

In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Kind



September 28, 2017

## “Sustainable Tourism – A Tool for Development”

Human beings have always liked to enjoy nature and its beauty. They have shown their interest in their surroundings and have always strived to discover natural phenomena. The scenic environment has attracted them and made them show their love for it in different ways. They have written essays, stories and poems and songs in this regard. They have not stayed to their own surroundings and they have tried to go to different parts of the world and enjoy the beauties of nature. Though, they have faced difficulties and hardships, they have not given up their thirst for finding out the miracles of this bewitching world and have kept on being astonished by it.

Today, when the world has been modernized and divided in different states, boundaries and borders have been created, yet human beings have not given up touring different places in different countries. This has now taken a formal form and called as tourism. Tourism is now a famous leisure and a developing business as well. Millions of people around the world tour various places and thus spend a large amount of money every year; while the countries that host those tourists earn millions of dollars as well. According to current statistics by UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), International tourist arrivals worldwide have grown from 25 million in 1950 to nearly 1.2 billion in 2015. Similarly, international tourism revenues earned by destinations around the world have grown from 2 billion US dollars in 1950 to 1260 trillion in 2015. The sector represents an estimated 10% of the world's GDP and 1 in 10 jobs globally. A part from financial and economic benefits, tourism can also provide opportunities to share social and cultural values and at the same time assist people in learning traditional and historical lessons.

Keeping these advantages of tourism in consideration, United Nations has selected September 27th to be celebrated as World Tourism Day. The purpose of the day is to promote tourism and preserve the tourist sites from destruction. This year the theme of the day was “Sustainable Tourism – A Tool for Development”. The celebration of this World Day focused on how sustainable tourism can contribute to development and it was held in Doha (Qatar). Sustainable tourism is defined as tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities. It should thus make optimal use of environmental resources, respect host communities and ensure viable, long-term economic operations so that benefits are equitably distributed among all stakeholders.

It also remain a reality that for a country economic stability has an important role in the development and improvement of tourism. It, in fact, helps both in providing better opportunities to host tourists and at the same time provide better opportunities to produce tourists who would have the capacity to tour the places of their choice. It is really difficult to find any country suffering from economic instability spending money for the promotion and development of tourism as they have many other priorities. There are several countries in the world that have places worth visiting and can attract many tourists, but as the governments of such countries are not able to spare budget for development of tourism, they are not able to cash the opportunity.

In a similar fashion, the political stability and security also play a dominant role in supporting tourism. The countries that suffer from insecurity are not able to attract tourists as tourists would rarely want to risk their lives for the sake of tourism. Afghanistan is also a similar type of country that has been suffering from the evil of insecurity; therefore, tourism has not been able to flourish much. However, the country possesses the potential to become an important tourists' site. According to information by the Ministry of Information and Culture (MoIC), despite considerable drop in the number of foreign tourists to Afghanistan, due to insecurity, the sector is able to generate an annual income of almost one billion Afghanis. Foreign tourists can travel to only 12 provinces of the country that have over 200 historical sites. Whereas the relevant ministry issues around 100,000 tourism visas for foreign tourists every year. Afghanistan can flourish its tourism and this sector can be an important contributor in its economy as the country is striving to stand on its own. But, for that to happen it is really important that the relevant authorities must make honest efforts. The Afghan government needs to give proper attention to this sector and must not neglect it just because of the excuse of insecurity. Afghanistan can develop when it pays attention to different sectors simultaneously. Considering one sector as the panacea to all is not the solution. Developing all the institutions is important and so is the institution of tourism.



## China – A Model of Peace and Prosperity for Afghanistan

By Hujjatullah Zia

All nations seek to live a free and peaceful life. A civil society, if not a utopia, where individuals are able to exercise their rights and liberty is the ambition of human societies. Despite this fact, people are discriminated on the basis of their race, sex, color, and creed. Radical ideology and lack of religious tolerance are the main reasons behind the persistent violence and violation of human rights, which are widespread in Afghanistan, too.

