



MORE THAN 300 ATTEND UAE WORLD TOURISM DAY CONFERENCE HOSTED BY RAS AL KHAIMAH TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

- *Conference was held under the patronage of HH Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi, UAE Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Ras Al Khaimah*
- *UNWTO Tourism for All theme: Tourism must be inclusive and barrier-free*
 - *RAKTDA commits to a plan for international accessible tourism standards across the emirate*

Ras Al Khaimah – UAE – 29 September 2016: Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority (RAKTDA), which develops the emirate’s tourism infrastructure and plans, initiates and drives its domestic and overseas promotions, today hosted the annual UAE World Tourism Day conference for the second year in a row, under the patronage of HH Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi, UAE Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Ras Al Khaimah.

The half-day UAE World Tourism Day Conference, held at the Al Marjan Island Convention Centre, saw a keynote address from His Excellency Mohammad Al Muhairi, Undersecretary to UAE Minister of Economy, who spoke about the important contribution of tourism to Ras Al Khaimah and the UAE.

As well as discussing issues and developments within accessible tourism and matters that strengthen Ras Al Khaimah’s and the UAE’s tourism propositions, the conference addressed the key needs of family and elderly travellers, aligning with UNWTO’s World Tourism Day which was marked earlier this week – under the theme ‘Tourism for All – Promoting Universal Accessibility.’

The conference brought together international thought leaders in front of an audience of key industry stakeholders from across the UAE, including: Haitham Mattar, CEO of RAKTDA, Ivor Ambrose, President of European Network for Accessible Tourism; Andrew Dent, CEO of the UK’s highly popular Family Traveller Magazine; Urs Binggelli, Senior Travel and Tourism Expert at global management consultants McKinsey & Company and Scott Booth, Research Director and Head of Travel, Tourism & Leisure for the internet-based market research firm, YouGov ME.

Topics explored included: how to make tourism destinations and products accessible to disabled travellers, elderly travellers with reduced mobility, and families with small children. The potential of wellness tourism was discussed as the percentage of the mature travelling population continues to grow.



Haitham Mattar, CEO of RAKTDA said: “World Tourism Day is an annual UNTWO organised event, which aims to promote responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism. As well as marking the celebrations with an informative and insightful conference, we decided to go a step further this year and put words into action.

RAKTDA has today strengthened its commitment to deliver Tourism For All by signing the Accessible Tourism Code of Good Conduct. This code was developed by the European Network of Accessible Tourism (ENAT) – represented today by one of our keynote speakers Ivor Ambrose. Over the next three years, we will commence the journey to honour our commitment to this code by establishing accessible tourism products and practices in the emirate.”

The conference also served as an opportunity for RAKTDA to demonstrate the emirate’s capabilities in staging high profile meetings: “We have a superb range of venues as well as the expertise to service the high value MICE sector and are building a credible reputation as an exciting alternative for business conferences and corporate gatherings,” explained Mattar.

“We are supporting the development of our MICE profile with the creation of an events calendar for the destination which we anticipate will act as a spur to attract additional meetings, convention, incentives and exhibition business,” he concluded. This follows the announcement of the very successful Young Global Leaders debate held earlier the same week at the Al Hamra Convention Centre.

-ENDS-

Notes to Editors:

About Ras Al Khaimah

One of the world’s fastest growing tourism destinations, Ras Al Khaimah boasts a rich culture and long-standing history dating back 7,000 years. The Emirate boasts an array of archaeological sites and breath-taking natural vistas, from golden sand beaches, awe-inspiring terracotta dunes and a green belt of date palms to Jebel Jais, the highest mountain in the UAE.

To learn more about Ras Al Khaimah, visit us at:

- www.rasalkhaimah tourism.com
- www.facebook.com/visitrasalkhaimah
- www.youtube.com/visitrasalkhaimah
- <https://twitter.com/raktourism>

About Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority (TDA)

The Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority (TDA) was established in May 2011 under the government of Ras Al Khaimah. In order to achieve target growth of one million visitors by the end of 2018, the authority aims to develop the emirate’s tourism infrastructure and establish Ras Al Khaimah as a world-class destination for leisure and business travel, creating



sustainable investment opportunities and enhancing the quality of life for its residents. In order to achieve its goals, the Ras Al Khaimah TDA has a government mandate to license, regulate and monitor the emirate's tourism and hospitality industry.

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