

## UNWTO and Tunisia to hold International Conference on the Future of Mediterranean Tourism

UNWTO and the Ministry of Tourism of Tunisia will organize an international conference on the future of Mediterranean tourism on the island of Djerba (1617 - April, 2012). The news was announced at the Tourism Investment Forum for Africa, INVESTOUR, held during the international travel fair, FITUR (Madrid, Spain, 19 January).



Djerba

"While the Mediterranean may be the most visited region in the world, with over 200 million tourist arrivals a year, it also faces numerous challenges; political, environmental and social," said UNWTO

Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai. The conference in Djerba would offer an opportunity to tack stock of tourism trends in the region, he said, and adopt a "shared vision" to adequately face these challenges.

"Tunisia is back and ready for a solid and sustained recovery; this conference could not take place in a better setting," added Mr. Rifai meeting with the new Minister of Tourism of Tunisia, Elyes Fakhfakh.

Mr. Fakhfakh pointed to the significance of holding the conference in Tunisia, where tourism provides jobs and incomes for hundreds of thousands of people. "Tunisia has decided its leadership and, with the determination of its youth, has embarked on a new, dynamic future in which tourism is clearly a sector vital to growth," he said.

The Minister spoke of the profound changes the country had





undergone over the past year and the need for Mediterranean countries to come together in forums such as the Conference on the Future of Mediterranean Tourism to share experiences and work together to maintain competitiveness in the global tourism market. "We in Tunisia have a rich history and it is our objective to advance the promotion of our cultural assets as a means to diversify our tourism offer and

bring our people closer to the sector," he said.

The conference will convene tourism stakeholders from the Mediterranean region and beyond to address how the region can continue to attract large numbers of visitors in the face of sustainability challenges and competition from other world regions. The two-day event is the sixth in UNWTO's series of destination management conferences.