

Asian Ecotourism Network





www.asiantourism.org

Spring / 2018

Mounthly Newsletter



Message from the chair

Hello AEN fans! Now that AEN is legally registered in Thailand, we will be engaging with our members and start implementing ecotourism projects. To realize our mission, please join us. Your membership fees help us not only realize the mission, but AEN will grow to outreach to the people in the need of our assistance and expertise.

We would also love your in-kind contribution such as helping our administrative tasks and developing AEN national and regional satellite offices that become the windows for AEN.

Now that the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development is over, I want to ask you if you were able to accelerate the changes where you contribute in ecotourism? During 7th and 9th December 2017 in Kesane, Botswana, the 2017 edition of the International Symposium and Annual Conference of 10YFP Sustainable Tourism Programme was held under the theme of "Empowering Tourism Destinations' Sustainability through Innovation". (http://sdt.unwto.org/conference-10yfp-stp)

Masaru Takayama, the chair of AEN, attended and took part as a speaker in the annual conference on behalf of Japan Ecolodge Association and AEN. The delegates were asked to refine the Kasane Call to Action during the workshop and agreed to implement it to accelerate the sustainable consumption and production in tourism.

This Call to Action is for all governmental agencies; international organizations; financial institutions and donors; non-governmental, grassroots and other civil society organizations; the private sector; academic institutions; communicators and the media; and travelers to join forces advancing sustainable consumption and production in tourism worldwide. The details are available at 10FYP STP website (From February it is 'One planet travel with care'. http://sdt.unwto.org/about-10yfp-stp



After these intensive meetings, the delegates were able to enjoy field visits including game drives within the Chobe National Park, meeting with the local farmers and cultural groups, and boat cruise in the Chobe River, all provided by Botswana Tourism Organization. In addition, the chair was invited to experience the visit and experience the stay at ecotourism certified lodges. Botswana has its unique certification system developed in collaboration with Fair Trade Tourism. (http://www.botswanatourism.co.bw/eco-certification-system)

The certified lodges visited were 1) Wildtrack Safaris Eco Lodge: https://wildtrack-safaris.com/ (cozy and luxurious cottages, no electric wires to separate from the wildlife!) 2)Thobolo Bush Lodge: http://thobolosbushlodge.com/ (Literally, middle of nowhere in the forest reserve with two boreholes that attract amazing wildlife) 3) Chobe Game Lodge http://www.chobegamelodge.com/

(Eco-luxurious properties for all ages. Solar powered boats and upcycled Land Rovers and Toyotas for game drives) All lodge were unique in its way and they are all endeavoring to make their tourism services more sustainable. There are a lot to learn from Asia. Visiting these unique lodges for special experiences is highly encouraged when you visit Botswana.





For sponsorship opportunities, contact 655 - 7132 / 734 - 4668 or 0905-5571-079 email: mark@leadimpact.asia



A lot goes into making VMY2018 a success

MIRI: Much work still needs to be done to make Visit Miri Year (VMY2018) campaign a great success.

In this regard, Malaysian Association of Hotels honorary secretary-general John Teo believes that although many people are looking forward to it, efficient infrastructure must be in place.

Accommodations like hotels and inns, condition of road signages, tourist destinations, eateries, "public transportation and safety issues must be considered besides making sure that all these infrastructure and facilities are up-to-date, repaired and well-prepared to welcome the expected tourists.

"In fact, all these facilities are correlated with one another in helping tourists, especially backpackers, go around the city and places of interest easily and conveniently," Teo said when sharing his view on 'Miri Tourism Year', stressing that safety and cleanliness must be given priority.

"Tourists want to feel safe when they visit a place. Therefore, emphasising road safety, directional signposts and enforcement of local ordinance are of utmost importance which the city council must take into con

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sideration before welcoming tourists."

Promotion, said Teo, must not be overlooked because promoting the best features of Miri on major websites, apps, government-related sites as well as on tourism and travel magazines could attract more travellers and tourists.

