



**SPEECH BY
YB DATO' SRI DR. NG YEN YEN
MINISTER OF TOURISM, MALAYSIA**

**AT THE CLOSING CEREMONY & HANDING OVER OF ATF 2014
FLAG TO MALAYSIA**

**LAO ITECC, VIENTIANE, LAOS
24 JANUARY 2013, THURS, 6:30PM**

H.E MR. SOMMATH PHOLSENA

Minister of Public Work, Lao PDR

H.E. MR. CHALEUNE WARINTHRASAK

Vice Minister of Information, Culture and Tourism, Lao PDR

H.E. MR. SAVA KHONE RAJSAMONTRY

Vice Minister of Information, Culture and Tourism, Lao PDR

H.E. MR. BOUANGEUN SAPHOUVONG

Vice Minister of Information, Culture and Tourism, Lao PDR

H.E. MR. SAYTHONG KEODOUANGDY

Vice Mayor of Vientiane Capital

H.E DATO' THAN TAI HING

Malaysian Ambassador to the Lao People's Democratic Republic

DATO' MIRZA MOHAMMAD TAIYAB

Director General, Tourism Malaysia

Members of the Laos and International Travel Trade Fraternity,

Members of the Malaysian Delegation,

Members of the Media,

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Good evening. On behalf of the Government of Malaysia, it gives me great pleasure to **accept the flag of the host of the ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF) from the Lao People's Democratic Republic**; formally passing the baton to Malaysia as host of the **33rd ASEAN Tourism Forum**.
2. Malaysia is where ATF began. In 1981, this event was held at Genting Highlands, near Kuala Lumpur. We last hosted the ATF in 2005, which was held in Langkawi. The 2014 ATF will be the **sixth time** we are playing host to this event.
3. With this official handing over of the ATF to Malaysia, we just can't wait to welcome all of you to Kuching, Sarawak, on the island of Borneo, which is the venue of the upcoming ATF 2014.
4. Also known as the *Land of the Hornbills*, **Sarawak is no stranger in playing host to international business tourism events**. Many meeting and incentive planners from around the world are attracted to hold their events there due to the availability of world-class hotels, modern facilities, unique culture and various fascinating attractions, as well as a strong track record in organising and hosting numerous international and regional conferences.
5. You will be fascinated by its **natural wonders** such as the **Mulu National Park - a UNESCO World Heritage Site** - which boasts the world's most extensive cave system and the largest cave chamber.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

6. As a united ASEAN, the strength of our collective efforts is greater than the sum of its parts. We may seem small standing on our own, but together, ASEAN can be a mighty force to be reckoned with. The ASEAN market constitutes a size of **600 million people**, spreading over a **geographical size of 4.4 million square kilometres**. In 2011, a total of **81 million tourists** visited countries in the ASEAN region.
7. Malaysia is honoured to continue the spirit and tradition of the ASEAN Tourism Forum, which embraces the role of being a catalyst for change in tourism policy and development, subsequently improving the economic and social standing among ASEAN countries.
8. Therefore, for the 2014 ATF, Malaysia has chosen the theme, "**ASEAN – ADVANCING TOURISM TOGETHER**". We believe it is time for us to raise the tourism industry value-chain to a higher level. This can only be achieved by working together for mutual benefit.
9. In this regard, we need your full support and active participation in both the forum and TRAVEX.

10. The 33rd ATF in Kuching, Sarawak, will be the premier international event to usher in **Visit Malaysia Year 2014**, which will display the best of Malaysia as we celebrate **1Malaysia Truly Asia**. A wide range of activities and events has been lined-up for the whole year to cater to the interest of different types of travellers.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

11. I strongly believe that ATF 2014 would further boost ASEAN cooperation in tourism, subsequently ensuring a more robust and exciting tourism year for ASEAN countries.
12. Once again, on behalf of the officials and the travel industry of Malaysia, I would like to **congratulate the Government of Laos, particularly the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism**, for doing an excellent and outstanding job in organising the 2013 ATF in Vientiane. I would also like to extend my **sincerest appreciation to the people of Laos** for their warm hospitality.
13. To all the foreign delegates, we wish you a safe journey home.
14. Till then, we look forward to welcoming you to Malaysia and we wish you all a wonderful and auspicious year ahead.

Thank you.