

Uzi Baram

SPEECH PRONOUNCED BY MR. UZI BARAM  
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Distinguished Ministers, people of the media,  
dear colleagues from the travel trade, ladies  
and gentleman:

Let me tell you how proud and happy I am to  
be sharing this press conference with my  
neighbours the Ministers of Tourism of Egypt  
and Jordan.

I hope it will be followed by other similar  
occasions, when we will be reporting on new  
progress in tourism relationship between our  
countries, travel trade and peoples.

Many months ago we promised that tourism  
will be the first economic area to give real  
fruits within the context of the ongoing peace  
process in our region.

Now, our presence here together and our  
joint declaration is really a happy  
demonstration that the time for declarations  
is over!

It is true that we came here to reiterate the  
fact that peace and tourism go hand in hand.  
That peace is substantial, even intrinsic, to  
normal development of tourism.

But more than that, we came also to tell you  
that the time for philosophy is over and the  
real protagonists of the tourism endeavour in  
our region, that is, our travel agents, airlines,

transporters and hotellers, are working together.

It is possible now to buy a tour to Jordan through El Al, to buy a package to Egypt through a Jordanian travel agent or to reserve an Israeli hotel through an Egyptian travel agent. A tour to the Nabatean remains in Petra, the Holy Places in Israel and the pyramids in Egypt can now be part of a wonderful combined package.

This is not a dream. The Mediterranean and the Red Sea shores will be developed in a chain of tourism sites. The Dead Sea on both the Western and Eastern shores will be a vacation center and health resort.

Israelis will most probably flock to visit Jordan, as they do visit Egypt by the tune of more than one hundred thousands. They will also travel to Morocco and Tunisia as soon as they are freely and easily allowed to do so in the very near future. Israelis will surely travel by the thousands to Lebanon and Syria, the moment they are allowed to do so, hopefully before the end of the nineties. It should be taken in consideration that Israel is the major tourism-exporting country in the Middle East, with more than a million Israeli tourists traveling abroad out of a total population of about five million.

Dear friends, action starts today here at the I.T.B. to make our dreams a reality, to bring our promise to fulfillment.

The German and European tourism and travel private enterprises have now a significant opportunity to build with us the ancient, but new fascinating international destination called the Middle East. Yes, a new touristic Middle East. You are confronting, together with the peoples of our region, a tremendous challenge for development, investment and profit.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members of the tourism industry: travel agencies, travel wholesalers, airlines, and all the many others who collaborate with us all in promoting our destinations.

Allow me to thank also our wonderful team here at the Israel Government Tourist Office in Germany. They are doing a fine job.

I wish all the participants in I.T.B. a very successful year in their commercial activities, and a wonderful future to tourism in the new Middle East.

And to you, people from the media, Shalom, Saalam and thank you for coming today to see us three partners join hands for a better future.