



SPEECH BY YAB TUN DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD, PRIME MINISTER OF MALAYSIA

**AT THE LAUNCH OF THE VISIT MALAYSIA 2020 CAMPAIGN LOGO
ON 22 JULY 2019 (MONDAY), AT 4.00 PM
AT THE MAIN TERMINAL, KUALA LUMPUR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (KLIA)**

INTRODUCTION

1. Thank you for inviting me to launch the Visit Malaysia 2020 campaign logo.
2. And congratulations to the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture and Tourism Malaysia for this launch. It symbolises our firm commitment to the tourism industry.
3. And the launch of the logo is a significant way to usher the much-awaited Visit Malaysia Year 2020. We truly hope that we will witness more tourist arrivals, be they by air, land or sea.

AN INDUSTRY THAT THRIVES

4. Malaysia's tourism industry continues to grow from strength to strength. Looking back to 1990 and 1994, when I launched the Visit Malaysia Year campaigns, we were already aware that tourism would be an important factor in the national economy.
5. Today, almost three decades later, what we had envisaged then had come true and even more. Tourist arrivals have increased steadily and Malaysia has truly become popular and able to hold our own against other global destinations.
6. Kuala Lumpur was ranked 9th in the list of most-visited cities in 2017, and this is according to the Top 100 City Destinations 2018 report. Therefore, it is something that we can be proud of and should serve to motivate us to double our promotional efforts of Malaysia in the future.
7. The Government will continue to support efforts to develop Malaysia's tourism industry and further improve its standing in the international ranking.
8. It is the Government's intention to ensure that the latest Visit Malaysia 2020 campaign becomes a catalyst for achieving targets set under the Malaysia Tourism Transformation Plan.

TOURISM REVENUE

9. The tourism sector has shown impressive performance recently. Between January and May 2019, tourist arrivals recorded a growth of 4.8% with 10.95 million tourist arrivals compared with 10.45 million tourist arrivals in the corresponding period last year.
10. Besides this, the first quarter performance of 2019 also showed growth in tourism revenue which reached RM21.4 billion, a surge of 16.9% compared to the same period the year before.

11. In 2018, 25.8 million tourists visited our shores, and Malaysia secured 15th place among countries with the highest number of tourist arrivals.
12. Meanwhile, Malaysia ranked No. 21 among countries with highest tourism revenue, bringing in RM84.1 billion in tourism revenue in 2018 as stated in the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) in its Barometer Report published in May 2019.
13. While we put in much effort to woo foreign visitors, do not ignore our domestic tourism as it is a key contributor to the economy. A total of 78.2 million domestic tourists were recorded in 2018 with a growth of 10.9% from the previous year, while domestic tourism expenditure registered a growth of 11.7% in 2018 with RM60.4 billion.
14. Without doubt, tourism is one of the most important sectors to ensure the country's economic and service sector growth. It is not only able to generate income but also able to provide many jobs for the people in the country.
15. In 2017, this industry contributed 14.9% to the national economy compared to 10.4% in 2005. Meanwhile, the number of employees engaged in the tourism industry had also increased to 3.4 million in 2017 from 1.5 million in 2005. The number of people employed in the tourism industry made up 23.2% of the total labour force.

VISIT MALAYSIA 2020

16. The Visit Malaysia 2020 campaign is an opportunity as well as a challenge for us to attract record numbers of visitors to Malaysia and make the country a destination of choice for leisure and business tourists.
17. It is hoped that the Visit Malaysia 2020 campaign will succeed in its target of 30 million international tourist arrivals and RM100 billion tourist receipts.
18. Increasing flight connectivity from other destinations to Malaysia is one of the initiatives to boost arrivals into Malaysia and meet the campaign targets. If we have better air accessibility connecting other cities with Malaysia, we will be able to receive many more tourists.
19. Hence, we need to connect and reach out to “high yield” markets which are Malaysia’s target market for this campaign, namely ASEAN, China, India, United Kingdom and Germany.
20. The success of the Visit Malaysia 2020 campaign also depends largely on effective promotions. The tourism sector needs to move in tandem with digital transformation emphasising on digital marketing using various social media platforms if the industry is to remain competitive.
21. To make Visit Malaysia 2020 a success, let us make it a national mission for all. Thus, I call upon everyone, the rakyat and our friends, to help us make this campaign a success by telling and sharing to everyone you know of how beautiful, peaceful and wonderful it is to be in Malaysia.
22. Indeed, we all have a role to play in the Visit Malaysia 2020 campaign. Our hospitality must not be merely a slogan but translated into the nature and culture of our people. The beauty of a place will attract but the hospitality will make people stay and return.

23. The Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture and Tourism Malaysia when inviting Malaysians to participate in the logo creation of the Visit Malaysia 2020 campaign intended to remind everyone that this is a national campaign that requires the participation and support of everyone, whether they are directly involved in the tourism industry or not.
24. Malaysians have to realise that the success of this campaign will benefit everyone as spill over from the tourist industry spreads to all walks and manners of other businesses and industries.
25. I am indeed pleased when informed that this national project saw participation of various levels and sectors - ministries, agencies, departments, non-governmental organisations, private sector and tourism industry players themselves.
26. I am especially heartened to see the public-private collaboration in the implementation of mutually beneficial initiatives. One such initiative shall be witnessed shortly -- a cooperation between the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture and airlines such as Malaysia Airlines, AirAsia, Malindo and Firefly, as well as with well-known multinational Japanese company, Sharp.
27. This campaign focuses on ecotourism, arts and culture, befitting the National Ecotourism Plan 2016-2025 and the National Culture Policy which places ecotourism, arts and culture as the main focus and the path forward in the development of the tourism industry in Malaysia.
28. Through this campaign, we will welcome visitors from all over the world to experience the uniqueness and beauty of Malaysia's ecotourism attractions including our rainforests, mountains, islands and beaches.
29. At the same time, visitors will have the opportunity to immerse themselves in our diverse culture, arts, heritage and history. This is in line with the campaign's promotional theme - "Culture, Nature and Its People".
30. This campaign also aligns with the United Nations World Tourism Organisation's "Sustainable Development Goals" (SDGs) aimed at reducing the negative impacts of tourism development and providing direct benefits to the community through tourism initiatives.
31. To further strengthen the industry, the Government has recently launched the Malaysian Tourism Promotion matching grant fund, or GAMELAN Malaysia. The RM5 million special tourism fund is aimed at assisting tourism industry players in their international tourism promotion and marketing programmes to increase international tourist arrivals, while boosting domestic tourism.
32. In addition, to assist and expand handicraft and homestay businesses, a RM500 million SME (small and medium-sized enterprises) tourism fund will be made available by SME Bank, enabling the Government to subsidise interest rates by 2%.
33. The Government has also allocated a sum of RM1 billion to the Tourism Infrastructure Fund to provide financial assistance to new and existing companies involved in tourism-related activities and services.
34. These are some of the things delivered by the Government and we hope that through these incentives, we will be able to see our tourism industry flourish even more.

CLOSING

35. Before I conclude, I would like to extend my appreciation to the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture and Tourism Malaysia as well as all other ministries and agencies, the private sector and non-governmental organisations for jointly organising this event and for participating in this campaign.
36. This is a good example of public-private partnership in strengthening economic development as well as increasing the country's tourism portfolio.
37. On that note, it is indeed with much pleasure I officially launch the Visit Malaysia 2020 campaign logo.

Thank you.