

Oman Air, An Important Strategic Partner Promoting Tourism

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Tourism is becoming a gradually more popular way to boost economic growth in developing countries, and Oman has significant potential for becoming a major global tourist destination. Oman has been cautious in opening its doors to mass tourism mainly because the government is looking to attract certain types of tourists that will be compatible with what the country has to offer. Although Oman is not for everyone, it is certain to charm those with an eye for natural beauty and an interest in Arabic tradition of one of the oldest states on the Arabian Peninsula. Oman is rich in natural assets and cultural heritage and the country provides an attractive and safe destination for tourists. With features such as wildlife, cultural heritage including UNESCO listed forts, an extensive coastline with spectacular sandy beaches, sunny hot climate, variety of water sports and recreation and unique archaeological sites of world significance, Oman is poised to be launched as an attractive international tourism destination.

Usama Bin Karim Al Haremi Oman Air Corporate Communications and Media Department in Oman Air said that Oman Air is an important strategic partner and will have a significant role in making things happen. The government promotes tourism, consistent with its policy of economic diversification. Tourism can make substantial and sustainable contributions to economic growth. Tourism projects are aimed also at job creation for Omani nationals. The vision for Oman's economy, up to the year 2020, envisages that within a stable macro-economic framework to be provided by the Government, sustainable development would be achieved by relying on the private sector as the primary engine of growth. A diversified, dynamic and globalised economy is to be established through a strong, efficient and competitive private sector. The objectives for the tourism sector include the encouragement of the role and contribution of the private sector, the development of human resources within the sector and raising the percentage of Omanis in the labour force. These aims have to be achieved keeping in view the fact that the tourism sector's contribution to the GDP has to eventually grow to 5 per cent by 2020. Al Haremi said that security and stability experienced by citizens, residents, visitors and tourists, ranks the Sultanate of Oman among the pioneers in advanced countries in this regard. This is one of the most significant factors of tourist attractions which Oman has and accordingly, the Sultanate of Oman is all set to grow to be of a global tourist destination with its traditional favorites

and the spirit of tolerance of Omani citizens.

Al Haremi affirmed that Oman Air will continue to promote unique Oman tourism opportunities that are not likely to be found anywhere else. The tourism sector is the largest foreign exchange earning sector, and the Government realizes many enormous tasks cannot be done on their own and has therefore, given a greater responsibility to the private sector and is encouraging public-private sector partnerships as well as foreign investments. The higher management apprehends that this is a crucial step if we hope to boost Oman image considerably and follow through with the Sultanate Tourism Master Plan, which will benefit the economy. The airline is to work closely with the government to promote tourism. The effects of the tourism sector on regional economies have proven to be paramount and have positively driven employment and income levels in the region.

Revealing the World Tourism and Travel Council (WTTC) on Oman Al Haremi pointed at Oman being a fast growing Travel & Tourism economy as per the report. Travel & Tourism in Oman is expected to generate OMR2, 087.2 mn (US\$5,428.4 mn) of economic activity (Total Demand) in 2007, growing (nominal terms) to OMR3, 036.3 mn (US\$7,896.6 mn) by 2017. Oman Travel & Tourism market share of worldwide Total Demand is generally increasing. Oman's T&T Industry is expected to contribute 2.2% to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2007 (OMR327.7 mn or US\$852.3 mn), rising in nominal terms to OMR575.7 mn or US\$1,497.2 mn (3.2% of total) by 2017. Oman Travel & Tourism Industry GDP contribution to Total GDP is generally increasing, and Travel & Tourism Economy GDP contribution to Total GDP is generally increasing. Oman T&T Economy employment is estimated at 107,000 jobs in 2007, 10.1% of total employment, or 1 in every 9.9 jobs. By 2017, this should total 150,000 jobs, 12.2% of total employment or 1 in every 8.2 jobs. The 33,000 T&T Industry jobs account for 3.1% of total employment in 2007 and are forecast to total 54,000 jobs or 4.4% of the total by 2017. Oman relative Travel & Tourism Industry Employment contribution to Total Employment is generally increasing and relative Travel & Tourism Economy Employment contribution to Total Employment is generally increasing.



Globally, the tourism industry has had an increasing contribution to overall gross domestic product figures and this contribution is set to increase, especially in emerging markets, in the future. In 2005, travel and tourism spending exceeded \$ 5.9 trillion rising to \$ 6.5 trillion in 2006, and is expected to generate in excess of US\$7 trillion in 2007, rising to over US\$13 trillion over the coming decade according to the World Travel & Tourism Council's (WTTC) Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) research, sponsored by Accenture and prepared by Oxford Economics. (WTTC) is the forum for business leaders in the Travel & Tourism industry working to raise awareness of Travel & Tourism as one of the world's largest industries, employing approximately 231 million people and generating over 10.4 per cent of

world GDP.

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