

# Moroccan Travel Market in Marrakesh

> Marrakesh - Najib Khalifa

Marrakesh hosted its 1st international tourism exhibition; the Moroccan Travel Market, from 17th to 20th of January. It was undoubtedly the tourist event of the year, giving Moroccan tourism an international dimension. The event was attended by more than 200 exhibitors, public and private; domestic and international. More than one hundred journalists from various national and international media have attended to cover it.

We were about thirty journalists, and we exchanged views on the purpose of tourism fairs aboard the bus that led us from Casablanca to Marrakesh, a distance of 240 km. Arriving at the 5 stars hotel Al-Nafiss, reserved for journalists, we put our belongings in our rooms and we took our lunch. Then we headed to the exhibition.

After the inauguration, made by the Minister of Tourism, Mr. Mohamed Bousaid and organizer of the event, Mr. Abdul-karim Rahal Al-Soulami, we visited the stands which were organised according to their speciality. They included: private tour operators, travel agencies, car hire, federations of the hotel industry, catering, transportation and handicrafts. These were all part of the private sector. We also visited the stands of the public sector, such as the Moroccan National Tourism Office (MNT0), the Ministry of Tourism and the regional centres of tourism. We also paid a visit to the stands of Malaysia, France, Spain, Belgium, Germany and some African countries.

Many celebrations were held in for the exhibitors, participants and journalists, including the evening and dinner organised by the Regional Tourism Office of Marrakesh at the Palace of Congresses and the evening organized by the the company Fires International.

Other activities during the exhibition included a conference chaired by Mr. A.



One of the stands

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Azzouzi, D.G. of the MNT0, on the theme "responsible tourism", another on "The travel industry destined for Morocco", moderated by Mr. Jean-Francois Rial, President of the World Travel and a third headed by Mr. Xavier Descamps, co-chairman of Tourisport Company, on the topic: "Adventure Tourism". Mr. Chris Hugo addressed the theme of "Rural Tourism". Isabelle Bennani, Pashman, (president of Cento), Marie Poulain (Director of Escate), Ziyade Man (KDS), Prince Emmanuel, Fadel Lahlayssi (DG BMCE), have intervned on the following topics: "Responsibility of tour operators", "New Technologies of tourism", "Tourism industry and new businesses", "Solutions for tourism acquisitions", "Tourism development in Africa" and "Financing tourism projects." Finally, Ms. Houda Shakiry (professor at the University of Al-Akhawain) and Mr. Sidqi Ma'ati, an expert



Press conference

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and consultant on tourism, have dealt with the subject of "Tourism and added value."

During the closing session, the organizer Mr. Abdul-Karim Rahal Al-Soulami promised to making this show, which attracted more than 8,000 visitors, an annual event in January of every year in Marrakech, by providing the competitiveness necessary to deal with other international exhibitions held at the same time, including those of Lisbon and Madrid. ■