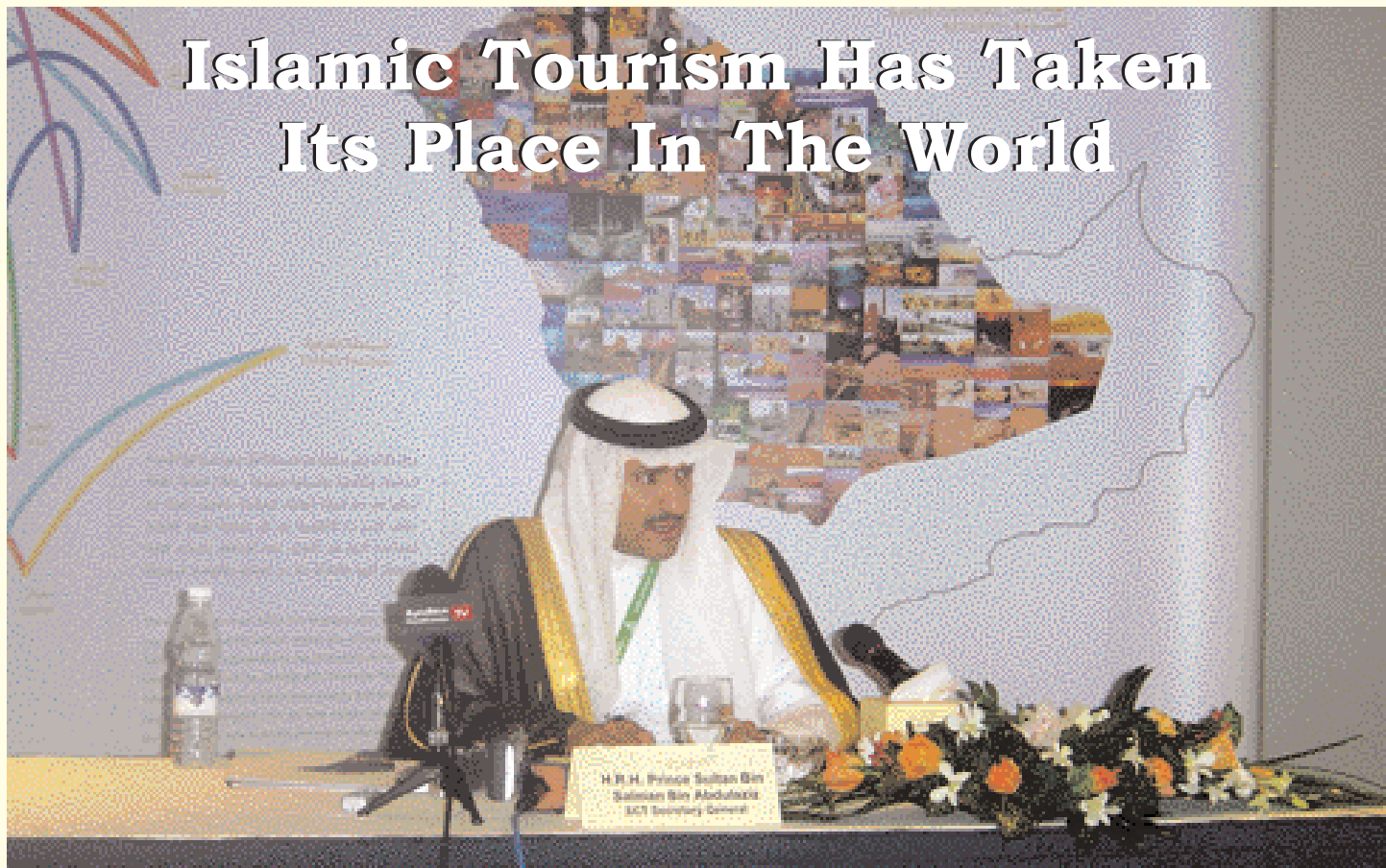


Prince Sultan Ben Salman, Secretary General Of The High Committee For Tourism In Saudi Arabia to Islamic Tourism magazine:



Prince Sultan Ben Salman during his press conference

الأمير سلطان بن سلمان في مؤتمره الصحفي

Dubai - Motaz Othman

"You provide to Islam and Muslims a great service through the facilities which you announced to accommodate foreign tourists on the territories of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. They will be able to discover for themselves the worthy life which the inhabitants of this country live within the framework of Islamic principles, contrary to the negative media image. They can also enjoy a healthy holiday within the framework of the principles of the kingdom".

I made this comment to Prince Sultan Ben Salman, Secretary General of the High Committee for Tourism, during his press conference for Arab and foreign journalists held on the first day of Al Moltaqa exhibition. The Prince indicated that 18 agencies and Saudi tourism companies were authorized to conclude agreements with foreign tourist agencies to attract non Muslim tourists to Saudi Arabia. One

envisages the arrival of millions of tourists, knowing that Muslim tourists from various countries can visit Saudi Arabia on programmes combining Umrah and tourism. He added: "We are now a member the World Tourism Organization. In June we will start to issue licences to tourist guides and authorise tourist classifications for hotels and places of residence.

"We do not fear anything, and we do not have anything to hide. We will be happy and proud when tourists converge on the kingdom. We will make them as comfortable as possible so they benefit from their holidays within the framework of the principles of Islamic Sharia. Saudi Arabia is the land and the cradle of Islam", the Prince said. He added that "this new dimension to attract tourists was adopted in coordination with the various ministries, the Interior, Trade, Hajj and others, as well as the kingdom's embassies abroad.

The Prince underlined the principal tourist attractions, such as Islamic culture, the historical sites, the beaches, the rich coral etc

We visited the stand of the High Committee for Tourism and had an interview with Prince Sultan. We asked him about the message that he wants to convey to European tourists and the Western world through Islamic Tourism magazine. He replied: "We welcome the tourists and we want them to enjoy their stay, benefit from their holidays and learn about the Islamic way of life in the Kingdom." I was very happy to meet Prince Sultan, especially when he insisted on the need for cooperating with Islamic Tourism magazine, since we have the same objective, namely to give to foreign tourists a true and realistic image of Islam and Muslims, far from the negative stereotypes. And I was proud that Islamic Tourism magazine was the first to promote the concept of Islamic Tourism. ■