



## PRESS RELEASE

### VMY 2014 TAKES CENTRE STAGE AT ARABIAN TRAVEL MARKET IN DUBAI

**KUALA LUMPUR, 3 May 2013** – Tourism Malaysia’s efforts to publicise the country’s fourth Visit Malaysia Year (VMY) in 2014 and its comprehensive promotional activities continues in the Middle East. Its **Deputy Director General (Planning) Dato’ Haji Azizan Noordin** will be leading a Malaysian delegation to participate in the Arabian Travel Market (ATM) in Dubai from 5 to 9 May, followed by a post-ATM sales mission to Oman and Kuwait.

The four-day ATM, the biggest travel and tourism event in the Middle East, is scheduled to begin on 6 May at Dubai International Convention and Exhibition Centre (DICEC). It offers Malaysia an excellent platform to market and create awareness of **Visit Malaysia Year 2014** to the travel and tourism industry players in the Middle East.

ATM 2013 marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Malaysia’s participation in this prestigious event, which is a strong testimony to the country’s support to the event and its commitment in attracting more Middle Eastern tourists to Malaysia.

“With the celebration of VMY next year, Tourism Malaysia will strive to attract more tourists from the Middle East to Malaysia. I’m confident that we will be able to achieve our target as Malaysia is the top destination for Muslim travellers.

“In a survey released in January this year by Crescentrating, a Singapore-based Muslim travel consultancy, Malaysia secured the first spot as the world’s top Muslim-friendly holiday destination. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 as the best score, Malaysia obtained 8.3, among 50 nations surveyed,” explained Dato’ Haji Azizan.

In fact, Tourism Malaysia has just added another feather in its cap by garnering the “Best Global Tourism Advertising Campaign” award at the 4<sup>th</sup> Middle East Business Leaders Awards 2013 held on 28 April in Abu Dhabi. The event was jointly organised by the Federation of GCC Chambers and The Leaders International.

As in previous years, the 2013 ATM sees the participation of a strong Malaysian delegation comprising 120 sellers from 77 organisations comprising hotels and resorts, travel agents, tourism products owners, representatives from various state governments, including Legoland Malaysia, Putrajaya Corporation, Tourism Selangor, Langkawi Development Authority (LADA), and Visit KL (the Tourism Unit of the Kuala Lumpur City Hall).



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Also joining the Malaysian delegation to ATM this year are officials from the VMY 2014 Secretariat and two very prominent figures in Malaysia's tourism industry – the President of Malaysian Association of Hotels (MAH) **Datuk Haji Mohd Ilyas Zainol Abidin** and the President of Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents (MATTA) **Dato' Mohd Khalid Harun**, who are also Board members of Tourism Malaysia.

The Malaysia Pavilion at Hall 1, Sheikh Saeed Arena (Booth No. AS6420 & AS6620) is expected to attract a significant number of international buyers throughout the event. It will be launched on 6 May by Dato' Hj. Azizan. To attract visitors to the Malaysia Pavilion, a **batik demonstrator**, a group of **Malaysian traditional musicians and dancers** will be present at the Pavilion.

He is also scheduled to pay courtesy calls on both Chairmen of Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority and Sharjah Commerce & Tourism Department, as well as the Chairmen/CEOs of top airlines in the Middle East including Oman Air, Emirates Airlines, Qatar Airways, and Etihad Airways. Besides that, meetings with top travel agencies in the Middle East and media interviews are also expected to take place.

**Several important programmes have been scheduled for 7 May, which include a media briefing and the launch of "Destination Malaysia" brochure.**

**Tourism Malaysia will be launching online tour packages and the "Tourism Malaysia Dubai – App" during the media briefing. The informative and interactive app allows travellers and businessmen to find information on tourist destinations in Malaysia, book flights and hotels, and get the best travel deals and packages from Dubai to Malaysia. In addition, LADA will also be launching its online tourism campaign at the briefing.**

In the evening, Tourism Malaysia will be hosting a special dinner at the Al Ameera Ballroom in Grand Hyatt Dubai to promote VMY 2014. The **'Malaysia Gala Night Dinner'** will give the guests a glimpse of what awaits them in Malaysia, especially during the celebration of VMY 2014. It is also to show Tourism Malaysia's appreciation to buyers, media and invited guests for their support in stimulating travel to Malaysia. **Dancers from Istana Budaya**, under the Ministry of Information, Communications and Culture, will be performing specially choreographed Malaysian traditional dances to entertain the guests.

After ATM, Tourism Malaysia's promotional efforts in the Middle East will continue with a **sales mission to Oman (10 – 12 May) and Kuwait (12 – 14 May)**, which will be participated by 28 and 27 Malaysian sellers respectively. Programmes for both destinations include travel mart, press conference, gala dinner, and meetings with selected travel agents.

"Through ATM and the post-ATM sales mission, Tourism Malaysia aims to boost tourist arrivals from the Middle East. These events offer Malaysian delegates excellent platforms to network, meet and discuss business opportunities with their foreign counterparts, as well as sharing with them Malaysia's latest tourism developments. These will definitely help generate more publicity for Malaysia," said Dato' Haji Azizan.

**In 2012, tourist arrivals from West Asia to Malaysia were 370,535, which was an increase of 3.2% compared to 358,994 in 2011. For the same period, tourist arrivals from Oman registered a hike of 13.2%**



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while tourist arrivals from UAE and Kuwait recorded a drop of 24.7% and 0.3% respectively. In terms of tourist receipts, Oman and Kuwait registered a growth of 14% and 0.9% respectively.

In terms of flight accessibility, Emirates Airlines and Etihad Airways ply between UAE and Malaysia, offering 32 flights and 11,169 seats per week. Flights from Oman and Kuwait are serviced by Oman Air (7 flights, 1,540 seats per week) and Kuwait Airways (3 flights, 816 seats per week) respectively.

COUNTRY	TOURIST ARRIVALS		TOURIST RECEIPTS (RM )	
	2011	2012	2011	2012
UAE	24,212	18,233	169.6 million	132.2 million
OMAN	22,062	24,977	154.3 million	175.4 million
KUWAIT	22,833	22,759	172.3 million	173.8 million

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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, Malaysia. While the Ministry of Tourism implements tourism policies, conducts studies and offers incentives for industry players, Tourism Malaysia focuses on the specific task of promoting Malaysia at the domestic and international level. Driven by its aspiration to promote Malaysia as a destination of excellence in this region, Tourism Malaysia has grown by leaps and bounds since its inception and has emerged as a major player in the nation’s socio-economic landscape. In 2012, Malaysia registered 25 million tourist arrivals and RM60.6 billion in tourist receipts.

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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