



MEDIA RELEASE

TOURIST ARRIVALS TO MALAYSIA CONTINUE TO INCREASE

Putrajaya, 30 August 2012: The Tourism Minister, Dato' Sri Dr. Ng Yen Yen announced that Malaysia welcomed 11,632,478 tourist arrivals for the first six months of 2012, registering a growth of 2.4% compared to 11,362,862 arrivals for the same period last year.

Correspondingly, total tourist receipts from January to June 2012 rose by 4.0%, generating RM26.8 billion to the country's revenue compared to RM25.7 billion in 2011.

ASEAN region continued to be the largest contributor of tourist arrivals with 73.8% share of the total arrivals. The top ten generating markets were Singapore (5,832,330 / -4.8%), Indonesia (1,108,361 / +20.0%), China (758,289 / +34.2%), Thailand (638,641/ -11.5%), Brunei (588,165/ -1.2%), India (365,104/ +6.9%), Australia (242,579/ -10.4%), the Philippines (238,175/ +45.3%), Japan (215,872/ +32.5%) and United Kingdom (196,738/ +5.9%). They accounted for 87.55% of the total tourist arrivals.

Among these markets the Philippines recorded the highest growth of 45.3% year-on-year followed by China (34.2%), Japan (32.5%), Indonesia (20.0%), India (6.9%) and United Kingdom (5.9%).

Other long-haul markets that had posted remarkable growth were Oman (33.2%), Russia (28.2%), France (20.6%), USA (18.9%), South Korea (18.0%), Kuwait (17.4%) and Denmark (15.7%).

The Minister attributed Malaysia's appeal and growth in arrivals **to the strong support from trade partners and the increased air connectivity to several key destinations such as Beijing, Hong Kong and Kansai.** Key international-level tourism events such as Formula 1 PETRONAS Malaysia Grand Prix (23-25 March), 1Malaysia GP sale (10 March-15 April), 1Malaysia International Shoe Festival (29 March-1 April) and Citrawarna (19 May) have also contributed to the continued growth of Malaysia's tourist arrivals.

China's growth in arrivals (+34.2%) is due to the code share operations between China Southern Airlines and Malaysia Airlines since March 2012 to increase the Beijing-Kuala Lumpur flight frequency to two daily flights. Meanwhile, Cathay Pacific has also added seven more weekly flights to service the Hong Kong-Kuala Lumpur sector, and three weekly flights for the Hong Kong-Penang sector. Air Asia has also mounted three more weekly flights between Hong Kong and Kota Kinabalu since March 2012.

Japan, with a 32.5% increase in arrivals, benefited from the four weekly AirAsia X flights from Kansai to Kuala Lumpur since March, and the increase of service from Haneda to Kuala Lumpur from four to six weekly flights.

Korea's 18% increase in arrivals is attributed to JinAir's charter flight operations in January and February from Incheon to Kota Kinabalu; Korean Air's twice weekly flight since April and Eastar Jet's four weekly flights beginning March.

Arab Saudi saw a 71.7% increase in arrivals because of the Arab Saudi Immigration's new rule which requires all outgoing travelers to own individual passports. Prior to this ruling, children travelled on their parent's passports. Two periods of long holidays – January to March and June to July – also contributed to the increase in Arab Saudi travelers.

ASEAN saw a 1% decrease in arrivals due to the change in recording arrivals based on nationality instead of country of residence; thus expatriates working/living in ASEAN countries were not regarded as ASEAN travelers. This reflected in the decreased arrivals from Singapore (-4.8%), Thailand (-11.5%), Brunei (-1.2%) and Cambodia (-4.2%).

This change has also affected Australia arrivals which declined by 10.4% since many Australian permanent residents were nationals of other countries such as New Zealand, Europe, Middle East, India and China. The decline is also attributed to Malaysia Airlines' withdrawal of the Perth-Kota Kinabalu flight operations since January this year.

New Zealand also suffered a decline of 16.3% in arrivals this year due to AirAsia X's termination of its Christchurch-Kuala Lumpur service in March.

Sweden's 22.4% decline in arrivals is attributed to the lack of direct flight services between Sweden and Malaysia compared to Thailand.

South Africa showed a 10.7 decrease in arrivals this year due to the cessation of Malaysia Airlines' flight service between Kuala Lumpur and Johannesburg as well as Cape Town earlier this year.

Note:

Data on tourist arrivals was supplied by Immigration Department of Malaysia.

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