



MEDIA RELEASE

MALAYSIA'S PARKS AND GARDENS TO BE PROMOTED IN OCEANIA MARKETS

A group of six botanists, media and travel agents from Australia and New Zealand are in Malaysia from 17 to 23 October to visit and view the parks and gardens in Malaysia as part of the Ministry of Tourism's efforts to promote Parks and Gardens as a new tourist product. The botanists are from the Auckland Botanic Gardens and the Brisbane Botanic Gardens.

Under the Ministry of Tourism's Mega Fam programme, the group will visit the parks and gardens in Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya, Selangor, Melaka and Sabah. The Mega Fam trip is one of the outcomes generated from the Minister of Tourism, YB Dato' Sri Dr. Ng Yen Yen's sales visit to New Zealand and Australia in August this year – a trip she made to promote Malaysia's unique tourism products to the Oceania markets. It is a chance to showcase Malaysia's unique flora as well as receive feedback from botanists of internationally-acclaimed gardens.

The Ministry of Tourism is keen to promote Parks and Gardens as yet another tourism product to tourists in view of the following:

- Malaysia's unique flora -- Peninsular Malaysia is blessed with more some 8,500 species of flowering plants, while Sabah and Sarawak have between 10,000 and 12,000 of flower plants species. In addition, Malaysia has about 3,000 species of trees, 1,000 species of orchids, 300 species of palms and 60 species of bamboos – some of these plants are endemic to Malaysia.

- The Ministry of Tourism has identified at least 13 gardens located throughout Malaysia which can be further promoted as a viable tourism product
- Efforts to introduce Parks and Gardens tourism were further boosted by the success of the Malaysia Garden at the Chelsea Flower Show 2010, which won the gold medal – it just proves that Malaysia has the potential to be promoted as a Parks and Gardens destination due to the wealth and biodiversity of our plant and flower environment.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON MEGA FAM PROGRAMME:

The Mega Fam programme is organised with the support from local and foreign airlines, Malaysian hotels and state governments. Established in year 2000, it is a part of Tourism Malaysia's promotional strategy to create greater awareness of Malaysia as a tourist destination. Its main objective is to offer the participants a personal experience of the attractions, tourist destinations, and products and services in Malaysia in order to develop tour packages and generate publicity on the country as a preferred destination for leisure and MICE.

The publicity and exposure gained, especially through the participation of foreign media in this programme, has been very high. A total of 1,500 Mega Fam participants were hosted last year, generating a publicity value of RM69 million (about USD21 million). A total of 18 programmes were organised last year in conjunction with major festivals and tourism events. This year, 15 Mega Fam events have been planned.

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