

# The 7th Mediterranean Travel Fair

> Cairo - Motaz Othman

I believe I am one of few journalists who clearly points out the negatives and positives of Cairo's Mediterranean Travel Fair, because I have covered its activities during the past seven years: I made friends with the organizers, the majority of exhibitors and even the visitors.

I was invited to this year's fair as part of the hosted press programme. This led me to meet the exhibitors and to listen to their opinions about MTF and suggestions for its improvement.

- Mr. Zalizam Zakaria, director of the Malaysian Tourism Office in Saudi Arabia, praised this year's fair and said it was an improvement on the previous exhibition. He was eager that the organizers open the fair to Egyptian citizens. That was confirmed by the director of the office of Indian Tourism in Johannesburg, who indicated that MTF is Africa's leading fair.

- Mr. Lefkos, director of Cyprus Tourism, underlined the need for the participation of more Egyptian travel agencies and expressed his astonishment at their low turnout.

- Mr. Pascal, director of the French stand, declared: "The fair was very good; I met many Egyptian and Arab travel agents and several journalists. That is very encouraging, because it contributes to promoting Arab tourism in France."

- Miss Thahabiya Momen, director of the Algerian stand, indicated that the fame of the MTF grows year by year and attracts increasing numbers of visitors. She believes the fair should be opened to the public because "the tourist is, in the final analysis, the citizen and it is for him that we are here. But, unfortunately, we do not see him". She mentioned cultural tourism, which encompasses the Mediterranean countries



The Accor stand

جناح أكور

and indicated that her country will always take part in this fair, considering its importance.

- Miss Patricia, director of the Thai stand, expressed her great satisfaction, adding: "On the first day, we could not drink a coffee; so many interested, educated serious visitors were there." She rejected the idea of opening the fair to the public, asserting that she only intends to deal with travel agencies who, in their turn, market Thailand to their clients.

- Mrs. Awatef, marketing director of the Sudan stand, was very satisfied with the fair and declared that for her the MTF is the best ▶



A stand in the fair

جناح في المعرض

means of promoting tourism in Sudan, which is taking part for the first time.

- The director of the Palestinian stand underlined the notable evolution of the fair in terms of participants and visitors. She made a point of thanking the government and the organizers for inviting Palestine.

- The director of the Bulgarian stand indicated that this fair is very beautiful, and that it is an important opportunity to meet Egyptian and Middle Eastern travel agents. She added that her country tries to target the Arab market through the fairs of Dubai, Jordan and Egypt and that it will continue to take part in this fair.

- Mr Shakiry, the publisher of Islamic Tourism magazine, said that the fair needs a larger participation of Arab and foreign travel agents, while underlining the need for opening it to the public, since most of the participants are tourist offices.

- Mr Ibrahim Astalay, tourist adviser at the Turkish Embassy, indicated that he would invite the Turkish private sector to take part next year, while praising the efforts of the organizers.

The fair was inaugurated by the Egyptian Prime Minister, in the presence of the Egyptian Minister of Tourism and other ministers of tourism from participating countries. The fair recorded a positive growth, in terms of area and the number of participants which reached 27 countries including four newcomers: Brazil, France, Bulgaria and Kosovo.

A press conference was held during the opening day, by the Egyptian Tourism Minister, the President of Greek Tourism and the president of Reed Exhibition Company. They presented their vision of tourism from and into Egypt. The President of the Greek Office of Tourism said he was very pleased to take part in the fair and briefly described his country's tourist attractions. Mr. Shakiry proposed, in his intervention, the organizing of a major African tourism fair, with the collaboration of the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism, Reed Company and Islamic Tourism magazine. This proposal was favourably received and will be followed up.

I believe it is necessary to allow Egyptian intellectuals, lawyers, engineers, tradesmen and businessmen, to take part in MTF. The majority of the exhibitors -



The Google Seminar

ندوة غوغل



The Press conference

المؤتمر الصحفي

offices of tourism - wish to establish contacts with the public. In the same way, I estimate that it is necessary to grant facilities and concessions to Egyptian travel agencies to take part as this will encourage the participation of foreign tourist agencies.

The venue should be the same each year. Egypt is on the map of international tourism and the map of Mediterranean and Arab-Muslim countries. It would be wrong to think of transferring it to Greece or any other Mediterranean country. Even if there is such a tendency, it is necessary to keep the fair in Cairo, even if it means changing its name to the "Mediterranean and Africa Fair". ■



Celebrating MTF

جانب من احتفالية المعرض