



MEDIA RELEASE

MOUNTAINEERING POTENTIAL IN MALAYSIA

Malaysia's via ferrata on Mount Kinabalu has been identified as a premier mountaineering training centre location for Southeast Asia. The testament comes from legendary mountaineer, Sir Chris Bonington, who recently climbed on the summit plateau and experienced the world's highest via ferrata, operated by Mountain Torq. Bonington declared that the rock on Mount Kinabalu was one of the finest he had climbed and that it was suitable for novices and experts making it an amazing location for a mountaineering training centre in Southeast Asia. The use of the via ferrata, he said, introduces potential climbers to mountaineering before they progress to sports and rock climbing in a totally natural environment with a low level of risk.

Bonington, who made the trip to Mount Kinabalu from 4 to 6 October, said "I am immensely impressed with Mt Kinabalu, and the potential for developing serious adventure alpine rock climbing is almost limitless. The amazing thing about Kinabalu is that it is suitable for absolutely every style of climbing. Having done the via ferrata here, it is brilliant and the lovely thing about it, is that complete novices can go on it and have a thrill of a lifetime. Even an experienced climber, like myself, can actually thoroughly enjoy doing it, when we got up to the plateau (and see the peaks around us) the climbing potential is limitless. (Due to the easy access and the variety of rock terrains and gradients). There are a variety of rock climbs which complete novices can go on and enjoy. For the more experienced climbers, the sky is the limit."

Bonington strongly felt that Mt Kinabalu was the pristine location for the establishment of a mountaineering training center, saying, "Mt Kinabalu is perfectly set up for a mountaineering training center. In Europe, we have a lot of very good climbing schools, (catering to a large range of ages). There is a real potential for Mt Kinabalu to have a training center/ climbing school because it provides a whole series of potential rock climbs of every kind of standards. You can take beginners and set them on a very high level of safety on the first steps of being a climber. Mountain Torq can very easily be a premier mountaineering training center in South East Asia. For the early climbing, you want a safe environment (which Mt Kinabalu has), but as with climbing there will always be a small element of risk, but that risk can be kept down to a very reasonable level. And the job of the mountaineering school like Mountain Torq is to reduce that risk to an acceptable level. Based on how Mountain Torq manages their operations, clients and the quality of the Mountain Torq trainers, this risk has been reduced. For example on the via ferrata, it has been reduced to 99.9% safe. For a training center, there will always be a slip or an accident, but the way that Mountain Torq is doing it, it would be on a very low risk level in introducing people to an incredible sport."

Bonington also highlighted that the profile of climbers verses hikers on the mountain was very different and it would open up potential to attract a new type of tourist to Sabah.

Who is Sir Chris Bonington?

Sir Chris Bonington is by far one of the most famous of the legendary mountaineers the world has ever seen. Now at the age of 76, his list of notable accomplishments fills a library with 20 over books written over the course of 40 years. These books hold the account of his most notable mountaineering escapades. But these books are unable to contain all of his exploits in mountaineering and his passion for life.

With a mountaineering career that started at the age of 16 years old, Bonington has climbed more than 40 mountains all over the world ranging from the European Alps to

the Himalayas, across the Oceans to South America, and even as far reaching as Antarctica and up north to Greenland. With most of the mountains being higher than 6000m above sea level, Bonington is an expert in negotiating snow, ice, glaciers, death defying crevasse crossings and surviving countless avalanches and snow storm, while setting up first ascents.

More details can be found on his website www.bonington.com.

What is Mountain Torq?

Mountain Torq is the World's highest via ferrata located at Mt Kinabalu's Panar Laban rock face. It starts at 3,411m and ends at 3,776m – the next highest via ferrata is found in the Italian Dolomites called the Marmolada West ridge, at the highest point of 3,343 meters.

Mountain Torq is also South East Asia's only mountaineering training center located at 3,411m above sea level on Mt Kinabalu.

For more information, please contact (GMT +8)

Ms Quek I-Gek

Tel : 60 88 268 126

Fax : 60 88 269 126

Cell : 60 19 813 8162

i-gek@mountaintorq.com

Issued by: Communications & Publicity Division, Tourism Malaysia

Date: 22 October 2010

For more information, please contact +603- 2615 8188; Fax: +603 26158299 or

Email: anisramli@tourism.gov.my Website: www.tourism.gov.my