



Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Malaysia

MEDIA RELEASE

**MALAYSIAN TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAMME (MTCP)
SHORT COURSE ON ISLAMIC TOURISM:
UNDERSTANDING AND EMBRACING THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
8 - 20 JUNE 2014
KUALA LUMPUR - JOHOR - MELAKA - PUTRAJAYA, MALAYSIA**

Despite the shrinking growth of the global economy, international tourism managed to maintain its expanding trend. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), international tourism continued its momentum with a 5% growth, or an additional 52 million international tourists, recorded a world total of 1.087 billion arrivals in 2013. Nowadays, more people travel for spirituality and pilgrimage apart from traveling for leisure and relaxation.

There should be a more sustainable way for mankind to use resources as more people consume products and services while they are travelling. How can Islamic tourism help create sustained value in these areas? Islamic tourism, being a part of the general tourism sector contributes in some way in the effort of many governments to develop tourism in a sustainable manner. From an economic standpoint, Islamic tourism has its own market niche that could potentially increase spending or revenue in a destination, create jobs and help to boost entrepreneurship in those areas to cater to Muslim tourists.

For Islamic tourism to be sustainably developed, there need to be a proper system that will take care of the locality and environment with the neighbouring areas and the effects on future generation. The economic policies we endorse today will have an impact on the country, especially the places where development are involved and the people. As the industry grows, awareness for sustainable development i.e. economic, environmental and social sustainability, need to grow at the same pace.

Realizing the importance to spread the awareness of sustainable tourism development, this year, Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC), an agency under the Ministry of Tourism and Culture (MOTAC) in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) will be organizing a short course under the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme (MTCP) with the theme "*Understanding and Embracing the Opportunities for Sustainable Tourism*". The MTCP, launched in 1980 by the Commonwealth Heads of State Meeting in New Delhi has gathered 25,000 participants from 140 nations to identify, analyse and discuss issues faced in the efforts of developing their respective countries. It signifies the Malaysian government's commitment to the South-South cooperation particularly the Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC). The course that will run from 8th to 20th June 2014 will witness participation from government functionaries from Cambodia, Egypt, Gambia, Indonesia, Iran, Lao PDR, Malawi, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Sudan, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Uganda, Uzbekistan, Vietnam, Yemen and Zimbabwe.

Among the topics to be discussed throughout the programme are Islamic Tourism Development: Malaysia's Experience, Development of Sustainable Tourism in Johor, Sustainable Tourism in Melaka: Cultural and Heritage Aspects and Malaysia's Islamic Tourism Blueprint: The Framework. The short course will feature accredited speakers from various public and private organizations, representing different sectors of Malaysia's tourism industry.

Malaysia has been voted as the top Halal Friendly Holiday Destination among Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) countries for four years in a row since 2011 By Crescentrating. To maintain its position as one of the most visited countries worldwide, Malaysia leverages on its strengths on economic, environment, social and cultural values while maintaining its political stability. MTCP is one of the platforms for Malaysia to share its best practices with the countries involved besides learning how industry players from other countries practice Islamic and sustainable tourism.

The programme is also coordinated as a part of the Visit Malaysia Year (VMY) 2014 campaign whereby the participants will be taken to places of interests in Malaysia, starting from Kuala Lumpur, Johor, Melaka Shah Alam and Putrajaya. The participants are expected to visit the Puteri Harbour and Legoland theme parks in Johor, Islamic Arts Museum in Kuala Lumpur, the iconic Melaka River Cruise, The Restu Foundation in Shah Alam and to tour Putrajaya with Cruise Tasik Putrajaya.

Y.Bhg Dato' Mirza Mohammad Taiyab, Director General of Tourism Malaysia will officiate the *Short Course on Islamic Tourism under the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme: Understanding and Embracing the Opportunities for Sustainable Tourism* on the 9th of June 2014 at Kasturi Hall, De Palma Hotel, Ampang, Kuala Lumpur.

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