**Tabriz, the Capital of Islamic Tourism in 2018**

The city of pioneers in Iran, the host of the world's Muslims

Tabriz, the old history maker, the passage of the overwhelming history of a land that the height of its mountains, its blue sky, the freshness of its plains, the blessing of its trees and the alchemy maker tiptoes of its noble people have created thousands of images in the minds of people around the world.

Now, after being selected for another test, Tabriz known as the city of pioneers has opened its doors to the people of the world, especially the world's Muslims to show what is said about Tabriz is not just a word. Tabriz is ready to show that "Tabriz must be seen".

**However, why Tabriz?**

The selection of Tabriz as the tourism capital of the Islamic countries in 2018 has had a tumultuous process, and Tabriz city could obtain this title due to its various abilities and qualities.

The selection of the host of the world's Muslims in 2018 dates back to the 9th meeting of the Tourism Ministers of OIC in 2015 when, after the preliminary investigations and arbitration in Iran, the cities of Tabriz and Yazd were introduced as Iranian candidates to the meeting and they along with other selected cities of the Islamic world were judged by the experts in the tourism field.

The meeting was hosted by Niger, and Tabriz, after being scrutinized and obtaining the needed scores among the various candidates, was finally introduced as the tourism capital of Islamic tourism in 2018 by receiving 7 votes out of 9 votes presented in the meeting.

The cities of Taling in Malaysia, Palghar and Sylhet in Bangladesh, Mardin in Turkey, Medina in Saudi Arabia, as well as Yazd and Tabriz in Iran had participated in this competition. However, Tabriz city was finally introduced as the tourist destination of the Muslims in 2018 due to having various exemplary natural and historical tourism areas, enjoying proper infrastructures in different fields, numerous specialized museums and diverse nature, as well as holding various international and regional events, having historic sites, being introduced as the universal carpet city, and of course, considering the increase in the number of its domestic and foreign tourists.

Tabriz has been selected considering the long history, civilization and cultural background of the city. Tabriz has long been the cradle of literature, mysticism and culture, and has been famous for its diverse arts, handicrafts and capable artists. In addition to these, other historical examples, such as the Iron Age Museum, the Kabood Mosque, Rab'-e Rashidi, Arg-e Alishah, Maqbaratoshoara, and dozens of historical houses that represent the culture of the city, as well as Tabriz Bazaar recorded in the UNESCO World Heritage List as the longest covered bazaar of the world with the interconnected brick structures and about one million square meters of area and the ancient history and culture intertwined with the lives of the people of the city show the importance and the attractions of Tabriz for other Muslims in the world.

Information about the nature and tourism sites, sustainable growth in the number of tourists entering the city over a specified period, tourism revenue of the city, cultural and art centers, historical and Islamic monuments, the latest tourism exhibitions and various festivals, including the exhibitions for agricultural products, handicrafts and nomadic productions, the tourism events held in the city during the intended year, the number of hotels and leisure centers, the availability of the basic infrastructures, the ease of the transportation system and access to visa, accessibility of information on the city in the regional and the international level are among the factors which are considered for the selection of the exemplary tourism cities. Accordingly, based on the surveys, the beautiful city of Iran, which has been designated for several years as a clean city, a city merciful with travelers and the first Shiite capital of the Islamic world, has become the capital of the Islamic tourism in 2018.

**The Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC);**

**The haven of all the Muslims**

The Muslims, the followers of the religion of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the people who have responded in every color, race, and country to the call of "Ghulu la ilaha illa llahu tuflehu" (Say there is no god but Allah and be saved) and have taken refuge with every fiber of their being in the divine protection, have established thirteen centuries after the call of the liberal man who called everyone for unity and kindness the cornerstone of an institution that is a place for the advancement of the goals of the Islamic world and the elevation of the justice flag among human beings.

"The Organization of Islamic Conference"(OIC), which now is about half a century since its birth, is attempting to provide the grounds for more development of the Muslim countries in the world and pave the way for the excellence and the achievement of the great goals of Islam by expanding the spirit of unity among these countries.

The organization, also known as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, is the second intergovernmental organization after the United Nations, which, with the 57 member countries and a scope spread across four continents of the world, encompasses a wide range of the world's peoples. It is the voice of the Islamic world and guarantees the protection of the interests of the Muslim world, as well as the promotion of the international peace and harmony among the followers of the Islamic religion in the world. The organization was established on the basis of the decision of the historic summit held in Rabat, Morocco on September 25, 1969 as an important decision following the criminal fire in Al-Aqsa Mosque at the time of the occupation of Jerusalem. It has been active in various activities to this day.

The structure of this organization is simpler than other similar organizations and its supreme pillar is the kings of the countries or the heads of the states and its summit is held every three years in the capital of one of the member states of the organization. In addition to the summit of the Islamic countries, another meeting is convened by the foreign ministers of the Islamic countries once a year or several times if necessary. On this basis, the 8th summit of the Islamic countries was held in Tehran on December 7, 1997 with the participation of most of the Islamic countries and top officials of fifty-five Muslim countries.

The development of Muslim countries in different dimensions is one of the main objectives of the organization and to achieve this objective, various tools are used. The following up and the implementation of the decisions of the organization summits is one of the solutions proposed in the law of the organization, and in this regard, various specialized committees have been established in the organization. Standing committees and interim committees of OIC have been established in such forms as the Information and Cultural Cooperation Committee, the Trade and Economic Cooperation Committee, the Scientific and Technological Cooperation Committee, as well as some interim committees in accordance with the necessity and the need of the Islamic World.

Tabriz has been selected as the tourism capital of Islamic countries in 2018 when "Iyad bin Amin Madani" was the secretary general of the OIC. This action is usually taken to introduce the cities of the Islamic world and to increase the interactions between countries.