

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



**MALDIVES TOURISM PROMOTION BOARD  
REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES**

---

**P R E S S   R E L E A S E**

---

Release date: 28 November 2010

## **Maldives officially showcased at China**

The Maldives Tourism Promotion Board (MTPB) and representatives from Maldives tourism industry participated in the China International Travel Market (CITM) that was held from 18 to 21 November 2010 at Shanghai, China. This is the biggest travel trade fair held in Shanghai.

The Maldivian delegation was led by the Minister of Youth and Sports; Hon. Hassan Latheef, Ambassador of Maldives in China; Hon. Ahmed Latheef and the Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Tourism, Arts & Culture; Mr. Ahmed Salih on an invitation extended by the Chinese Government. A total of 21 companies namely resorts, hotels, tour operators, travel agents and safari operators participated in CITM 2010 under the Maldives' banner.

Maldives Stand with an area space of 36 sq. meters is prominently located next to the Dubai and the Mauritius stand. Maldives stand at CITM was designed to portray the Maldives as a holiday destination and also highlights it as a finalist for the "New7Wonders of Nature".

Maldives was officially launched as a tourist destination in China for the first time on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2010 at the Portman Ritz Carlton Hotel. A Seminar and a Maldivian night were organized to launch the destination. The main objective of the Seminar is to identify the problems that the Chinese tourists face when they visit the Maldives and to

find out what they expect from their holiday. In this regard a prominent Tour Operator in China, CYTS spoke on behalf of the tour operators. All the tour operators highlighted that Maldives is a popular destination among the Chinese as a holiday destination and the need for an office in China. Also they informed the importance of having Chinese speaking staff at the resorts / hotels in the Maldives. In addition to this, a presentation on enhancing the quality of experience of Chinese tourist holidaying in the Maldives was presented by the Permanent Secretary, Mr. Ahmed Salih. Also a presentation on the destination was done by the Senior Marketing officer, Ms. Fathimath Raheel of MTPB.

Also, major airlines operating to the Maldives and media were invited to attend the Seminar. A platform was opened for the Maldivian industry officials to meet the Chinese tour operators and travel agents for business on one to one basis.

During the Maldivian Night Mega Globe an airline operating company announced that a direct flight from Hong Kong would start operation in 2010 to the Maldives. At present direct flights are operating from Kunming, Chengdu and Guangzhou. In order to make the Maldivian Night a huge success a lucky draw was organised at the end of the night. A total of 10 ticket prizes were awarded by Sri Lankan Airlines, Bangkok Airways, Mega Airways, China Southern Airlines and China Eastern Airlines. Also, Sun Hotels and Resorts, Six Senses Laamu, Island Hideaway and Universal Resorts offered complimentary stay at their respective resorts for 2 people.

Maldives recorded a total of 643,410 tourist arrivals during the first ten months of 2010, indicating a sign of continuous growth of tourists to the country. It represented an increase of 21.8 per cent compared to 528,271 for the same period in 2009. China has emerged as the number 1 market since August 2010. This is the first time that an Asian country has taken over the number 1 position of tourist arrivals to the Maldives. A total

of 49,655 Chinese tourists visited the Maldives at the end of October 2009 and 104,148 at the end of October 2010. This is a 109.7 percent increase compared to 2009.

China is fast becoming one of the biggest single markets in term of sending travelers overseas globally. According to latest international tourism statistics, published by UNWTO, the total number of outbound travelers from China reached almost 48 million in 2009. Also the total number of outbound visitors from China will reach 100 million by 2015 which is in direct contrast to many other countries that are affected by the financial crises and economic recession.

Reuters in their website stated that China's economy has picked up over the course of the year, with third-quarter GDP growth rising to an annual 8.9 percent from 7.9 percent in the second quarter and 6.1 percent in the first, virtually assuring China of reaching its 8 percent full-year target.

Present estimates of "middle class" in China range from 100 million to 247 million. Chinese households currently save 25% of their post-tax income, according to the China Statistical Yearbook. A survey by McKinsey indicated that this high savings rate was driven, in part, by Chinese citizens' belief that they need to set aside funds for retirement and healthcare expenses. If these expenses do not rise as rapidly as income levels, then Chinese consumers may have a surplus of funds that they are willing to spend.

More and more Chinese have much more disposable income that are keen on traveling abroad in order to fulfill their dreams of visiting foreign countries, having exotic holidays and purchase high quality or unique products made overseas because they often associate foreign travel with necessary spending of their accumulated wealth. Indeed,

many national authorities recognized the high spending power of Chinese visitors hence; wish to attract as many visitors from China as possible.

The Chinese government has relaxed the restrictions for Chinese nationals traveling overseas particularly to approved destinations (112 approved destination including Mauritius and Seychelles). At the same time more and more foreign authorities are welcoming Chinese travelers by relaxing or simplifying the visa requirement. Maldives is fast becoming the "hottest" destination for Chinese travellers.

END

For more information, please contact:

Fathimath Raheel, Senior Marketing Officer

Maldives Tourism Promotion Board

Telephone: +960 332 3228

Facsimile: +960 332 3229

Email: [mtpb@visitmaldives.com](mailto:mtpb@visitmaldives.com)

Website: [www.visitmaldives.com](http://www.visitmaldives.com)