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Apec `needs to co-operate to boost travel industry'

LANGKAWI, Tues. - At a time of financial crisis in some of the Apec member economies where tourism has been adversely affected, there is a need for more active co-operation to promote tourism, Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Sabbaruddin Chik said today.

Speaking to reporters after opening the 13th meeting of the Tourism Working Group of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation at Sheraton Langkawi, he said money was the key to promoting the country overseas and he was confident that the resources would be made available as Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has impressed on the importance of advertising.

"Malaysia has taken several measures to overcome the financial crisis," he said, adding that the short-term measures taken to stabilise the currency and insulate the economy might inconvenience tourists in the beginning.

He said Malaysia had now shifted its emphasis in marketing, from selling the country as a whole to one of specific product-based campaign.

"Besides it has adopted a new strategy by staging international sports and recreation events," he added.

The TWG, formed in 1991 to recognise tourism as an important industry of economic growth and social development presently comprises 18 members and three member designates - Peru, Russia and Vietnam - who are to be accepted as full members at next month's Apec Ministerial Meeting in Kuala Lumpur.

The three-day meeting chaired by Malaysia is working on a programme of action to enhance areas of co-operation related to the tourism industry.

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