"In fact, Sarawak Tourism Board and the Tourism Ministry should include Miri in their roadshows, promoting the events and happenings in Miri which definitely would attract more curious people to Miri." Having been in the industry for nearly two decades, Teo is hoping for a successful VMY2018.

"The VMY2018 working committee, headed by Mayor Adam Yii and assisted by Councillor Ernest Goh, should formulate long-term and short-term goals for sustainable tourism industry.

"It is because short-term goals and strategies could attract huge number of tourists to Miri in 2018, whilst the long-term goal is to keep the tourists returning here for more explorations." Teo also suggested that improvement should be made to tour packages.

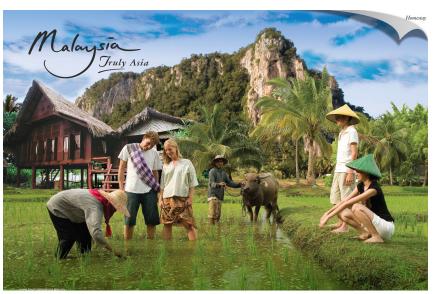
"If the locals cannot name one tourist place that they could recommend, what can raise the tourists' interest?" he questioned. Air connectivity, Teo added, remains one of the challenges that this city has yet to overcome.

"To get a direct flight to Miri from China or from other countries is not an easy task. Comparing this with Kuching, the capital of Sarawak, it is almost effortless for Kuching to gain more direct flights from foreign countries.

"Perhaps, it would be a better idea for all tourism partners to work together with hotels, travel agencies and airlines – offering affordable subsidised packages that include hotel accommodations packaged with tour arrangements provided by travel agencies and airlines.

"Such all-in-one packages could in a way attract more backpackers and tourists to visit Miri." Teo believed that despite the present economic downturn due to the decline in oil and gas prices, Miri's economy would be better if efforts were made to boost its tourism potential.

Source: Borneo Post Online



Firm, UMS to develop village into tourist attraction

KOTA KINABALU: Kampung Tambisan could become the next major tourist destination in Sabah.

Tambisan Travel and Tours Sdn. Bhd. managing director Antin Ismail said the village in the interior of Lahad Datu boasts rich flora and fauna, which was what inspired him to promote locals' way of life and culture.

"I think the activities carried out by locals in Kampung Tambisan can be developed into a tourism product. "With the involvement and positive acceptance of the community towards the importance of tourism, we have decided to help develop the industry in Kampung Tambisan," he said in his opening address at the letter of intent signing between Tambisan Travel and Tours Sdn. Bhd. and Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS).

In addition to raising awareness on the role of tourism in preserving and conserving the environment, the collaboration is also to implement community-based tourism in Kampung Tambisan as well as to provide a

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guideline, he added.

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UMS Faculty of Business, Economics and Accountancy Dean, Associate Professor Dr Raman Nordin, said community-based tourism was a form of sustainable tourism that could positively impact the lives of locals and improve socio-economy.

"I believe with cooperation from the local community, Tambisan is able to succeed in the project and serve as an example to other community-based tourism models in other places," he said.

Dr Raman also expressed hope for a stronger collaboration such as through a memorandum of understanding,

so that all parties can benefit from the initiative.

Source: Borneo Post Online







er, Sapa O'Chau Social Entrepreneur Making

ours in 2011 to the first ethnic minority

Tan is a keynote at our Global Eco

Shu Tan - Sapa O'Chau Black H'mong

Shu Tan is the founder of Sapa O'Chau and is a Black H'mong girl from Lao Chai Village, Sapa, Vietnam. She had firsthand experience as a street peddler of handicrafts when she was 13 years old. Shu was driven to help young people like herself to go to school and set up their own business. Determined to improve the lives of her community, she helped to build the first ethnic minority owned homestay in Lao Chai village in 2009.

