

MEDIA RELEASE

**Embargoed until
Miami, USA, Tuesday 13 March 2007 1230hrs /
Singapore, Wednesday 14 March 2007, 0030hrs**



ASEAN COLLABORATION BOOSTS ASIA'S CRUISE INDUSTRY

New ASEAN Cruise Portal Launched for Cruise Industry

Miami USA, 13 March 2007 – Asia's cruise industry received a boost today when the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Cruise Working Group launched a new cruise portal www.CruiseASEAN.com at the annual Seatrade Cruise Shipping Convention in Miami. This move marks the commitment by member ASEAN nations to collaborate more closely to further develop the industry in the region.

Providing vital information on ASEAN cruise destinations, the new portal is but one of the many initiatives that the Working Group has in the pipeline.

"This new cruise portal aims to introduce Asia as a cruise destination to the global cruise industry as well as passengers new to the region. Besides introducing each ASEAN member country and its tourism highlights, busy cruise executives will also be able to access detailed Southeast Asian port information online which is useful for planning and developing new cruise products for Asia," said Mr Kevin Leong, Chairman of ASEAN Cruise Working Group.

“The ASEAN Cruise Working Group represents the collective will and commitment of the region to move this industry forward. We have articulated a two-year plan which is aimed at strengthening and catalysing the growth of the region’s cruise industry. Our priorities now are to introduce Asian cruising to the world and ensure that we have the systems in place to welcome our guests.”

Asia currently holds a 5% share of the world’s cruise market. The Asia Pacific region is expected to be the next growth area in the cruise industry, not only through providing new destinations for cruise passengers from the Western markets, but also by being a new source of cruise passengers. In fact, cruise passengers in the Asia Pacific region are projected to grow by more than 40% from 1.07 million in 2005 to 1.5 million by 2010, reaching 2 million in 2015 ¹. Southeast Asian cruise passenger volumes are growing at an average annual rate of almost 5% and forecasted to reach 820,000 passengers by 2020.

With so much untapped potential in these markets which are only just emerging in the cruise industry, the ASEAN Cruise Working Group is working towards providing relevant training for travel agents to equip them with the vital cruise product knowledge. Besides engaging and building strong working relations with the industry and cruise partners, other areas of co-operation include infrastructure development, marketing and promotion and human resource development.

Several of the joint activities that have been undertaken aim to give the cruise trade a better understanding of the diverse offerings of the region. The brochure ‘Cruising In ASEAN’ has been produced for industry members and aims to promote the region’s diversity and places of interest. Member countries are also collaborating to showcase their respective attractions at various platforms such as Seatrade Miami so that Asian cruise destinations are better represented to positively impact the international cruise trade.

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¹ Source: The World Cruise Shipping Industry to 2020 by Ocean Shipping Consultants