

Dear Excellencies, Hon. Ministers, Colleagues...loved friends,

I do hope you are all well.

A special request for priority action, please.

As you all know, yesterday was the election of the new Secretary General for the UNWTO. The Executive Council established their recommendation for submission to the General Assembly for ratification, due in Sept. It was a heated race, with many leaving with severe burns. The WHO was one thing...the HOW quite another. The presumed successor to Dr Rifai, Zurab Pololikashvili, Ambassador of Georgia in Spain, will take office in January. May we all continue to serve at his pleasure.

I write to you today not to share the news of the next SG, but rather about the current. To say that Dr Rifai's spirit is bruised from the events of yesterday would be a gross understatement. he would never say so - we all know he is too decent and man to reveal personal feelings around the process that unfolded. But the bottom line is this: all that he created in the past 8 years for us all in terms of credibility, impact and inspiration of Tourism was betrayed. The HOW has left deep wounds that will take many years to heal.

Please, please rally. He needs to know he is in our thoughts, in our applause. We have been gifted with one of the finest leaders we will ever be blessed to meet in our respective lives. For the next 7 months he needs to be surrounded, celebrated and loved. January will come, the new SG will take office. But for the moment, now is about Dr Rifai. He has always been there for us. Now is time to be there for him. For easy reference, his email is: Taleb Rifai UNWTO <trifai@unwto.org>

Please share this request with others you know he is close to who may be able to channel love & strength his way.

With a numb heart and teary eyes, I thank you.

Love,
Anita

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