She grew Sapa O'Chau from selling café tours in 2011 to the first ethnic minority owned international tour operator in Vietnam in 2013. Shu Tan is the first Hmong woman under 30 to be featured in Forbes Vietnams 30 under 30. She was voted tourism entrepreneur of 2016. Her enthusiasm and dedication has inspired people from Vietnam and around the world to help her with her mission. Shu Tan is a keynote at the Global Eco Asia-Pacific Conference: 27-29 November, Adelaide, South Australia.

Would you like to meet Shu Tan and learn more about her incredible story?

Visit our website to register at:

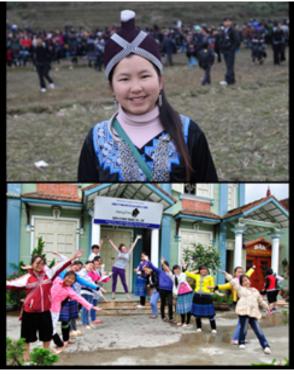
http://www.globaleco.com.au/register-form.php @sapaochau.org @shutansapaochau

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"A Social Entrepreneur Making Her Dreams Come True" - Link from LinkedIn Article

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SHU TAN

Founder, Sapa O'Chau

A Social Entrepreneur Making Her Dreams Come True

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Shu Tan is a keynote at our Global Eco Asia-Pacific Conference: 21-23 November, Hobart, TAS.

INSTAGRAM

Keynote: Shu Tan

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PETALING JAYA: Malaysia and Australia have signed a deal confirming their cooperation in their efforts to save coral reefs, according to a report by the Australian Associated Press.

Malaysia, Australia sign deal to save coral reefs

According to the report, both countries will attempt to save coral reefs by cooperating to reduce crown-of-thorns starfish outbreaks, protect endangered species and deal with ecotourism appropriately. Coral reefs in Southeast Asian countries, including Malaysia, are the most severely threatened in the world. Marine conservation organisation Reef Resilience has mentioned that almost 95% of coral reefs in Southeast Asia are under threat.

NEN Malaysia

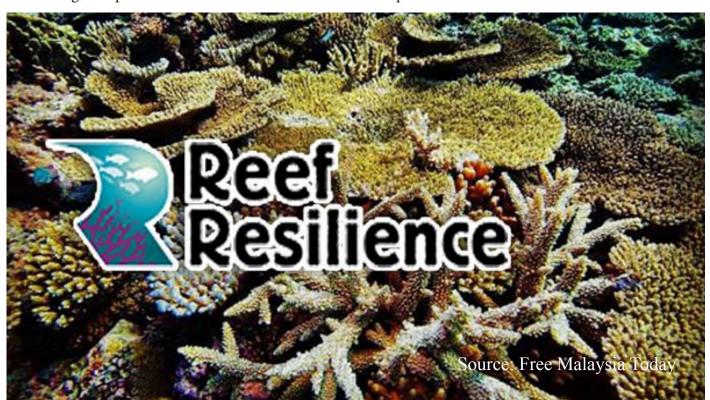
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An article from science website Phys.org has stated that the main causes of damages inflicted upon coral reefs included local threats, rising sea surface temperatures and coral bleaching.

The deal was signed during the ongoing United Nations Climate Change Conference, which has been taking place in Bonn, Germany.

According to Patricia Espinosa, executive secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the purpose of the conference is to encourage governments to implement the Paris Climate Change Agreement.

In so doing, it hopes to create sustainable and resilient development.



What's hot on the travel market?

UNITED KINGDOM: Sustainable tourism and authenticity were once again among the buzzwords at this year's World Travel Market in London.

Over three days, more than 50,000 professionals flocked there for business and a chance to promote their local tourism industry.

Nazri Aziz, Malaysia's Minister of Tourism and Culture, told Euronews: "Visitors will come and visit us in the rural areas to experience the daily life of the ordinary people in Malaysia. They like to taste the local food and want to see the local culture.

