

Beijing International Tourism Exhibition

Beijing - Motaz Othman

A luxurious reception was held in Beijing's Palace of Congresses, in honor of the ministers and secretaries of tourism, and the exhibitors and participants in the Beijing International Tourism Exhibition, 2005. We feasted on the local cuisine and enjoyed folkloric dances and popular artistic performances, all excellent examples of the rich Chinese culture. The organization could not be faulted and illustrated the eagerness of the organizers to ensure the fair was a success. The inauguration took place on June 22nd, under the flags of the participating countries, music and the release of colorful balloons.





Mr. Changjiang Yu, welcomed the participants. He said that the government and the private sector in China accorded great importance to investment in tourism. The participation of more than 55 countries and the high quality of the representations reflected that Beijing is highly regarded by the international tourist trade and that China is the tourist destination of the future.

Mr. Edward Liu, the fair's organizer and head of the directorate of Sims Company, welcomed the exhibitors and thanked Greece in particular for its strong participation. He also welcomed the 200 trade visitors and guests participating in the "Hosted Buyer" program.

I met both Mr. Yu and Mr. Liu and gave them copies of Islamic Tourism in its different languages. They examined the issues, and the publicity we gave to the fair, expressed their appreciation and looked forward to our continued co-operation next year.

The three-day fair attracted more than 500 exhibitors from different continents. They were divided into six great pavilions, three for foreign participants, two for the Chinese and one for Greece. Tourism experts believe China will soon become, the number one exporter of tourists to different parts of the world.

Islamic Tourism was a media partner in the fair and predicted its unparalleled success. Our publicity campaign began six months

ago. The German Marketing Director for Asia, Mr Horst, commented that we are always represented at major international travel fairs. I first met him at Dubai's ATM.

I talked to people in charge of different stands, including General Hachem Khan, the new Chief of Pakistani Tourism; Mr. Odaya, of Sri Lanka; Mr. Shahlimar, of the Philippines; Mr. Robert, of Hungary, as well as the people in charge of the Indian, Scandinavian, Hong Kong, Irish, Malaysian, Cambodian, Polish, Finish, Bangladeshi, Indonesia and Singaporean stands.

I also met numerous people in charge of hotels, resorts and airlines such as Qatar Airlines, Emirates, Turkish and Cathay Pacific. I visited the tourist offices of Greece, Cyprus, Lebanon and China. Mr. Nael Shamroukh, from Jordan told us that they were experts in religious tourism for Muslims who visit Saudi Arabia via Jordan. On offer is a two-day programme taking in Jordan's Islamic sites, especially Kurk and Al-Mazar.

On the last day, the exhibition welcomed thousands of Chinese residents. It had the support of the Beijing Tourist Board and the exhibitors introduced the Chinese to their countries and attractions. The Beijing International Tourism Exhibition is now on the international exhibition calendar and can only grow from strength to strength. ■

