

**ADDRESS TO ITOA CONFERENCE
TEHRAN, IRAN – NOVEMBER 23, 2008**

**BY
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IIPT FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT**

MEMBERS OF THE IRANIAN TOUR OPERATORS ASSOCIATION, THE IRAN CULTURAL HERITAGE, HANDICRAFTS & TOURISM ORGANIZATION, DISTINGUISHED GUESTS – LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

IT IS INDEED AN HONOR AND PLEASURE TO BE INVITED TO ADDRESS YOU HERE IN IRAN - HOME TO ONE OF THE WORLD'S OLDEST CONTINUOUS CIVILIZATIONS, WITH HISTORICAL AND URBAN SETTLEMENTS DATING BACK TO 4000 BC. A LAND RICH IN HISTORY – RICH IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY - THE ARTS, LITERATURE AND CULTURE – A LAND WHERE MORE THAN TWO THIRDS OF THE POPULATION IS UNDER 25 – AND THEREFORE A LAND WITH A GREAT FUTURE.

IT WAS TEN YEARS AGO –AT THE START OF A CHRISTIAN NEW YEAR - AND THE THE ISLAMIC MONTH OF RAMADAN THAT PRESIDENT KHATAMI – PROPOSED A DIALOGUE OF CIVILIZATIONS – WHICH IN TURN WAS ADOPTED BY THE UNITED NATIONS.

IT WAS PROPOSED AT THE CLOSE OF THE 20TH CENTURY, WITH THE AIM OF LEAVING BEHIND A CENTURY FULL OF INEQUALITY, VIOLENCE, AND CONFLICT – IT WAS PROPOSED WITH THE INTENT OF BENEFITTING FROM THE ACHIEVEMENTS AND EXPERIENCES OF ALL CIVILIZATIONS - AND WITH A PRAYER THAT WE BEGIN A NEW CENTURY OF HUMANITY, UNDERSTANDING, AND DURABLE PEACE, SO THAT ALL HUMANITY WOULD ENJOY THE BLESSINGS OF LIFE.

CLEARLY – PRESIDENT KHATAMI'S VISION HAS NOT BEEN FULFILLED IN THESE FIRST YEARS OF THE 21ST CENTURY – BUT WE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY WITH THIS FIRST ITOA CONFERENCE – TO BEGIN THE DIALOGUE ANEW – WITH TRAVEL AN TOURISM PLAYING A KEY ROLE IN ITS FULFILLMENT.

SINCE ITS BEGINNINGS IN 1986 – THE UN INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF PEACE – IIPT HAS BEEN PROMOTING A 'HIGHER PURPOSE' OF TOURISM INCLUDING THE KEY ROLE OF TOURISM IN:

- PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING
- COLLABORATION AMONG NATIONS
- PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT AND PRESERVING BIODIVERSITY
- ENHANCING CULTURES AND VALUING HERITAGE
- SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
- POVERTY REDUCTION AND
- RECONCILIATION AND HEALING WOUNDS OF CONFLICT

THIS 'HIGHER PURPOSE' OF TOURISM - WITH ITS CAPACITY TO GENERATE SOCIAL – CULTURAL – ECONOMIC - ENVIRONMENTAL - AND POLITICAL BENEFITS - IS INCREASINGLY RECOGNIZED AND HAS GAINED ACCEPTANCE AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS

VICE PRESIDENT MASHAEE THIS MORNING SPOKE OF A NEW ROLE FOR TOURISM – A
ROLE IN GLOBAL SECURITY

IIPT WAS BORN WITH A VISION OF MAKING TRAVEL AND TOURISM THE "WORLD'S FIRST
GLOBAL PEACE INDUSTRY."

AN INDUSTRY THAT PROMOTES AND SUPPORTS THE BELIEF THAT EVERY TRAVELER IS
POTENTIALLY AN AMBASSADOR FOR PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP.

OUR VISION OF PEACE IS ONE THAT THAT EMBRACES

- PEACE WITHIN OURSELVES

- PEACE WITH OTHERS – FROM OUR NEIGHBORS NEXT DOOR – TO OUR NEIGHBORS
IN THE GLOBAL VILLAGE.

- THIRDLY - PEACE WITH NATURE

IN THE BELIEF SYSTEM OF THE IROQUOIS NATIVE PEOPLE OF NORTH AMERICA -
PASSED DOWN FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION FOR HUNDREDS IF NOT
THOUSANDS OF YEARS – GOD CREATED MAN – TO TAKE CARE OF EVERYTHING
ELSE THAT GOD HAS CREATED.

- PEACE WITH PAST GENERATIONS

HONORING THE LEGACIES OF OUR FOREFATHERS - THEIR MONUMENTS –
AND TRADITIONS

A DIMENSION THAT IS PARTICULARLY IN IRAN WITH YOUR RICH HISTORY
AND CULTURAL HERITAGE.

