge stakeholders to consider the importance of well managed local sourcing mechanisms to spread the benefits of tourism. We recognise the importance of associations and partnerships to achieve this.
2. The conservation and celebration of **tangible and intangible heritage management**. It is necessary to understand and respect the value systems of local communities. Cultural heritage is at the heart of destinations. This heritage must be represented and interpreted truthfully and marketed with respect.
3. The challenge of a **world of finite resources**. Actions include legislation, enforcement and compliance monitoring to protect natural and cultural heritage, and reduce the consumption of natural resources such as water and fossil fuels.
4. **Responsible destination marketing and management**. Marketing should be used to attract tourists who value and respect local communities, natural and cultural heritage of destinations, while management should ensure fulfilling visitor experiences.

Drawing on the outcomes and progress made since the First Conference on International Responsible Tourism in Destinations, this Conference reaffirms that a responsible approach to sustainable tourism is a model that can and should be developed and adapted for national, regional and local programs. Additionally, the Conference recognises the value and priority of operational research and monitoring for targeted actions at all levels.

Noting that tourism is a multi-stakeholder and dynamic industry, the Conference invites all stakeholders to take their share of responsibility in a collective effort to achieve sustainable destinations.

The Conference encourages other national programs around the world to adopt a responsible approach to sustainable development through tourism.

To demonstrate its leadership in taking responsibility, Oman's Ministry of Tourism will finalise its Sustainable Tourism Policy in collaboration with other government authorities and stakeholders. The policy will be embodied in 8<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan (2011-2015) for Tourism. Accordingly, we invite all stakeholders to declare what their organisations will do to make a positive difference, and expect stakeholders to develop sustainability policies and report on their implementation and effectiveness.

To assist the spread of our learning internationally, Conference presentations will be posted on [www.rtd4.om](http://www.rtd4.om)

His Excellency Mohammed bin Hamoud al Toobi, Undersecretary, Ministry of Tourism	Professor Harold Goodwin Director International Centre for Responsible Tourism
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