Afghanistan will have to learn living a peaceful life from multiethnic societies. Let us view the multiethnic and multilingual society of China. China is officially composed of 56 ethnic groups, i.e., 55 minorities plus the Han majority. The laws and Constitution of People's Republic of China (PRC) guarantee equal rights to all ethnic groups in China and help promote ethnic minority groups' economic and cultural development. Ethnic minorities are represented in the National People's Congress as well as governments at the provincial and prefectural levels.

Some ethnic minorities in China live in what are described as ethnic autonomous areas. These “regional autonomies” guarantee ethnic minorities the freedom to use and develop their ethnic languages, and to maintain their own cultural and social customs.

In addition, the PRC government has provided preferential economic development and aid to areas where ethnic minorities live. Additionally, the Chinese government has allowed and encouraged the involvement of ethnic minority participation in the party. In the long course of historical evolution, people of all ethnic groups in China have maintained close contacts, developed interdependently, communicated and fused with one another, and stood together through weal and woe, forming today's unified multi-ethnic Chinese nation, and promoting the development of the nation and social progress.

In other words, Since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, following the guideline of unity among all ethnic groups for common prosperity and drawing on China's historical experience and the useful practices of other countries, always with a view to China's actual situation, the Chinese government carved out a path for the successful solution to ethnic issues and exercised the ethnic policy featuring equality, unity, regional ethnic autonomy, and common prosperity for all ethnic groups.

In brief, China has fostered the unity and harmonious coexistence of all ethnic groups who are striving with one mind for economic development, political stability, cultural prosperity and social harmony.

Based on China's Constitution, freedom and rights of the person are inviolable. The Constitution and laws of China stipulate that the state respects and safeguards human

rights. Violation of the freedom of the person of citizens of any ethnic group is proscribed. China, which has joined the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, prohibits discriminations on the grounds of race, color, faith, and gender. Hence, all ethnic groups live a peaceful life in China, it was what I was really impressed by on my trip to Beijing City of China for attending the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building-Measures in Asia (CICA) in 28 June.

Afghanistan's Constitution also prohibits discriminations and emphasizes equal rights for all ethnic groups living within this territory. It is stated in the Constitution's preamble that the state will “form a civil society void of oppression, atrocity, discrimination as well as violence, based on rule of law, social justice, protecting integrity and human rights, and attaining peoples' freedoms and fundamental rights.”

In the post-Taliban Afghanistan, democracy and human rights were debated hotly and people voted for selecting their representatives and the president. Afghans hoped to exercise their rights without fear. However, the violation of people's rights continues and traditional mindsets and radical ideology inflict sufferings upon the nation. In brief, stating equal rights for citizens and conducting election, without implementing the law, will not build democracy.

First, Afghan government needs to broaden the horizon of all ethnic groups through spreading awareness and underlining the spirit of brotherhood. Since Afghanistan is a religious society, religious preachers will have to enlighten the true message of religion and uncover the ugly face of sectarianism and religious radicalism.

In villages, where traditional culture is strongly practiced, religion is misinterpreted through the Taliban's pawns and radical elements. Unity among all ethnic groups for common prosperity is a dire need for Afghan nation. The bogus claim of radical elements must not weaken our faith in brotherhood. Both Afghan state and nation should learn from China how to support stability and coexistence in this multiethnic society. If we do not adopt a role model for living a peaceful life, violence and violation of human rights will linger on. It is not only China, any peaceful multiethnic countries will teach us the lesson of peace and stability. It is we to keep our eyes open and transcend ethnic tendencies for peace and prosperity.

Moreover, the government has to enforce the law and exert it on all people equally regardless of their ethnicity, political status, etc. Strict implementation of law and tight security are one of the cornerstones of China's prosperity. So, Afghan officials are hoped to do their best for the betterment of the nation and country.

Hujjatullah Zia is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at zia\_hujjat@yahoo.com

## Tourism Industry – An Invisible Export

By Ali Payam

Cultural heritage is significant for all human societies. It is widely believed that ancient monuments reflect the historical records of a society and, therefore, they are really valuable. People will realize the inherent value of mankind via observing the monuments, which are considered heritage belonging to the entire world.

