

## MEDIA RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### ***ATF 2010 TRAVEX sold out*** ***Eco-tourism experts to share insight on sustainable tourism at*** ***ASEAN Tourism Conference***

*Brunei, 17 December 2009* – The 29th ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF), the region’s foremost tourism and travel event, to be hosted by member-nation, Brunei Darussalam, in Bandar Seri Begawan, from 21 to 28 January 2010, has registered overwhelming response. All 373 exhibiting booths at TRAVEX (Travel Exchange) have been snapped up and the ten member-nations are well represented at the annual event which showcases the best of travel products and services in ASEAN. Thailand and Malaysia lead the pack with the largest number of participating organisations.

Sheikh Jamaluddin Sheikh Mohamed, CEO of Brunei Tourism, ATF 2010 Host Committee, said, “As the global economy is already showing strong signs of recovery, this is an opportune time for sellers to capitalise on suitable platforms available to re-ignite interests and develop businesses. The sell-out reinforces ATF as a great vehicle for networking and trade for the ASEAN tourism industry.”

Among the expected turn-out of more than 1,400 delegates, some 400 buyers from the Asia-Pacific (57 per cent), Europe (33 per cent) and the rest of the world will congregate in Brunei Darussalam, at the three-day TRAVEX event from 26 to 28 January at the new BRIDEX (Brunei International Defence Exhibition) Centre in Jerudong. Apart from TRAVEX, delegates will also get to explore the unexpected treasures of Brunei and Borneo through the pre-show city tours and post-show tours jointly organised by Brunei Tourism, Sabah Tourism and Sarawak Tourism. These include visits to historic sites and cultural landmarks, spa treats, as well as exciting nature and scenic tours across Brunei and Sabah and Sarawak in Malaysia.

Driven by the theme – ‘ASEAN – The Heart of Green’, another highlight of ATF 2010 is the ASEAN Tourism Conference (ATC) to be held on 26 January. It will feature a keynote address, titled ‘Sustainable Tourism in Transboundary Conservation Areas’, by acclaimed

authority on eco-tourism – Hitesh Mehta – on how the region can embrace sustainable development principles and encourage responsible travel behaviour that will help conserve the environment and bio-diversity, as well as sustain the well-being of the local people.

Mehta's vast experience in sustainable landscape and architectural design projects, eco-lodge and eco-resort design, environmental and protected area planning across continents has earned him the reputation of being one of the world's foremost leading authorities on eco-tourism.

Currently an adjunct professor at the Florida Atlantic University in the US, Mehta runs his own landscape architecture and planning firm – HM Design – with ongoing projects in Costa Rica, Indonesia, Panama and Dominica and the West Indies. From 1997 to 2006, he held the position of Vice-President and Head of the Ecotourism and Environmental Planning Market Sector at EDSA (Florida), the world's largest landscape architecture and planning firm, during which he played an instrumental role in many key projects, such as the Eco-tourism Product Implementation Programme in Kenya and the Vision Plan for Wailoaloa Ecolodge in Nadi, Fiji.

In addition, a panel discussion will be chaired by leading industry professionals, who include Tony Charters, Principal of Tony Charters and Associates and Anthony Wong, Group Managing Director of Asian Overland Services Tours & Travel Sdn. Bhd. They will share their experiences on developing eco-tourism projects in transboundary conservation areas.

With an increasingly sophisticated market of travellers, the aptly-themed event is well poised to meet the demand for green facilities and fuel greater awareness of socially responsible tourism.

For full details of ATF 2010 and regular updates, visit [www.atfbrunei.com](http://www.atfbrunei.com).

**Enc. Hitesh Mehta.jpg** – Hitesh Mehta, acclaimed eco-tourism authority, will address more than 1,400 delegates on sustainable tourism at ASEAN Tourism Conference at ATF 2010.

#### **About Brunei Tourism**

**Brunei Tourism** is the Tourism Development Department in Brunei's Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources, in charge of the international promotion and marketing of Brunei as a tourism destination of choice, as well as the licensing of tour companies.

The Tourism Development Department has been actively engaged in the promotion of tourism to Brunei since the mid 1990s, when tourism gained recognition as a rising industry capable of greatly contributing to the Kingdom's economic diversification efforts, as well as becoming a significant generator of future employment opportunities for Brunei's citizens.

With a clear strategy to achieve feasible goals, Brunei Tourism is working to market Brunei's uniqueness as a peaceful, wholesome and wealthy kingdom, known for having one of the most pristine tropical rainforest environments anywhere, as well as for the pomp and splendour of its centuries' old monarchy, steeped in ancient Malay traditions.

With easy international direct access through its Royal Brunei Airlines carrier and other regional airlines, and with a tourism offering and image appealing to discerning travellers, Brunei is an exciting and safe new destination waiting to be discovered.

Brunei Tourism is committed to working closely with both local and overseas industry partners and media to position Brunei Darussalam as a distinctive travel destination in South East Asia.

Brunei last hosted the ATF in 2001 during its 'Visit Brunei Year'. For more information on Brunei Tourism, visit [www.bruneitourism.travel](http://www.bruneitourism.travel).

### **About TRAVEX Organiser**

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### **Media Contact**

#### **Jeffrey Sunnylai (Mr)**

Public Relations Unit (Marketing & Promotion Section)  
Brunei Tourism  
Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources  
Jalan Menteri Besar, Bandar Seri Begawan BB3910  
Brunei Darussalam  
Tel: (673) 238 2822 Fax: (673) 238 2824  
DID: (673) 238 2829  
Email: [jeffrey@bruneitourism.travel](mailto:jeffrey@bruneitourism.travel)  
URL: [www.bruneitourism.travel](http://www.bruneitourism.travel)

#### **Hanli Tan (Ms)**

Assistant Marcoms Manager  
TTG Asia Media Pte Ltd  
1 Science Park Road, #04-07, The Capricorn  
Singapore Science Park II, Singapore 117528  
Tel: (65) 6395 7575 Fax: (65) 6536 0896  
Email: [hanli@ttgasia.com](mailto:hanli@ttgasia.com)  
URL: [www.ttgasiamedia.com](http://www.ttgasiamedia.com)