- FIFTH - PEACE WITH FUTURE GENERATIONS

WHEN YOU CONSIDER THE CORE ESSENCE OF THE CONCEPT OF
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT – IT IS PEACE WITH FUTURE GENERATIONS

AND FINALLY - PEACE WITH OUR CREATOR – WHICH BRINGS US FULL CIRCLE TO
PEACE WITHIN OURSELVES.

IIPT WAS FIRST TO INTRODUCE THE CONCEPT OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM: IN 1988 – AT
OUR FIRST GLOBAL CONFERENCE – TOURISM – A VIATL FORCE FOR PEACE IN
VANCOUVER 1988 –

4 YEARS BEFORE THE RIO SUMMIT ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

WE DEVELOPED THE FIRST CODES OF ETHICS AND GUIDELINES FOR SUSTAINABLE
TOURISM – 1993

AND CONDUCTED THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL STUDY ON ‘MODELS OF BEST PRACTICE’ –
TOURISM AND ENVIRONMENT – IN 1993/94

THE IIPT CREDO OF THE PEACEFUL TRAVELER IS INCREASINGLY DISTRIBUTED TO
TRAVELERS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD - AND

MORE THAN 1,000 CASE STUDIES OF “SUCCESS STORIES” HAVE BEEN SHOWCASED AT IIPT
CONFERENCES AND SUMMITS

AS A RESULT OF OUR MOST RECENT AFRICAN CONFERENCE – UGANDA BECAME THE FIRST COUNTRY IN THE WORLD TO INTRODUCE TOURISM LEGISLATION IN SUPPORT OF THE UN MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

AND MORE THAN 450 IIP PEACE PARKS HAVE BEEN DEDICATED IN CITIES AND TOWNS IN REGIONS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN - HUMANITY IS CURRENTLY WITNESSING - AND SHAPING THE MOST SIGNIFICANT PARADIGM SHIFT IN HUMAN HISTORY –

A PARADIGM SHIFT OF MAJOR DEMOGRAPHIC, ECONOMIC, ECOLOGICAL AND GEO-POLITICAL DIMENSIONS.

IT TOOK THE ENTIRE HISTORY OF HUMAN KIND – MORE THAN 150,000 YEARS – TO REACH A WORLD POPULATION OF 1.6 BILLION PERSONS BY 1900 - THE START OF THE 20TH CENTURY.

WE WILL BE ADDING THAT SAME NUMBER OF PEOPLE TO OUR GLOBAL FAMILY IN THE FIRST 20 YEARS OF THE 3RD MILLENNIUM –

NINETY PERCENT OF THIS GROWTH WILL BE IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.

WHILE PROGRESS IS BEING MADE TOWARDS POVERTY REDUCTION IN MANY DEVELOPING AND EMERGING ECONOMIES, SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA, IS SLIDING DEEPER INTO POVERTY –

A ROBUST GLOBAL ECONOMY COMBINED WITH UNPRECEDENTED POPULATION GROWTH IS RESULTING IN AN ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT THAT IS MORE THAN ONE THIRD LARGER THAN WHAT THE EARTH CAN REGENERATE IN A GIVEN YEAR.

AS OF SEPTEMBER 16TH OF THIS YEAR – HUMANITY HAD ALREADY CONSUMED THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF RENEWABLE RESOURCES THAT NATURE WILL RE-GENERATE DURING THE ENTIRE YEAR.

THIS IS REFERRED TO AS WORLD OVERSHOOT DAY.

AND THAT DATE IS HAPPENING EARLIER WITH EACH PASSING YEAR.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF OUR ACCUMULATING ECOLOGICAL DEBT AND POLLUTION INCLUDES GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE, SPECIES EXTINCTION, INSECURE ENERGY SUPPLIES, WATER SHORTAGES, CROP FAILURES AND DEPLETED FISHERIES.

60% OF ECOSYSTEMS BEING DEGRADED OR USED UNSUSTAINABLY

WHILE WE CONTINUE ON THIS PATH OF ECOLOGICAL DECLINE AND POSSIBLE COLLAPSE - THE WORLD MILITARY BUDGET FOR 2008 IS US\$1.5 TRILLION – MORE THAN THE GNP OF ANY COUNTRY IN THE WORLD EXCEPT 7

IF MY MATH IS CORRECT – THIS IS EQUAL TO THE TOTAL INCOME OF 40% OF THE WORLD’S POPULATION WHO STRUGGLE TO SURVIVE EACH DAY AT THE BOTTOM OF THE ECONOMIC PYRAMID.

NEARLY \$250 FOR EVERY MAN WOMAN AND CHILD IN THE WORLD –

WHEN OF THE MORE THAN 6 BILLION PEOPLE IN THE WORLD –

1 OF EVERY 6 SURVIVES ON \$1 A DAY OR LESS –

AND ANOTHER 2 OF EVERY 6 ON \$2 A DAY OR LESS

1 OUT OF EVERY 6 – GO TO BED HUNGRY

1 OF EVERY 4 PEOPLE ON EARTH – NEVER GET A CLEAN GLASS OF WATER TO DRINK

AND 35,000 CHILDREN DIE EACH DAY FROM PREVENTABLE DISEASES – MANY OF THEM FROM WATER-BORN DISEASES.

