

**SPEECH BY
YAB DATO' SERI DR. AHMAD ZAHID HAMIDI
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER OF MALAYSIA
19TH MALAYSIA TOURISM AWARDS 2014/2015**

**PUTRA WORLD TRADE CENTRE
17 FEBRUARY 2016**

Salutations:

YB Dato' Seri Mohamed Nazri Tan Sri Abdul Aziz
Minister of Tourism and Culture, Malaysia

YBhg. Tan Sri Dr. Ong Hong Peng
Secretary General, Ministry of Tourism and Culture

YBrs. Mr. Wee Choo Keong
Chairman, Tourism Malaysia

YBhg. Dato' Seri Mirza Mohammad Taiyab
Director General, Tourism Malaysia

Members of the tourism trade fraternity
Members of the media
Ladies and gentlemen

1. First of all, thank you for inviting me to be part of the 19th Malaysia Tourism Awards 2014/2015. It is an honour for me to be here.
2. I would also like to congratulate the Ministry of Tourism and Culture and Tourism Malaysia for putting together such a beautiful event to commemorate the effort of our tourism industry players and partners.
3. Award ceremonies such as this are important as they give recognition to those who have made outstanding contributions to the industry. At the same time, award recipients are endorsed as the benchmark in product and service quality among their peers. I am delighted to be able to share this moment with you.

Ladies and gentlemen,

4. Tourism has become one of the major players in international commerce, and represents one of the main income sources for many nations. Travel and tourism play an extensive role in stimulating economic sectors such as transport, food, accommodation, entertainment, handicrafts, shopping, spa, wellness, healthcare and education.
5. This is the case with Malaysia. Over the years, the tourism industry in Malaysia has grown significantly, both in terms of tourist arrivals as well as economic contribution. From a mere 5.5 million tourist arrivals in 1998, contributing some RM8.5 billion in tourism receipts, Malaysia is expected to attract 36 million tourists in 2020, generating RM168 billion in tourist receipts.
6. Malaysia's tourism industry currently ranks as the second largest foreign exchange earner after the export of manufactured goods and the sixth largest contributor to the economy, contributing a total of RM161 billion or 14.9% of our GDP in 2014. In 2014, tourism brought in RM19.4 billion of investment and contributed a total of 1.77 million jobs, i.e. 13 percent of total employment.

Ladies and gentlemen,

7. The UNWTO outlook for 2016 projects international tourist arrivals to grow by 4% worldwide in 2016. By region, growth is expected to be stronger in Asia and the Pacific (+4% to +5%).
8. As such, I believe there is no better time than now for Malaysia to take full advantage of the next wave of growth. With the creation of meaningful and high-value products, accompanied by excellence in service quality, I have no doubt that the tourism industry will be able to attract greater numbers of high net-worth tourists willing to pay a premium price for a first-rate experience.
9. On the part of the Government, our role is to develop policies that will make Malaysia a more tourist-friendly destination. Among our top priorities are national security and travel facilitation. With the successful implementation of visa exemption and e-visa system, we hope to facilitate the travel of more Chinese tourists to Malaysia.

Ladies and gentlemen,

10. To conclude, I wish to congratulate YB Dato' Seri Mohamed Nazri, the Ministry of Tourism and Culture and Tourism Malaysia for your role in the overall tourism development of Malaysia.
11. I look forward to seeing the industry soar higher in the coming years. I believe that with resilience, innovation, product quality and excellent service standards, the tourism industry will continue to drive our economy forward.
12. Last but not least, I offer my heartiest congratulations to all the recipients of the Malaysia Tourism Awards. I hope that you will continue to excel in the tourism sector and be an example for others to emulate.
13. Thank you.

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