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## Strong Presence For Oman Air At ITB Closing Report: ITB Berlin 2009 - Stronger Than Ever

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Oman Air said its partaking at the world's largest travel fair in Berlin recently was a great success. The National Carrier's stand did successfully display the true essence of Oman, and has played a considerable role in reflecting the country's flourishing tourism industry. Important business discussions were held with trade visitors; also, the carrier highlighted its latest products, announced its newest routes, and furthermore presented the genuine Omani hospitality.



Usama Bin Karim Al Haremi  
H-CC&M

Usama Bin Karim Al Haremi, Head of Corporate Communications and Media of Oman Air said, "We have received many enquiries and visits from interested buyers, and the public came in vast numbers too. We are more than happy. Not only did the ITB Berlin create greater interest in our country on the German market, it also made us the focus of increased international attention." He also affirmed that Oman Air would continue to work closely with the government, to further develop international markets for Oman tourism.

On the closing report, he said that ITB Berlin continues to grow and unlike many other industries, the travel sector is actively responding to the challenges. More market players visited the leading

platform of the international travel industry than ever before. ITB Berlin, which is taking place for the 43rd he informed, has been fully booked and exhibitor numbers have remained stable at last year's level. 11,098 exhibiting companies (2008: 11,147) from 187 countries occupied 26 halls, arranged on a geographical basis and according to the particular section of the tourism industry that they represent.

"Of the 110,857 trade visitors who attended (2008: 110,322), 42 per cent came from abroad, an increase of four per cent. Once again, record numbers took part in the convention. This year's figure was 12,000, compared with 11,000 in 2008. Crowds thronged the halls over the weekend as well. Approximately 68,114 members of the public (67,569) came to find out about travel destinations, products, and services from around the world. Overall attendance in the display halls was 178,971 (177,891)," He further added

Al Haremi also highlighted on the World Travel Trends Update released by IPK International at the ITB-Berlin, in relation to the Travel and Tourism Expectation for 2009. IPK International he notified is a highly qualified specialist in tourism market research and tourism marketing & masterplanning, which also counts among the leading tourism consultancies worldwide.



According to IPK International, internet bookings will surge, demand for online virtual meetings will gather pace, domestic travel will stay stable or grow, as will demand for low cost flights. Destinations adjacent to big travel markets they said will do not so bad. Long haul travel will fall sharply; moreover, the most pain will be felt in the business travel and MICE sectors. IPK's worldwide interviews suggest that 40% of Europeans will change their travel plans due to the economic crisis. Some 66% of Americans and 60% of Asians plan to make some kind of change.

According to IATA Al Haremi said, the worst is not come yet. All people are facing a difficult time; this is a full global economic crisis, not a small recession. "Alarm bells are ringing everywhere," said Giovanni Bisignani IATA Director General & CEO at a press conference in ITB 2009, adding that the industry is in a global crisis and we have not yet seen the bottom.

Bisignani added that International passenger demand fell by 5.6% year on year in January 2009, following a 4.6% reduction in December 2008. The demand drop outpaced capacity cuts of 2.0%, driving the load factor down 2.8 percentage points to 72.8%.

Head of Corporate Communications and Media of Oman Air notified too, that The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) revealed the results of its 2009 Economic Impact Research at its annual ITB Berlin press conference. "This year, the task of assessing travel and tourism trends and drawing up forecasts has been more challenging than ever because of all the uncertainties," Jean-Claude Baumgarten, WTTC President and CEO, announced. WTTC's latest research suggests that Travel & Tourism Economy GDP will contract by 3.6% in 2009. And it is expected to remain weak in 2010 with only marginal growth, of less than 0.3%, currently expected - on what will already be a weak 2009.



However, Al Haremi recalled The Middle East's Aviation Outlook 2009 report released recently by CAPA (Centre for Asia Pacific Aviation) that remains relatively bullish about the region's prospects. Global and regional aviation industry leaders believe that the Middle East aviation sector will be growing, while others are stagnating. They see this youthful region is set to soar, furthermore shape the growth of the future of aviation. In brief, experts trust that the region is fast becoming the 'Next-Gen aviation centre of the world.

In its role as the international travel industry's leading trade show and as an economic indicator, ITB Berlin Al Haremi confirmed, remains to be of great interest to the media around the world. The opening conference of ITB Berlin he said went live online for the first time, offering members of the media an opportunity to conduct interviews via the internet directly with selected speakers at the ITB Berlin Convention after their speech or panel discussion. This new service has been introduced in response to demand from media representatives worldwide, who wanted to report live on the opening of ITB Berlin, but were unable to attend the fair.

The programme of the global travel industry's largest convention listed around 80 outstanding events on up-to-the-minute topics, with 250 leading experts from business and science. In addition, the presence of some 120 international ministers of tourism ensured close contacts with politicians, furthermore provided opportunities for discussions about the present economic situation with people in positions of responsibility.



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