



ASEAN TOURISM FORUM (ATF) 2014 PREPARATIONS ON TRACK

KUCHING, 11 DEC 2013: The preparations for the ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF) 2014 to be held in Kuching, Sarawak are right on track.

Adopting the theme, ASEAN - ADVANCING TOURISM TOGETHER, the ATF 2014 will deliberate and explore the sustainable development of tourism and look at how various tourism initiatives and plans can further support the mantra of *Tourism Conserves, Preserves and Protects*.

“The ATF 2014 which will be held in Kuching from 16 to 23 January 2014, is a timely platform to think and act on the implementation of innovative and sustainable energy initiatives that will ensure the preservation of our natural environment for future generations,” said Minister of Tourism and Culture, Malaysia, Dato’ Seri Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz.

Kuching, Sarawak, is all set to welcome delegates from the ASEAN National Tourism Organisations (NTO), ASEAN Tourism Ministers, senior government officials, exhibitors, buyers and sellers, international and local media as well as Travel Exchange (TRAVEX) delegates from all over the world.

The ATF is a cooperative regional effort to promote the ASEAN region as one tourist destination where Asian hospitality and cultural diversity are at its best. The Travel Exchange (TRAVEX) component is a trade-only mart that showcases the world's largest contingent of ASEAN destinations, products and services, and facilitates the selling, buying and promotion of the region internationally.

The ATF also provides as a platform for the selling and buying of regional individual tourism products from ASEAN member countries, through the 3-day TRAVEX event. The unique and specialised ATF TRAVEX makes it very easy and convenient for suppliers of ASEAN tourism products and services and international buyers to conduct business and meet quality participants through the Seller-Meet-Buyer (SMB) and the Buyer-Meet-Seller (BMS) appointment scheduling sessions.

This annual event involves all the tourism industry sectors of the 10-member nations of ASEAN namely; Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Backgrounder

Each year, the hosting of ATF is rotated among the member countries. ATF 2014 marks the 33rd anniversary of this event since its inauguration in Malaysia in 1981.



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Among the core objectives of ATF include:

- Projecting ASEAN as an attractive, multi-faceted single destination;
- Creating and increasing awareness of ASEAN as a highly competitive regional tourist destination in the Asia Pacific;
- Attracting more tourists to ASEAN member countries;
- Promoting intra-ASEAN travel; and
- Strengthening cooperation among the various sectors of the ASEAN tourism industry.

First established in 1981, the ATF has been a key driving force in developing tourism in the ASEAN region. For over three decades, government and private sector associations have come together annually at ATF to discuss, review and strategise ways to continuously promote ASEAN as the world's top travel destination.

The very first ATF was hosted in Genting Highlands, Malaysia. It was seen as an early indication of the willingness of ASEAN countries to work together for the common good of every member country. Since then, ASEAN has grown economically by leaps and bounds, and garnered international recognition for its diverse culture, and the quality of ASEAN as an unforgettable holiday destination. Among the major initiatives of ATF was the promotion of Visit ASEAN Year 1992 and Visit ASEAN Campaign 2002.

With all 10 ASEAN member nations working hand in hand with the public and private sectors, significant progress has been made in growing a sustainable tourism industry in the region. Through increased cooperation and exploring mutually beneficial collaboration in facing common regional challenges, every ASEAN nation stands to benefit from sharing its unique, diverse cultures with the rest of the world through tourism.

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For more media releases, media info and media features on Malaysia's tourism industry, kindly visit the Media Centre of Tourism Malaysia's website at <http://www.tourismmalaysia.gov.my/>

MALAYSIA TOURISM PROMOTION BOARD OR TOURISM MALAYSIA is an agency under the Ministry of Tourism & Culture, Malaysia. Tourism Malaysia focuses on the specific task of promoting Malaysia at all levels. Since its inception, Tourism Malaysia has grown by leaps and bounds and it has emerged as a major player in the international tourism scene. In 2012, Malaysia registered 25 million tourist arrivals and RM60.6 billion in tourist receipts, placing the country firmly as the 10th most popular tourism destination in the world.

*In 2014, Malaysia will celebrate its fourth **VISIT MALAYSIA YEAR (VMY)** with the theme "Celebrating 1Malaysia Truly Asia". The VMY 2014 promotional campaign has started this year with a series of year-long special events and activities leading to VMY 2014. It will contribute to the Government's target to receive 36 million tourist arrivals and RM168 billion in receipts by 2020, as outlined in the Malaysia Tourism Transformation Plan (MTTP) 2020.*

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