

1 July 2023

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE:

WE FULLY SUPPORT OUR ACTION-ORIENTED MINISTER OF TOURISM

This release is on behalf of members in all of the following organisations:

- ASEAN Retail-Chains & Franchise Federation (ARFF)
- BBKLCC Tourism Association Kuala Lumpur (BBKLCC)
- Batu Road Retailers Association (BARRA)
- Bumiputra Retailers Organisation (BRO)
- Industries Unite (IU)
- Malaysian Association of Theme Parks & Family Attractions (MATFA)
- Malaysia Retailers Association (MRA)
- Malaysia Retail Chain Association (MRCA)
- Masjid India Business Association (MIDA)
- Persatuan Pengurusan Kompleks Malaysia (PPK) – Malaysia Shopping Malls Association

We, the undersigned associations, zealously applaud our Minister of Tourism for his resolute approach to “turun padang” to gain first hand information and observe the real situation of the conditions and practice of various government departments especially those that have bearing on the treatment of tourists coming to Malaysia.

Indeed, there are numerous and onerous impediments that deter tourist arrivals and does not auger well for the development of our tourism industry and that Malaysia truly welcome tourists as such.

There are many simple things that can quickly change such negative perceptions and instead epitomise Malaysia as a tourist friendly and welcoming destination.

YB Minister’s proposal for Visa-On-Arrival is a no-brainer as technology is now in place to enable such processing on the spot.

Even Visa-Free visitations can easily be accommodated with electronic capability available.

The airport is the first encounter of any arriving tourist but the long queues at the Immigration counters, coupled with unfriendly reception will surely harm our tourism industry since a negative post to Tik-Tok or Facebook can be very detrimental and widely shared in an instance.

We are in support of the recent implementation of pedestrian-friendly no-car mall for Jalan Alor. This is not by any means unique as many countries have adopted pedestrian friendly street malls to cater for the locals as well as tourists patronage in a pleasant and safe environment. The balance between the need for deliveries and pedestrian times is a matter of scheduling.

Food, entertainment and shopping are must activities of any tourist. To balance the sensitivities of locals and expectations of tourists, we have been proposing to have certain appropriate areas be declared as International and Tourism Zones in city and urban centres. The earlier attempts of such zones such as Bukit Bintang should be revived and expanded.

We have to be more pro-active to become more attractive as we are competing on a global stage.

The proposed Luxury Tax is indeed misplaced. Firstly, Luxury Goods are difficult to define and simplistically include established branded goods. Such established branded goods have global reach and have prices standardised globally. Any added tax will immediately make local pricing more expensive compared to the standardised global pricing regime. United Kingdom who has experimented with withdrawing rebates of VAT for tourists have now U-Turned due to the serious negative impact. Let us not go down this unsustainable path.

We fully support our YB Minister of Tourism in his many forays onto the ground to see for himself in order to quickly right the wrongs, and in order to formulate realistic and profound necessary changes to uplift our tourism industry so as to contribute more to our national economy.

YB Minister, please continue and keep up with your good work. We are firmly behind YB Minister.