



MEDIA RELEASE

VISIT MALAYSIA YEAR 2014 GARNERS STRONG MOMENTUM AT THE ASEAN TOURISM FORUM IN LAOS

VIENTIANE, 22 JAN. 2013: Tourism Minister the Hon. Dato' Sri Dr. Ng Yen Yen strongly promoted the Visit Malaysia Year (VMY) 2014 and its comprehensive promotional activities during the 32nd ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF) in Vientiane, Laos.

The week-long ATF, which started on 18 Jan, offers Malaysia a strong marketing platform to market and create awareness of VMY to its ASEAN counterparts.

Prime Minister the Hon. Dato' Sri Najib Tun Abdul Razak launched the VMY 2014 promotional carnival on 19 Jan at the Bukit Jalil Stadium. The three-day fun-filled tourism carnival was a prelude to a series of year-long special events and activities leading to Visit Malaysia Year 2014, with the theme "Celebrating 1Malaysia Truly Asia".

VMY 2014 also coincides with the 33rd ASEAN Tourism Forum which Malaysia will host next year from 16 to 23 January in Sarawak. Both events are expected to significantly boost arrivals of ASEAN visitors to Malaysia.

As in previous years, the ATF 2013 sees the participation of a strong Malaysian delegation comprising 52 hoteliers, travel agents, theme park operators and state tourism boards (Sarawak Tourism Board, Sabah Tourism Board and Tourism Selangor), who will woo over 400 international buyers.

The three-day TRAVEX (Travel Exchange) at the Lao International Trade Exhibition and Convention Center (ITECC), which started today, is expected to have buyers congregating at Tourism Malaysia's booth and engaging with representatives of Malaysian businesses and tourism organisations.

"This year's ATF is very special to us as it will witness the handing over of the baton to Malaysia - the 2014 host - which also coincides with our celebration of Visit Malaysia Year. I will take the opportunity to highlight VMY 2014 and its promotional campaign to my ASEAN friends and the international media; and share with them the many exciting and unique tourism events that have been lined-up," said Dato' Sri Dr. Ng Yen Yen.

On 20 and 21 January, several high-level Ministerial meetings took place at the Don Chan Palace Hotel. These included meeting of the ASEAN Tourism Ministers, meeting of the ASEAN Tourism Ministers with China, Japan and Korea; and meeting of the ASEAN Tourism Ministers with India.

The meetings culminated with the ASEAN Tourism Ministers Press Conference where a joint-media statement was issued.

Dato' Sri Dr. Ng Yen Yen's schedule in Vientiane is hectic with a series of press interviews, media briefing, press conference and courtesy calls.

During the ASEAN NTOs Media Briefing on 22 Jan, the Tourism Minister shared with the international media, Malaysia's tourism achievements, latest developments, and tourism offerings in 2013. Titled, *Malaysia's Tourism Success Stories*, the presentation vividly described the success of the country in attracting a significant amount of tourists every year and making it the world's ninth most-visited country for three consecutive years (2009 - 2011).

A string of accolades and international recognitions showered on Malaysia by the global tourism fraternity over the past couple of months bear testimony to the outstanding achievements of the country's tourism industry.

The Tourism Minister credited the success to the Government's strong commitment, as well as strategic and focused policies in making Malaysia the world's top tourist destination, along with strong support from industry players and Malaysians in general.

"We have certainly come a long way in being recognised as the fourth best shopping city in the world and the second best in Asia Pacific, as well as the 10th friendliest nation and third among the top retirement havens in the world.

Throughout the VMY promotional campaign, we will strive even harder to improve our position internationally by getting the nation ready to be the host for VMY, introducing new innovative tourism products and resolving any issues encountered by tourists," added Dato' Sri Dr. Ng Yen Yen.

Tourism Malaysia also hosted a 'Malaysia Gala Night Dinner' for buyers, media and invited guests on 22 January at the Don Chan Palace Hotel. Aptly themed, *Malaysia Open House, A Celebration Of ASEAN Unity*, the dinner was a prelude to Sarawak as host venue of the 2014 ATF where guests were treated to an array of cultural performances and traditional music.

The closing and handing over ceremony of the ATF 2014 flag to Malaysia will take place on 24 January at the Lao ITECC.

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/>

Issued by: Communications & Publicity Division, Tourism Malaysia
For more information, kindly contact Daryl Yep at 603-88918000 or via email: yyldaryl@tourism.gov.my
Facebook: www.facebook.com/friendofmalaysia
Twitter: twitter.com/tourismmalaysia
Blog: blog.tourism.gov.my