"Young people come from all over the world to a home stay by the beach, where they help with cleaning the beaches and clearing the sea from plastic bottles. So 'voluntourism' is another program we introduced in order to enhance our effort in supporting ecotourism in Malaysia." India is also keen to ride these trends. The state of Kerala has won the event's award for Best Responsible Tourism. "There is a strong possibility of ecotourism in our country and responsible tourism is what we believe in promoting," said Indian Tourism Secretary Rashmi Verma.





"We are doing a lot of work in that direction with coming up with guidelines for responsible and sustainable tourism in and around our ecotourism sites. A lot of infrastructure development is also happening at these sites, which is keeping in mind the environmental aspect of the whole destination."

Tourism that preserves the environment and local culture: the trend has become a strong selling point to compete against other destinations.



Nazri Aziz, Malaysia's Minister of Tourism and Culture during an interview with Euro News.

Source: Euro News

Smangus—An Ecotourism Destination in Taiwan where Blessed with Aboriginal Culture and Natural Beauty

Smangus—Destination in Taiwan



Officially, there are a total of 16 aboriginal peoples in Taiwan. The residents of Smangus, a tribal village 1,500 meters above sea level in Jianshih township of Hsinchu County, belong to the Atayal people. Smangus is one of the best scenic areas for ecological tour in Taiwan. Located on the mid-slope of Shueshan, it was the last place to get electricity in Taiwan. The connecting road for cars had not been available until 1995. Thanks to its late development, however, the virgin forest—with both coniferous and broad-leaved trees, is well preserved, and even boasts of quite a few giant red cypress trees of over 3,000 years old.

Smangus—Destination in Taiwan



Indeed, Smangus is now a famous ecological paradise for tourists. Since 2004, the local residents have adopted a "Tnunan Smangus", or collective cooperation model of business management. The land, as well as the profits from agricultural products and tourism, are collectively owned by the tribe. This practice has not only abode by the traditional Atayal norm of "gaga", but also brought the local people together. As a result, today's Smangus, with its mountainous landscape and cultural glamor, has developed a unique charm, fulfilling tourists' imagination about Shangri-La.

The precious Taiwan red cypress (Chamae-cyparis formosensis) forest was found in 1992, and has hence triggered the booming tourism of this tribal village. It takes half a day to walk from this no-smoking village to these trees--through a 5-km trail-- and come back. Visitors can stroll about to enjoy versatile forest beauty and rich ecological land-scapes. The road signs, viewing platforms and toilets along the way are all built by the local people, making use of the surrounding woods and stones. It is worth mentioning that the local residents commit themselves to protecting the forest and avoid excessive felling of trees.

So they set up lookout posts along the trail to guard against unlawful felling of trees, and the young locals take turns to stay out there at night. By doing so, they aim to safeguard their traditional territory and maintain the ecological functions of this virgin forest.

It must be noted that local restaurants do not provide disposable tableware. Most of the dishes are locally produced fruits and vegetables, including bamboo shoot, mushroom, honey peach and Makauy. There are altogether six hostels. To upgrade service quality, the maximum number of tourists each day has been reduced from 500 to 250 persons. All in all, the local people uphold the spirit and value of ecotour for the cause of environmental protection.





In addition to the giant Taiwan-red-cypress forest, itineraries can also include Koraw ecological park, the Slibu Falls, tribal classrooms, etc. Guide tours are available, but reservation should be made. Moreover, tourists can personally experience the pleasure of making millet mocha and Atayal archery and swing. Customized arrangements are available. If tourists rent a car in Taoyuan International Airport, it will take 4 hours to drive to Smangus.

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For more information, please contact:

Taiwan Ecotourism Association Website: http://www.ecotour.org.tw/

Email: eco.tourism@msa.hinet.net

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 5 — Tourism has moved from the conventional sight-and-feel experiences to more holistic and responsible holidaying.

"Responsible tourism" to draw visitors

"Today, it is no longer merely sun, sand and sea type of tourism. Tourists are becoming more demanding and more engaged in different

demanding and more engaged in different types of responsible tourism such as eco, cultural, conservation and volunteer tourism," Tourism and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz said.

