

# Algiers

## 7th international exhibition of tourism and travel 2005

Algiers - Mounir El-Fishawy

It is easy to travel to Algeria; but it is difficult to leave, largely due to Uncle Said, the most famous personality in Algerian tourism. If your visit is arranged by the Ministry of Tourism, Uncle Said will receive you with his big smile and guarantee you will be excited by your visit to this beautiful country. And it is also he who will wish you good-bye on your departure, leaving you with kind words and sharp comments. It is also difficult to leave Algeria due to the warm and generous welcome from the Algerian people who are known for their kindness to foreign visitors, as well as the natural beauty of the country and the wealth of its Arab-Islamic cultural heritage.



The opening ceremony. (From right), Mr. Tayr, Mr. Moussa and Mr. Mimoun.

من اليمين: عبد العالي طير، نور الدين موسى، وإسماعيل ميمون أثناء افتتاح المعرض.

The Algerian Ministry of Tourism invited me to the 7th international tourist exhibition held under the auspices of the President Abdelaziz Bouteflika in the Palace of Exhibitions in Algiers. The capital that hosted this event, pleased its numerous visitors with its moderate climate and splendid natural sites (beaches and green mountains sprinkled with buildings and mosques) crowned by the Martyrs Monument. Algeria is the country of 1.5 million martyrs.

### A Successful Beginning And End

On Monday May 16th, Nour-eddine Moussa, the Algerian Minister of Tourism, accompanied by Ismael Mimoun, the Minister of Fishing, inaugurated SITEV. Mohamed Sghir Kara, the ex-minister of tourism, was credited with organizing the event. Abdul-Aali Tayr, the President of the National Office for Tourism, and his team, worked tirelessly to ensure a successful exhibition

The Minister of Tourism announced in his opening speech, that the main objective of this symposium was to « improve the Algerian tourism product to give a push to the influx of tourists.» Sadly tourism stagnated during the black decade ( the terrorism years). He also underlined the tremendous investment potential in his country's tourism sector and added frankly: « Quantity tourism facilities exist in Algeria; what we lack is quality services and good ➤

## Exhibitions

management. This must be improved in line with international standards ».

The two ministers toured the exhibition stands accompanied by many Algerian, Arab and foreign journalists, and professionals from the tourism sector representing all the country's regions.

### Three Hundred Stands

This year there were 300 exhibitors at SITEV: 21 Arab and foreign country stands and stands showing Algeria's different wilayas and their hotels, tourism and hotelier schools, land and sea transport, tourism management establishments, regional tourist offices, tour operators and travel agencies. There was also a stand for Algerian youth and sport, which exhibited sports equipment, as well as stands selling traditional clothes, and works of art. Thousands of visitors, professionals and the general public, visited the five-day exhibition : some contracts were signed and tourist promotion campaigns were launched. One-day workshops, held in the Ali Maachi Cinema Hall, presented valuable information about Algerian tourism.

### Workshops

The theme of the workshop day was the role of tourism development and reconciliation between cultures. Many Algerian and foreign specialists took part in debates on the following topics:

- the World Tourism Organisation's code of ethics as a means of enhancing the principles of tolerance, understanding and respect of others:
- environmental tourism:
- sustainable tourism, a factor in the preservation and promotion of cultures and heritages:
- environmental preservation and its relationship with tourist development and the role of education:
- group tourism:
- the decade of the UNO (2001-2010) for a culture of peace and non-violence for the benefit of future generations:
- promotion of tourism and preservation of heritage and environment and their role in bridging the gap between nations and cultures:



The debate on tourism and tolerance .

ندوة حول السياحة والتسامح بين الثقافات.



The School of Hotel and Catering stand.

جناح مدرسة الطبخ والفندقة.



Algiers Hotel.

جناح فندق الجزائر



Some of the stands.

جانب من المعرض.



Some of the stands.

جانب من المعرض.

- sustainable tourism: practices respecting resources and the ecosystem:
- the public sector and sustainable tourism.
- the role of tourism in the preservation and promotion of handicrafts:
- the fishing sector and tourism:

A workshop was also organized about the impact of tourism development on sustainable development. Local and foreign specialists attended.

### Varied media activities

The exhibition's press centre was a hive of activity. Journalists were busy sending reports to all four corners of the world, notably Europe. The small number of Arab journalists was astonishing - only two non

Algerians including the author of this article. I don't know if this reflects Algeria's focus on the European market, or an Arab lack of interest in Algerian tourism, or both. Or was it just a coincidence? « The Gazette », the special daily of the SITEV, included 8 pages: 6 in French, one in English and one in Arabic. The National Office of Tourism has to be commended for its publication of the magazine « Tourism of Algeria » in Arabic and French.

The exhibition's promoters arranged for journalists to visit a number of wilayas, notably Annaba, Tipaza and Cherchell. Similarly, Dr Abdul-Rahman Belghat, General Manager of Accor and Director of its operations in Saudi Arabia, invited the media

to the Sofitel-Algiers Hotel and briefed them about Zemzem Tower which his company is building near the holy Kaaba in Mecca. Shares are available to the public.

### Islamic Tourism distinguishes itself

The involvement of Islamic Tourism magazine in the 7th SITEV was very positive. The National Tourist Office re-printed articles which appeared in the Arabic and French edition of "Islamic Tourism" (No.15) in its magazine "Tourism of Algeria". The articles provided a detailed description of Algeria's Islamic sites.

Islamic Tourism's representative was warmly welcomed by top people in Algerian tourism, up to the level of the ministry and the national tourist office. Algerian television was keen on inviting the author of this article to its programme « Mornings », during which the brilliant announcer Loubna Dib interviewed us about our magazine and its objectives, as well as on the prospects for Algerian tourism, our assessment of Algeria's tourist sites and the SITEV exhibition.

The exhibition closed on a successful note in the hope of achieving even greater success next year. It hopes to transform the promising dream of Algerian tourism into a concrete reality and firmly placing Algeria on the world tourist map.

We left Algeria, happy with what has been achieved, and with the hope of a better future for Algerian tourism, farewelled with a the smile and fond memories of the insightful commentaries of Uncle Said. ■