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MINISTRY OF TOURISM, ARTS AND CULTURE

MEDIA RELEASE

MALAYSIA JOINS HANDS WITH UNWTO MEMBER STATES TO COMMEMORATE WORLD TOURISM DAY 2023: 'TOURISM AND GREEN INVESTMENTS'

The global stage for this year's annual World Tourism Day (WTD) celebrations in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia shined the spotlight on the need for more and better-targeted investments for People, Planet and Prosperity; in the context of education and skills; sustainable infrastructure and green transformation; as well as innovation, technology and entrepreneurship.

Malaysia's delegation led by H.E. Dato' Roslan Tan Sri Abdul Rahman, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia in his capacity as official representative of H.E. Dato Sri Tiong King Sing, Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture, was among more than 100 World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Member States in attendance, including more than 50 Ministers of Tourism at the biggest WTD celebration to date. Joining them were high-level representatives from tourism's private sector, both regionally and globally.

During his official visit to Riyadh, H.E. Dato' Roslan also took the opportunity to pay a courtesy call on Mr. Fahd Hamidaddin, Chief Executive Officer and Member of the Board of the Saudi Tourism Authority. The meeting discussed potential areas of cooperation between the Government of Malaysia and the Kingdom of Saudi

Arabia for the mutual benefit of both countries, particularly with regards to the Government's effort to position Malaysia as a preferred transit hub for Umrah pilgrims traveling to Saudi Arabia via Kuala Lumpur International Airport.

On the special occasion of World Tourism Day 2023, H.E. Dato Sri Tiong King Sing remarked that the WTD serves as a vital platform to foster awareness on tourism's social, cultural, political and economic value towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. "The Government of Malaysia has long recognised the need to go for high-yield tourism and this aspiration has underpinned our national tourism plans and policies. Malaysia's overarching 10-year National Tourism Policy (NTP) 2020-2030 is aligned with the UN SDGs and 2030 Agenda in its 3 pillars of competitiveness, inclusiveness and sustainability, and its 6 transformation strategies," he said.

"Among the investment strategies outlined in the NTP 2020-2030 is the development of vibrant ecotourism clusters and designated Special Tourism Investment Zones, anchored by a strong mechanism for public-private partnership and collaboration between government Ministries and agencies to enhance the visibility of high-value tourism products and tourism-related incentives."

Tiong also reflected on the importance of striking the right balance between the 3P's of sustainability – People, Planet and Profit. "As a people-to-people industry, tourism has been a wellspring for encouraging small and micro enterprise growth in the Asia-Pacific region, generating investments in health and education services, and providing opportunities for women's economic empowerment, among other initiatives."

"For our destinations to thrive, tourism infrastructure and connectivity are key priorities in attracting premium new investments. Towards this end, Malaysia's Tourism Infrastructure Scheme worth US\$ 2 million (RM1 billion) was launched to strengthen the momentum of tourism

recovery by providing funding to tourism operators for hotel refurbishment and new tourism products," Tiong said.

"While infrastructure provides the hardware for sustainable tourism development, its software is shaped by the skills and expertise of local communities. As tourism employs 1 in every 4 persons in Malaysia's workforce with a high share of the informal sector, the challenge remains to elevate the career path with enhanced product knowledge, digital skills and training for special interest tourism in niche segments," he remarked.

"Moving forward, Malaysia welcomes the opportunity to work closely with UNWTO, particularly in the areas of global sustainability certification and measurement tools such as MST (Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism) and ESG. Adopting such indicators will go a long way in supporting a collective vision of an inclusive, equitable, and regenerative tourism industry," Tiong concluded.

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