



**PERSATUAN EJEN-EJEN PELANCONGAN DAN PENGEMBARAAN MALAYSIA
MALAYSIAN ASSOCIATION OF TOUR AND TRAVEL AGENTS**

PRESS STATEMENT - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MALAYSIA CAN WIN WAR AGAINST CORONAVIRUS BY LOCKING DOWN, SAYS MATTA

KUALA LUMPUR, 16 March 2020 – The Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents (MATTA) is urging the Cabinet to declare an all-out war against Covid-19 instead of continuing with protracted battles on a piecemeal basis with no end in sight.

MATTA President Datuk Tan Kok Liang says, “An all-out war requires the entire country to be locked down and this is what many European nations have already done and more countries are expected to follow suit. The global outbreak of the coronavirus has reached a scale where nations have to take bold and drastic measures.”

“Until noon on March 15, 190 new cases were recorded in Malaysia, taking the total number of positive Covid-19 cases to 428. Our initial response to contain the outbreak was successful but no longer so. Hence, more effective measures are needed, and we could adopt some from overseas, as the novel coronavirus has now spread to over 155 countries around the world.”

“The lockdown should provide sufficient notice and be clearly spelt out and not perceived as 24-hour curfew, which will result in panic buying and hoarding. Also, mechanisms must be in place to prevent or reduce unnecessary hardships to the rakyat as well as remaining tourists still holidaying in Malaysia.”

“As for the tourism industry, there is little left to salvage. It would be better to press the reset button and start all over again on a clean slate by placing hygiene, safety and security as top priorities and restore confidence for holiday makers.”

“When our country is all set, Malaysia will be recognised as one of the safest destinations to visit and Malaysians too would be welcomed in many countries when the situation normalises. For countries that are proactive in dealing with this crisis, tourism may rebound as fast as it had plunged, while others that take piecemeal actions will somewhat find it difficult to rebound.”



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“Meanwhile, MATTA is reminding everyone in the country to heed the many guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health, such as adopting social distancing by standing at least a metre away from another individual. Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin had announced that all gatherings, including international meetings, sporting events, social and religious assemblies, are to be postponed or cancelled until April 30 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.”

“Instead of endless running battles, it would be better to take the bull by the horns and it is an opportune time for the new government to rally the people together to fight and win this war. To rejuvenate our economy, we may have to start with a temporary lockdown.”

“As it is our moral and social responsibility to place human lives first, all MATTA Fairs scheduled in Kuala Lumpur and in various states throughout the country have been deferred until the country return to normalcy. They include MATTA Fair Cuti Cuti Malaysia that will not be held on April 4 to 5, and MATTA Fair Kuala Lumpur will not be held on May 1 to 3.”

“Please note that the Malaysia Travel Fair held recently at the Kuala Lumpur World Trade Centre from March 13 to 15 was organised by a different association registered as Persatuan Agensi Pelancongan Malaysia and calling itself as MATA. It has nothing to do with the Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents (MATTA) or MATTA Fairs”, concluded Tan.



DATUK TAN KOK LIANG (PGDK, M.A. Tourism, CA(M), FCTIM, CHA)

President MATTA

Term 2019 – 2021