



**PRESS RELEASE**

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## **MALAYSIA COMMITTED TO DEVELOPING CRUISE TOURISM**

**MACAU, 3 November 2014:** The Chairman of Tourism Malaysia Tan Sri Dato' Sri Dr. Ng Yen Yen, attended the third round of Global Tourism Economic Forum (GTEF) at the Venetian Hotel, Macau, recently as a panelist in an open forum discussion.

Themed "Maritime Silk Road (MSR) – From Macau we begin," the forum led discussions on the transformation of the MSR region and the tourism industry's role as its driving force. The forum also addressed issues faced by countries involved in the MSR route and explored new paths of growth for the travel and tourism industry.

In her session, Tan Sri Ng stated that the Malaysia government was committed to the development of cruise tourism, saying "Malaysia is developing and upgrading our hubs for cruise tourism and the Government is fully supportive of making Malaysia the main cruise tourism playground of the east."

Tan Sri Ng also spoke about ASEAN member states' commitment to improving tourism infrastructure in the region as part of the ASEAN Economic Community integration, saying that cruise tourism was an opportunity to attract more tourists to ASEAN.

Cruise tourism is among the key focus areas of Malaysia's tourism development plans. Under the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP), efforts to grow this segment have resulted in the establishment of the Malaysia Cruise Council (MCC), a policy-making advisory committee comprising representatives from both public and private sectors, including the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Ministry of Transport and local port authorities.

Plans are also underway for the development of a Straits Riviera in Malaysia, comprising six primary ports, i.e. Penang, Port Klang, Kota Kinabalu, Langkawi, Melaka, Kuching and other secondary ports.

As reported in the ETP Annual Report 2013, the total number of cruise calls at the six primary ports in 2013 is approximately 359 calls. Larger ships are now coming to Malaysia, including the Royal Caribbean's Mariner of the Seas, a 3,800-passenger ship that sailed to Southeast Asia in 2013.



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The two-day forum, organised by the Global Tourism Economy Research Centre, gathered more than 1,000 participants comprising local and international government officials from China, Iran, Cambodia, Croatia, Kazakhstan, Sri Lanka, Dubai, UNWTO, PATA as well international travel and trade members such as hoteliers, tourism officers, airlines and airport representatives, tour operators and tourism product operators.

Among the topics discussed were:

- Tourism - A driving force for cooperation on the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road
- Maritime Silk Road: Tourism for future tourists
- The New Maritime Silk Road
- Creative Strategies to win today and tomorrow "Shaping the present for the future"

Among the prominent panel members of the forum were:

- His Excellency Massoud Soltanifar, Vice President of Islamic of Iran; President of Iran Cultural Heritage, Handicraft and Tourism Organisation
- Mr. Tith Chan Tha, Secretary of State of Tourism of Cambodia
- Mr. Darko Lorencin, Minister of Tourism of Croatia
- Mr. Marcio Favilla, Executive Director Operational Programme and Institutional Relation (UNWTO)
- Mr. Rapol Zhoshybayev, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan
- Mr. Yaddhegige Don Nihal Jayathilaka, Secretary of the Ministry of Economy Development of Sri Lanka
- Mr. Xu Jing, Regional Director Asia and the Pacific UNWTO, Executive Secretary of the General Assembly and the Executive Council UNWTO
- Tan Sri Dato' Sri Dr. Ng Yen Yen, Chairman of Tourism Malaysia
- Mr. Yousuf Ahmad Lootah, Executive Director, Tourism Development and Investment Department of Tourism & Commerce Marketing Government of Dubai
- Lord Tim Clement-Jones, London Managing Partner and DLA Piper UK LLP
- Mr. Georgios- Drako Poulos, Special Advisor to UNWTO Secretary General on Private Sector Relation
- Mr. Arthur De Haast, Chairman Hotel and Hospitality Group JLL
- Mr. Peter Meier – CEO Kuoni Group

ENDS



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**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 2013, Malaysia registered 25.7 million tourist arrivals and RM65.4 billion in receipts, making tourism its second largest foreign exchange earner and the sixth highest contributor to its Gross National Income (GNI).

Malaysia is celebrating its fourth **VISIT MALAYSIA YEAR (VMY)** in 2014 with the theme "Celebrating 1Malaysia Truly Asia". The promotion of the country continues with the **MALAYSIA YEAR OF FESTIVALS (MyFEST)** campaign in 2015 with the theme "Endless Celebrations" emphasising the various festivals celebrated by its multicultural society. Both campaigns are key drivers towards achieving the country's target of 36 million tourist arrivals and RM168 billion in receipts by 2020, as outlined in the Tourism NKEA (National Key Economic Area).

Through the Tourism NKEA, collaborative efforts between the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, other Government agencies and the private sector have been enhanced to help secure Malaysia's position as a leading tourist destination. The targets set under the Tourism NKEA will be achieved through the implementation of twelve Entry Point Projects (EPPs) clustered under five themes: Affordable Luxury; Nature Adventure; Family Fun; Events, Entertainment, Spa and Sports; and Business Tourism.

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