LESS THAN ONE HALF THE WORLD’S CURRENT MILITARY EXPENDITURES WOULD BE SUFFICIENT TO END ALL THE PRIMARY CAUSES OF POVERTY IN THE WORLD.

LESS THAN ONE HALF THE WORLD’S MILITARY BUDGET WOULD BE SUFFICIENT TO SOLVE THE CRISIS OF GLOBAL WARMING.

AS EARLY AS 1960 - LESTER B. PEARSON, THEN PRESIDENT OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND FORMER PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA - WARNED THAT

“NO PLANET CAN SURVIVE HALF SLAVE, HALF FREE, HALF ENGULFED IN MISERY, HALF CAREENING ALONG TOWARD THE JOYS OF AN ALMOST UNLIMITED CONSUMPTION – NEITHER ECOLOGY, OR OUR MORALITY COULD SURVIVE SUCH CONTRASTS.

TO MEET THE CHALLENGES PRESENTED BY THESE AND OTHER GLOBAL ISSUES, WE MUST COLLABORATE IN A MANNER UNPRECEDENTED IN HUMAN HISTORY

CLEARLY – A WORLD AT PEACE IS A PRE-REQUISITE FOR THE KIND OF COLLABORATION REQUIRED -

A PEACE BASED ON THE BINDING FORCE OF MUTUAL RESPECT AND AN APPRECIATION OF OUR INTER-CONNECTEDNESS AS A GLOBAL FAMILY.

THIS HUMAN JOURNEY OF COLLABORATION CAN ONLY BEGIN BY FIRST: “*BUILDING BRIDGES OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN CIVILIZATIONS, CULTURES AND RELIGIONS-*

TRAVEL AND TOURISM – THE WORLD’S LARGEST INDUSTRY – HAS A KEY ROLE TO PLAY TOWARDS THIS END –

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN – WE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS – TO BE THE LEADING INDUSTRY IN A MAJOR PARADIGM SHIFT – A PARADIGM SHIFT THAT HAS BEEN STRUGGLING TO BE BORN –

A PARADIGM SHIFT TO AN ENVIRONMENTAL ETHIC THAT RESTORES ECOLOGICAL BALANCE IN OUR ONE COMMON HOME – PLANET EARTH;

A PARADIGM SHIFT THAT BRINGS AN END TO POVERTY – TOGETHER WITH A RECOGNITION OF THE HUMAN DIGNITY OF EVERY PERSON.

AND A PARADIGM SHIFT THAT SEES AN END TO WAR AS A MEANS TO SOLVING CONFLICT AS IT IS ONLY THROUGH A GLOBAL FAMILY AT PEACE WITH ITSELF – AND A PARADIGM SHIFT TO COLLABORATION AT ALL LEVELS – AND BY ALL SECTORS OF SOCIETY –

SO THAT WE CAN SOLVE THE UNPRECEDENTED GLOBAL ISSUES FACING OUR ONE COMMON HOME – AND OUR ONE COMMON FUTURE AS A GLOBAL FAMILY.

TOWARDS THIS END – I WOULD LIKE TO SUGGEST THREE AREAS OF COLLABORATION.

EARLIER THIS YEAR – IIPT LAUNCHED “WORLD PEACE TOURS’ – THE AIM OF WHICH IS TO ORGANIZE TOURS WHICH EXEMPLIFY THE CONCEPT AND PRINCIPLES OF IIPT. MR. DONALD KING, A MEMBER OF IIPT’S BOARD OF DIRECTORS IS SPEARHEADING THIS INITIATIVE AND WE INVITE EACH OF YOU WHO ARE TOUR OPERATORS TO JOIN US.

SECONDLY, AT WORLD TRAVEL MARKET TWO WEEKS AGO – IIPT ANNOUNCED ITS INTENTION TO MOBILIZE SUPPORT OF THE GLOBAL TRAVEL AND TOURISM INDUSTRY FOR THE OLYMPIC TRUCE IN THE MONTHS LEADING UP TO THE 2010 WINTER OLYMPICS IN VANCOUVER, CANADA. WE INVITE EACH OF YOU TO JOIN US AS WELL IN THIS INITIATIVE.

AND FINALLY – IIPT WILL SERIOUSLY CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITY OF ORGANIZING A CONFERENCE IN IRAN WITH THE AIM OF PROMOTING A DIALOGUE AMONG CIVILIZATIONS THROUGH TOURISM IN SUPPORT OF PRESIDENT KHATAMI’S PROPOSAL OF 1998.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND ATTENTION – AND GOD BLESS YOU ALL.