The significance of cultural heritages do not necessarily belong to a particular nation but to the human societies. However, its particular importance for the country where the heritages are located is undeniable since it will benefit the country from different perspectives, including the financial aspect. Tourism is one of the main pillars and economic drivers of many countries. It plays an important role in terms of employment, income and maintenance of urban infrastructure and public services.

Archeologists and tourism analysts believe that the countries whose economy is dependent on tourism are seeking with strong determination to uphold tourist attraction. Additionally, cultural heritage and ancient monuments are financial resources that will create job for people. According to them, one of the prominent characteristics of tourism development is its direct or indirect effect on creating job. Tourism attractions, which need no financial support, are simply in need of an effective management. Today, tourism industry is a boom in economic activities around the world.

The development of tourism, with swift increase compared to other economic activities, has created scores of job and considered a leading industry. In short, tourism is significant in social and financial development to the extent that economists call it “invisible export”. Tourism is an export industry because foreign visitors who travel to a country purchase the “touristic experience” of that country and because it is intangible goods.

Historical heritage or ancient monuments are rich, endless, and indigenous resources which lead to economic independence and the balance of trade in the country. Based on statistics released by the World Tourism Organization (WTO), global tourism increased dramatically from 1950 to 2005 and its financial benefit increased from \$ 1.2 billion to over \$ 622 billion. In 2007, 10.3 percent of the global domestic product was allocated to tourism.

Tourism industry is very dynamic and its huge revenues generated by this money-making concept have attracted the attention of experts, who think that it is one of most dynamic activities in social-economic evolution. Cities and villages are the most attractive places for tourists. In order to achieve sustainable development in tourism, all

social, cultural, economic and environmental dimensions should be supported.

The countries that were able to handle tourism industry well, benefited to a great extent. For instance, income from the tourism industry is over \$ 2 billion in Dubai, ranked after the UAE, Qatar and Kuwait, and gained great success in attracting tourists in recent years.

Hence, within the emerging trends for tourism, it is well accepted that we are going to see a global increase in travel, facilitated by means of transport that are progressively breaking barriers in a more competitive global market and where tourists are making an impact never seen before. At the same time, tourism will remain closely linked to the rapid changes brought about by the exchange of knowledge, innovation and technological advances.

In fact, tourism is a flourishing industry that will benefit the countries owning cultural heritage and monuments. It provides jobs for the locals. Hotels, bars, transport, shops, and restaurants all need staffing. Tourism can provide much-needed employment for people. It raises the profile of the place generally and gives the locality a chance to show itself off and raise its profile in the world.

In addition to bringing prosperity to economy, it also allows an economy to develop a new form of income. This acts as an insurance policy in case of hard times, because the additional income coming in can help support traditional industries in case of being under financial pressure. This is especially important for communities that rely on a single industry, or where there is a concentration of industry that is environmentally damaging such as mining or manufacturing. It's also important for rural communities, where there is significant risk based on the farming conditions and global commodity prices. Tourism allows a community to diversify their sources of income, and rely less on a single industry.

Tourism allows people to look at their history, and cultural heritage and develop their own community identity. This helps the local residents to maintain their traditions and culture, while also showcasing it for all the visitors. This advantage of tourism is what has saved many local heritage sites from destruction in addition to giving tourists a wonderful insight into the local ways of life. Tourism can help to preserve the history of a region that may be at risk of being lost.

Tourists are all potential customers, and with the right approach can be included in a business strategy that allows for fantastic success.

Ali Payam is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at the Outlookafghanistan@gmail.com

Chairman / Editor-in-Chief: Moh. Reza Huwaida

Vice-Chairman: Kazim Ali Gulzari

Email: outlookafghanistan@gmail.com

Phone: 0093 (799) 005019/777-005019

www.outlookafghanistan.net



The views and opinions expressed in the articles are those of the authors and do not reflect the views or opinions of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan.