

MyCEB Media Release

Industry Seminar “What Matters Most” starts off Optimistic Year for MyCEB



Sharing their knowledge about business events (L to R): Noor Ahmad Hamid (ICCA Asia Pacific), Mike Williams (Gary Grimmer & Company), Zulkefli Haji Sharif (MyCEB) and Datuk Peter Brokenshire (Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre)

20 January 2010, Kuala Lumpur:

The year started off strongly for the Malaysian Convention & Exhibition Bureau – MyCEB – with its seminar “What Matters Most.” 92 participants – from destination management companies (DMCs) to professional congress organisers (PCOs), and from hotels to venues – packed the seminar room at Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre.

Opening the seminar, Mr Zulkefli Haji Sharif, MyCEB’s CEO shared the bureau’s aspirations: to be Top 5 in ICCA rankings in Asia Pacific, or host at least 120 association meetings that meet ICCA’s criteria by 2015.

ICCA or the International Congress & Convention Association produces an annual rankings by number of international association meetings a country hosts. In the last 2008 rankings, Malaysia hosted 87 association meetings and was ranked 32nd in the world, and 8th place within the Asia Pacific region. The number one country in the world is USA, and the first ranked in Asia Pacific is

Japan. Malaysia's closest competitors in South East Asia - Singapore and Thailand - are ranked fifth and sixth respectively in the region.

MyCEB is currently compiling the list of association meetings that took place in Malaysia in 2009 for submission to ICCA by 31 Jan 2010 for the annual 2009 rankings which will be revealed in May/June 2010.

Zulkefli went on to share MyCEB's business plan with participants where the primary focus is to maximise yields and the return from investment (ROI) from business events or MICE (meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions).

For maximum ROI, MyCEB's strategies will involve increasing the number of MICE delegates to Malaysia, prolonging their length of stay and increasing their delegate expenditure. Hence attendance promotion activities for conventions already secured and not yet held, will be as important as business development research and bidding for new conventions. Studies have shown that a MICE delegate spends about 3-4 times more than an average tourist.

To help achieve Malaysia's MICE aspirations, MyCEB has appointed Gary Grimmer & Company (GG&C), a business events consultancy based in Melbourne to kick off the establishment of MyCEB. GG&C is no stranger to Malaysia's MICE business having earlier completed the MICE feasibility study for Tourism Malaysia. Its senior consultant Mr Mike Williams is now relocated to Kuala Lumpur for this 18-month project to fast track MyCEB's development.

Although Malaysian MICE accomplishments are not new, with Tourism Malaysia winning ICCA's Hot Leader of the Year award (2007) and Sarawak Convention Bureau bagging ICCA's Best Marketing Award (2008), the global meetings industry remains one of the most competitive with emerging destinations and traditional leaders fine tuning their tactics constantly. "To stay in this race, Malaysia needs to reinvent its MICE approach and we are confident that collectively, with the support of the industry and government backing, Malaysia will achieve this," added Mike. GG&C has vast experience consulting convention bureaux and assisting in their set-up and also manages BestCities Global Alliance, the world's first convention bureau alliance comprising eight top convention cities from around the world.

In his session about how to sell Malaysia to international associations, Mike reminded participants that bidding for association meetings is a long term process as most meetings only take place once a year (some once every 4 years) and rotate among different countries/continents. "If Malaysia does not succeed in its bid, there is always a next time, and a next. Lessons can be learnt from every bid," Mike confided.

KLCC's General Manager Datuk Peter Brokenshire reiterated that the economic benefits from hosting international conventions are shared by all, not just by the venue. Since its opening in June 2005 and up to Dec 2009, KLCC has played host to 113 regional and international conferences. Together with 38 other national and local meetings, conventions alone is estimated to have injected some RM439million into Malaysia's economy. KLCC has already forward- booked 48 international and regional conventions from this year up to 2018. "The business aspect of international conferences is for everyone, and with wide reaching affects," added Datuk Brokenshire.

Noor Ahmad Hamid, ICCA's Asia Pacific regional director presented Malaysia's "ICCA report card" – although currently ranked within the Top Ten in Asia Pacific, Malaysia needs to maintain and increase its momentum as other regional destinations continue to chip away at the lucrative market. "The increased political will and government funding from most other Asian countries and the dynamic strategies by both national and city convention bureaux will keep Malaysia on its toes," concluded Noor.

At this seminar, Sarawak Convention Bureau, a young but extremely active MICE player in the international arena, introduced their award winning video "Changing Perspectives" which formed part of their Best Destination Marketing campaign. Sarawak Convention Bureau has reported a 72% success rate in their bids to host conventions in 2009, bringing 39 new conventions to the state of Sarawak.

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