He said Malaysia is also at the forefront of mainstream tourism in the national development agenda. "Towards this end, tourism is currently our second highest contributor in terms of foreign exchange earnings, and third in terms of contribution to Gross National Income," he said at the launch of the 6th Global Summit on Urban Tourism yesterday. Nazri said more should be done to give priority towards sustainable tourism development.

"This significant conference is indeed timely as tourism brings new patterns and changes to the urban landscape. As metropolitan areas expand rapidly, the public and private sectors face radical changes as well as significant opportunities," he said. This is the first time the summit is being hosted outside of Europe.

Nazri said the decision to host the summit in Kuala Lumpur is appropriate as the capital has emerged as a major destination for urban tourism.

"This is in contrast with the rest of the country which is better known for its unique heritage and living culture, beautiful scenery, beaches, majestic rainforests and mountains," he said.

In addition, the industry in Malaysia has been identified as one of the National Key Economic Areas to propel the country's economic transformation, said Nazri.

"In this regard, the Malaysia Tourism Transformation Plan (MTTP) was formulated and implemented in 2011 to achieve the targets of 36 million international tourist arrivals generating US\$40.8 billion (RM168 billion) in receipts by 2020.

"The MTTP is expected to transform the tourism landscape to be more vibrant and competitive, with tourist arrivals increasing 1.5 times and tourist expenditure expanding three times by 2020."

The theme of the summit is "Sustainable and Competitive Tourism on the New Urban Agenda".

Source: The Malay Mail Online



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Sarawak

Sarawak offers many ecotourism attractions KUCHING: Sarawak offers many attractions and comparative advantages for investors, as well as for ecotourism, says Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Amar Awang Tengah Ali Hasan.

In his opening keynote address before the World Islamic Economic Forum 2017 (WIEF 2017) panel discussion on Investment Opportunity in Sarawak Corridor of Renewable Energy (SCORE), Awang Tengah said Sarawak has a lot of ecotourism products to offer.

"These include as the UNESCO World Heritage Gunung Mulu National Park, Bako National Park, Semenggoh Wildlife Centre and our cultural attractions, as well as the famous Rainforest World Music Festival.

"Sarawak is also rich in biodiversity, with flora and fauna that holds great potentials for the pharmaceutical and medicinal industry. The state is actively looking into these potentials and would like to invite investors to collaborate with the state in research and development (R&D) and the commercialisation of our biodiversity resources," he added.

On the same note, Awang Tengah, who is also the Second Minister of Urban Development and Natural Resources and Minister of Industrial and Entrepreneur Development, highlighted that the state government places great emphasis on the sustainability of its timber resource.

"The Sarawak government has also encouraged the establishment of industrial trees with fast growing species such as acacia, in order to sustain the timber resources and relieve the pressure from natural forest. One million hectares of land are being earmarked for industrial trees. Currently more than 400,000 hectares have been planted.

"There are plenty of opportunities for wood-based industries such as pulp and paper, and furniture," he said.

Sarawak has planted 1.5 million hectares of oil palm against the target of two million hectares by 2020, the minister said, and thus the state welcomes investment in the downstream oleochemicals production. With large potential biomass supply estimated at 19 million dry tones, Awang Tengah said Sarawak aims to be Asia's First Integrated Biomass Hub.

"The biomass supply is available at competitive cost and concentrated in four main clusters, namely oil palm plantations, timber and rubber plantations, CPO mills and wood products," he added.

"The state government has always been investor-friendly and we have all the legal frameworks in place to ensure the interest of investors are protected. Now, the state government is embarking on digital economy to leapfrog the state into high income economy by 2030," he said.

Source: The Borneo Post



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The Sustainable Tourism Conference in Nagasaki

Shimabara Peninsula offers unique topography and geology shaped by active volcanic activities from the ancient times, and blessed with a variety of spring water. The people have prospered with the local cultural richness that

was proudly passed on from the last generations overcoming the natural threats facing the eruptions of Mt. Fugen-dake.

