



Remarks by Mr. Taleb Rifai at ITB
Secretary-General, World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

The Decade of Travel and Tourism
(Berlin, Germany, March 2011)

Mr. Rainer Brüderle, Federal Minister for Economics and
Technology, Germany

Mr. Adam Giersz, Minister of Sport and Tourism, Poland

Mr. Klaus Laepple, President of the Federal Association of the
German Tourism Industry (BTW)

Mr. Klaus Wowereit, Governing Mayor of Berlin

Mr. Raimund Hosch, President and CEO, Messe Berlin

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear friends,

Year after year, ITB presents me with an exceptional opportunity to share with you some insights on the year gone by and prospects for the year ahead.

A unique platform from which to analyze the latest international tourism results and trends, reflect on the inevitable tourism ups and downs and devise the way in which together - the global tourism community - can address the challenges and opportunities to come.

This year, as we enter a new decade, I would like to invite you all to look towards a further horizon.

Dear friends,

The first decade of the 21st century was a decade of extraordinary tourism growth, but also of severe shocks: a decade that began with September 11 - which for many marks the shift in paradigm for the tourism sector - and ended with the global economic crisis of 2008/2009.

Now - with recovery underway and international tourist arrivals up by 7% in 2010 – it is time to look forward and ask what the next ten years hold for our sector.

2000-2010: “The best of times, the worst of times”

The first ten years of the 21st century are behind us, and what a decade it was for tourism. A decade marked by three main trends

- **First**, an exceptional growth in the tourism sector: In 2000, international tourist arrivals stood at 687 million. By 2010, this number had increased to 935 million – nearly 250 million tourists more in ten years. And we are now well on course to hit the one billion mark in the very near future. International tourism receipts almost doubled in the same period - from US\$482 billion in 2000 to almost US\$900 billion last year.

- **Second**, the emergence of new destinations: The world has opened up. New destinations have emerged. Over the past ten years we have witnessed the rise of the emerging countries - tourism has followed the same trend. In 2000, emerging economies held a 38% share of international tourist arrivals: by 2010 this had increased to 47%. Today, out of the 935 million international tourist arrivals in the world, nearly half are to emerging economies.
- **And, third, technology** – The last decade has seen changes beyond the numbers. It has seen profound changes on *how* we travel. When could one think telephones would be used to buy air tickets and serve as boarding passes? Technology has transformed our sector. Tourists can now search and book holidays themselves on the internet. When they arrive at their destination they can check the weather, buy tickets for tourism attractions or download a city guide. When they leave they upload their photos, rate their stay and keep in contact. E-visas, air and ground traffic handling, border systems, waste reduction and energy efficiency technologies. All these areas and more have developed rapidly over the past ten years and revolutionized the way we travel creating a myriad of new opportunities.

Dear friends,

Conditions during the first decade of this new century might not have been ideal for international tourism. It was a decade that saw the redefinition of global geopolitics following 9/11, immense natural

disasters, a worldwide pandemics and the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression.

However, never before have so many people travelled to so many places. Few places on the planet have escaped the curiosity of the traveller and few are now unreachable.

So, where do we go from here?

2011-2020: The Decade of Travel and Tourism

We meet here against a backdrop of a recovering economy and significant geopolitical shifts.

Unbalanced economic recovery across the globe, faster in emerging economies but still subdued in many advanced ones, continues to pose risks for world economic stability and the desired sustained growth.

Global unemployment is at a record high for the third straight year since the start of the economic crisis. And at the current pace, it is estimated it will take us 5 years to see employment back at pre-crisis levels.

Oil prices are again reaching peak values as economies rebound and the current situation in the Middle East impacts on production.

And, finally we can not forget our environmental challenge. As the world works to leaves the economic crisis behind, the energy and

climate crisis continues to advance. Greenhouse gases have reached record levels and our natural capital is running dangerously low.

Dear Friends

Tourism is a sector that can deliver, like not many others, on all the three pillars of sustainable development: economic growth, social progress and environmental sustainability.

Today, tourism generates 5% of the world's GDP; 30% of the world's exports of services and one in 12 of the world's jobs.

As we wake up to a new reality, as leaders and decision makers set out to rebalance the world away from our old model of growth: **tourism can lead a new decade of fairer, stronger and more sustainable growth. Tourism can become of one the most effective agents of development.**

Dear Friends,

In this new decade, tourism will come of age

As traditional economic sectors, such as agriculture, manufacturing, or heavy industries, loose dynamism, it is clear that a second wave of service sectors and human activities are emerging.

Tourism, culture, sports, creative industries, entertainment –are the industries that have exhibited particularly strong growth over the past few years. And these will be some of the most dynamic and

economically significant industries and development agents of this decade.

Who could have imaged how much a football tournament could do for South Africa over one summer? The country reaped incalculable marketing gains from the 500 million spectators around the world who on average tuned in to watch each of the 64 matches of the tournament. Nearly half a million foreign fans visited the country, many for the first time and the country has consolidated itself as a tourism destination.

A similar movement happened in China, India, Canada, and here in Germany and is now underway in the United Kingdom and in Brazil.

Now, more than ever in the history of humanity, we are living in global times. Goods and trade, capital and information all flow across international borders at incredible speeds. Today people are following. Tourists, nearly one billion, are filling the world.

Dear Friends,

As we enter the new decade, and in spite of all challenges, I am confident this will be remembered as the decade of travel and tourism.

It is up to us all, together, to make of tourism a true driving force of a fairer and more sustainable future and a true vehicle for economic growth and development.

Thank you,