



MEDIA RELEASE

MALAYSIA STAYS COMPETITIVE AS A VALUE-FOR-MONEY DESTINATION IN GLOBAL TOURISM INDUSTRY 2009

Malaysia has emerged as the fourth most price competitive country in the world in the travel and tourism industry out of 133 countries surveyed. The top three countries listed in the price competitiveness pillar were Egypt, Brunei Darussalam and Indonesia.

Based on the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report (TTCR) 2009 published by the Geneva-based World Economic Forum (WEF), the selection of the price competitiveness countries in the global travel and tourism industry is based on many factors, such as the extent to which goods and services in the country are more or less expensive than elsewhere, airfare ticket taxes and airport charges, fuel price level comparison, and taxation in the country as well as the relative cost of hotel accommodations.

In terms of the overall travel and tourism competitiveness index 2009, Switzerland is ranked first out of the 133 countries, followed by Austria and Germany, the same top three countries for the past three years. High marks were given based on their rich cultural resources, tourism and ICT infrastructure, environmental sustainability, ground transport infrastructure, safety and security, quality of human resource and policy, rules and regulations in tourism industry.

Malaysia is ranked 32nd overall in TTCR 2009, which is behind four Asian countries, namely Singapore (10th), Hong Kong SAR (12th), Japan (25th) and Korea Republic (31st). In the Asia Pacific region, Malaysia is ranked 7th, ahead of Thailand (8th), China (10th) and Indonesia (15th).

The TTCR 2009 highlighted Malaysia's rich natural resources (ranked 21st), such as the oldest rainforest in the world and two World Heritage Natural Sites, both located on the island of Borneo. The report also applauded Malaysia's efforts to preserve the cultural heritage while supporting the development of new hotels, convention centres, and tourist attractions. An example of the successful promotion of Malaysia's historical and national heritage was the inclusion in 2008 of the historic cities of Melaka and Georgetown in the UNESCO World Heritage list.

In addition, Malaysia's presence in all major international tourism fairs (ranked 1st) was highly commended as was our commitment in prioritizing the tourism sector (ranked 23rd in the related pillar). Malaysia was also ranked high for its effective destination-marketing campaigns (ranked 12th) and excellent product branding.

Further, Malaysia ranked 28th for ground transport infrastructure, with its roads and railroads particularly noted for their high quality. Malaysia's policy environment is considered highly conducive to the development of the sector (ranked 9th) which is ranked after Singapore (1st), Hong Kong (2nd), Ireland (3rd), Denmark (4th), Canada (5th), Finland (6th), Sweden (7th), and Jamaica (8th). Malaysia requires tourist visas from very few countries (ranked 1st in related pillar) making the country an accessible destination for tourists from almost all United Nation countries.

MICE (meetings, incentive, conference and exhibition) strategies are also part of the Malaysian government's plan to enhance the travel and tourism infrastructure by providing adequate accommodation and meeting rooms with large capacities, equipped for business meetings in different hotels and convention centers. At the moment, Malaysia hosts an average of 82 international fairs and exhibitions every year, and is ranked 30th on this indicator.

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