

Press release

For immediate release

THE FIRST EDITION OF WTM CONNECT ASIA KICKS OFF WITH POSITIVE RESPONSE

The annual event's first day sees Malaysia marking an impressive standard as the first country in Southeast Asia to host the international brand

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KUALA LUMPUR, 19 MAY 2016 – The World Travel Mart (WTM) Connect Asia officially opens its door yesterday to buyers and suppliers from over 30 countries, with the Opening Ceremony held yesterday at the Eastern & Oriental Hotel, in George Town, Penang.

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This is the first time that WTM Connect Asia spread its wings to Southeast Asia, choosing Malaysia to host its inaugural event here in this region. WTM Connect Asia offers unique networking experiences with its one-to-one format of pre-scheduled meetings that targets the booming Asian leisure travel market, allowing exhibitors to exclusively meet with elite international hosted buyers.

The event's opening ceremony sees notable individuals such as Mr. Nick Pilbeam, Divisional Director of Reed Travel Exhibitions, Datuk Seri Mirza Muhammad Taiyab, Director General of Tourism Malaysia, Madam Chong Yoke Har, Deputy Director General of Tourism Malaysia, .Mr. Tony Nagamaiah, General Manager of Malaysia Major Events (MME), a division under the Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB), and Mr. Chok Yan, Chief Executive Officer of Penang Global Tourism.

"It is great to see so many buyers and exhibitors in Malaysia during this inaugural event that chose Malaysia as its venue. We are also pleased to have collaborated with the experts; Reed Travel Exhibitions that have helped us pave the way to making WTM Connect Asia a recurring event in Southeast Asia." said Director General of Tourism Malaysia, Datuk Seri Mirza Mohammad Taiyab during the opening ceremony.

This much anticipated event is organised by Reed Travel Exhibitions and supported by Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau, Tourism Malaysia and State Tourism of Penang.

“MyCEB supported 214 business events that brought in 108,105 international delegates last year with an estimated economic impact of RM1.3 billion. With the current economic status, I am positive that we would be able to achieve more than the previous year,” said Tony Nagamaiah, General Manager of MME, who presented MyCEB during the opening ceremony yesterday.

... In a separate interview, Datuk Zulkefli Hj Sharif, Chief Executive Officer of MyCEB, said, "In 2015, we secured 153 events that estimated to bring in a total of 97,078 delegates; WTM Connect Asia was one of these events MyCEB's Business Events Division won last year."

WTM Connect Asia 2016 will be held until 20 May 2016 at the Straits Quay Convention Centre. For more information, log in to www.wtmconnectasia.com.

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About MyCEB

MyCEB was established in 2009 by the Ministry of Tourism & Culture, Malaysia to further strengthen Malaysia's business tourism brand and position for the international business events market. A non-profit organisation, MyCEB serves as a central hub to assist meeting and event planners to bid for and stage international business events in Malaysia and act as a conduit for national product development. MyCEB's goal is to improve its rankings as an international

meetings destination within International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) and to grow business tourism arrivals to Malaysia.

In November 2011, MyCEB unveiled its business events tagline, 'Malaysia – Asia's Business Events Hub' which encompasses its aim to communicate Malaysia's proposition as a gateway to Asia for meetings – where many of Asia's diverse cultures, languages and lifestyles are represented and have merged through a long history of trade and meetings.

Malaysia Major Events (MME), previously known as International Events Unit (IEU) is another division of Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB). It focuses on identifying and supporting major event bids for sports, arts, lifestyle and entertainment events. It also assists home grown and home hosted events as well as other cluster events that strengthen Malaysia's global appeal as an international avenue for major events. www.myceb.com.my

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