

Ras Al Khaimah Stakes its Position in the Global Hospitality Market

UAE fourth largest emirate, Ras Al Khaimah aims to welcome 1.2 million visitors by 2013

(London, UK – November 7, 2011) The Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Investment and Development Authority (Ras Al Khaimah TIDA) announced today its commitment to double the annual number of visitors to the emirate of Ras Al Khaimah by the year 2013 to welcome 1.2 million visitors compared to 600,000 visitors in 2010 as part of a strategic development and promotional plan to gain global recognition in the hospitality market.

Established in May 2011 as a government entity, Ras Al Khaimah TIDA's main objectives are developing and promoting the emirate's tourism infrastructure and potential on regional and international grounds.

“We are positioning the rising emirate of Ras Al Khaimah as global affordable luxury destination for leisure, adventure and business travel. Our increased presence at WTM 2011 is a reflection on our overall tourism aims and objectives. In line with doubling the number of visitors by 2013 to 1.2 million, the government of Ras Al Khaimah is investing worth AED 600million between now and 2012 in tourism development projects including hotels and resorts to reach the total inventory of 10,000 hotel rooms by the year 2016 compared to 2,500 rooms in 2010. Following the vision of His Highness Sheikh Saud Bin Saqr Al Qasimi, Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Ras Al Khaimah, responsible developmental programmes are carefully studied and fastidiously implemented,” said Victor Louis, Chief Operating Officer, Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Investment and Development Authority.

Offering a diverse landscape, rich heritage and a temperate climate, Ras Al Khaimah, UAE, is a global ideal getaway offering an extensive selection of exclusive outdoor activities from rock

climbing, mountain biking, kayaking, fishing and golfing, exploring the desert by safari, experiencing a traditional Bedouin desert camp and visiting the historical and heritage spots spread in the emirate.

Situated on the west coast of the UAE, the 64-kilometres of shoreline provide clear crystal blue water, white sandy beaches, eclectic selection of international gourmet experiences and world-class spas as well as premium accommodation and international hotel brands including *Hilton Hotels & Resorts*, *DoubleTree by Hilton* together with regional and national hotel chains including *Rotana Resorts*, *Banyan Tree Resorts*, *Bin Majid Beach Hotels & Resorts*, *Casa Hotels and Resorts*, *Al Hamra Fort & Beach Resort* and *Acacia Hotel*.

One of Ras Al Khaimah's most exclusive spots is *The Land of Pearls* that includes the *Pearl Museum*, which opened in October and the *Pearl Excursion*, the first of its kind in the Gulf, opening in December 2011. Here, the rebirth of the long lost pearl industry in the UAE is presented, where visitors are able to enjoy unique opportunities to both learn and experience the processes of natural pearl cultivation.

Among the government development projects is the expansion and upgrade of UAE first luxury desert resort, *Banyan Tree Al Wadi* located in the heart of a 90 hectare private natural reserve in the desert featuring exclusive types of local plants and wildlife

Additionally, a series of mountain resorts located 900 meters above sea level have been announced, where the temperature will reduce up to 12 degrees than that at ground level, offering the perfect summer retreat for the UAE residents and visitors.

By October 2012, two of the main development projects in the emirate are scheduled to open; the 700- hotel rooms and apartment *Bab Al Bahr*, being developed on five man-made islands off the coast of Ras Al Khaimah and the 349-room *Ras Al Khaimah Waldorf Astoria*, marking the entry of the luxury brand of Hilton Worldwide to the UAE followed by *the Al Hamra Fort Hotel & Beach Resort*, scheduled to re-open as a Hilton Hotels & Resorts branded property in 2013.

Announcing further charter flights heading to Ras Al Khaimah, Louis said: “We signed recently an agreement with the Swedish Tour Operator Apollo, part of the Swiss Kuoni, where Ras Al Khaimah will receive a weekly charter flight from Sweden, one of our main source markets. The 250- seat weekly charter starts from November 2011 and continues throughout the winter season, bringing an additional 10,000 visitors to the emirate. This, followed our agreement with the German Tour Operator, *Reise Service Deutschland* and the Dubai based Destination Management Company *World of Travel* that introduced five weekly charter flights from Germany and one weekly charter flight from Austria to Ras Al Khaimah from September 27th to June 3rd, 2012 with additional 50,000 visitors to the emirate”.

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About Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Investment and Development Authority

The Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Investment and Development Authority (Ras Al Khaimah TIDA) was established in May 2011 as a Government of Ras Al Khaimah entity to both develop and promote the emirate’s tourism infrastructure and potential both domestically and abroad.

Ras Al Khaimah TIDA is responsible for establishing the emirate of Ras Al Khaimah as a premier quality-value destination for leisure, adventure and business travel. In order to achieve its goals, the Authority has a Government mandate to license, regulate and monitor the emirate’s hospitality industry. It conducts research and analysis of future tourism projects and current trends, create and implement the branding, marketing and promotion of Ras Al Khaimah tourism products and services and develop, implement and support strategies designed to encourage tourism investment into the Emirate.

Clear strategic goals and targets have been set by Ras Al Khaimah TIDA including increasing the total number of annual visitors to Ras Al Khaimah to 1.2 million by 2013, and increasing the emirate’s total hotel and resort room inventory to 10,000 keys by 2016. These targets will be achieved through a myriad of activities including the representation of Ras Al Khaimah tourism industry at overseas travel shows, conferences and exhibitions

together with education of travel professionals regarding Ras Al Khaimah's tourism products and unique attractions through workshops, road-shows, familiarization and training programmes; media and consumer campaigns and promotions; the coordination and implementation of joint initiatives with key travel industry players; the hosting of leading sporting, cultural and trade exhibitions and events; and the development of the Emirate's tourism infrastructure and attractions through the implementation of strategies and initiatives specifically designed to generate and encourage direct tourism investment and investment opportunities into the emirate. Ras Al Khaimah has its own unique identity with a diversity of landscapes that makes it the perfect getaway for leisure, adventure, and quality-value experiences. The emirate presents an extensive selection of exclusive outdoor adventure activities from mountain climbing and mountain biking to kayaking and fishing. For relaxation visitors to Ras Al Khaimah will enjoy idyllic sojourns at our white sandy beaches and resorts, offering an eclectic selection of international gourmet experiences and world-class spas.