The Sustainable Tourism Conference in Shimabara Peninsula, Nagasaki was held from 4th-5th November. It was hosted by Ecotourism Japan with the support of Japan Fund for Global Environment (JFEG).

Ms. Ariana Luquin Sanchez from UNWTO Regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific presented the significance of international year of sustainable tourism for development. Mr. Albert Salman, Founder and Director of Green Destination mentioned key perspectives to develop sustainability in destination with examples of positive and negative impacts, though his experiences of organizing "Sustainable Destination Top 100"

At the end of the conference, all the mayors from the three cities in Shimabara Peninsula, Simabara city, Unzen city, and Minami-Shimabara city, came together to sign up the Shimabara Peninsula Nagasaki Declaration on Sustainable Tourism Destination for development. This agreement will bring the local government and tourism industry together and accelerate the sustainable tourism development in Shimabara Peninsula.

Source: Tourism New Zealand & Tourism Industry Association (TIA)

The New Zealand Toursim Sustainability Commitment

New Zealanders agree that international tourism is good for the country and are evenly split on whether New Zealand is attracting too few or too many international visitors.

The latest Mood of the Nation survey, commissioned by Tourism New Zealand and Tourism Industry Aotearoa, and undertaken before and after each summer, was conducted in November 2017.

The data shows most New Zealanders view international tourism in a positive light. Some 92% of respondents agree that international tourism is good for New Zealand while 87% say they take personal pride in making international visitors welcome in New Zealand.

Only a small proportion knew how many international visitors New Zealand attracts annually. When told it is 3.7 million per year, almost half (47%) said this was just right. Almost a quarter (23%) felt that was too many, while another quarter (23%) felt it was too few. However, compared to previous surveys, more New Zealanders (40%) are worried about the pressures arising from tourism growth. Tourism New Zealand's Chief Executive Stephen England-Hall says pressure on infrastructure is the top concern and while concerns about the environment and traffic congestion remain, they have significantly declined. The key perceived benefits of tourism are regional economic growth; growth opportunities for businesses; employment opportunities; and bringing vitality to regions.



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"It is reassuring to see New Zealanders value the industry and are proud of the role they play in it. However, we cannot ignore that for some people, tourism has downsides which is why we are addressing these issues. "Tourism New Zealand's focus is about easing the visitor concentration in summer by promoting travel in spring and autumn, and encouraging visitors into some of our less visited regions. A major campaign is cur-

rently underway to attract more Australians to Northland and the West Coast in autumn."

TIA Chief Executive Chris Roberts says the tourism industry is actively working to support communities to reap the benefits of tourism.

"TIA launched the New Zealand Tourism Sustainability Commitment in late 2017, setting eight goals that will see the industry achieve economic, environmental, community and visitor sustainability. We all have a part to play and it is our goal that every tourism business in New Zealand will commit to operating sustainably." Launched on 14 November 2017, the New Zealand Tourism Sustainability Commitment aims to see every New Zealand tourism business committed to sustainability by 2025 - our Vision is Leading the World in Sustainable Tourism.

To deliver on this, we must achieve ambitious economic goals while sharing the overwhelming benefits with supportive host communities, contributing to restoring, protecting and enhancing our natural environment, and continuing to be a high quality destination of choice for domestic and international travellers.



Every New Zealand tourism business has been invited to join this inspirational sustainability journey adopt 14 Commitments that will ensure goals are acheived. Together the industry is looking to create a truly sustainable tourism industry that makes a positive and enduring contribution to Aotearoa New Zealand. For more details see the website: www.sustainabletourism.nz

TIA is also leading major projects that bring together industry representatives with central and government to address the management of freedom camping, visiting drivers and tourism infrastructure deficits.

"We know how important tourism is for our country. One in seven people employed in New Zealand are supporting themselves and their families thanks to tourism. It is entirely possible to have ongoing tourism growth and protect the values New Zealanders hold dear. We want a New Zealand where our economy, people and the environment are all better off because tourism exists," Mr Roberts says.



















