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GLOBAL 2004-PELANGI BEACH
PELANGI BEACH RESORT STARTS PREPARING FOR GLOBAL 2004

By: Yong Soo Heong

LANGKAWI, June 18 (Bernama) -- Pelangi Beach Resort, a chalet-type resort at Pantai Cenang here, has already started preparing for the Global 2004 International Smart Partnership Dialogue (also known as the 2004 Langkawi International Dialogue) by refurbishing its rooms and upgrading its Internet facilities, said its general manager, Francois G. Sigrist.

"Time is short and we are happy that everyone is involved in lending a helping hand to make Global 2004 an even more successful event than the last one," he said.

Global 2004 will be held from July 29 to 31.

Pelangi Beach Resort, which also hosted Global 2002, will be the main venue for the dialogue. The hotel is modelled along a traditional Malay seaside village with 331 rooms contained in 51 double and single-storey chalets made mainly from two local timber species, kempas and kapor.

Sigrist said the refurbishment started about a year ago on a gradual basis so as not to interrupt guest bookings.

"During the low season or whenever the chalets are empty, we will refurbish them one by one," he added. "The hotel is already 15 years old and we must ensure that it remains attractive with the best amenities and service standards."

As for the upgraded Internet facilities, Sigrist said the public areas like the lobby, business centre and swimming pool were now wireless Internet-enabled following the installation of a broadband Internet network.

"We find that many guests from other hotels also come to our hotel to make use of our Internet facilities and we are looking into extending this further to other areas in the hotel," he said.

Sigrist said it was crucial nowadays for top hotels to have good Internet access for guests because more and more people were demanding for

it.

"You just have to have it (these days)," he said and cited an analogy that the lack of Internet access in a hotel was like having a bathroom without a shower or water.

He said Pelangi Beach Resort was now aiming to attract guests in the MICE (meeting, incentives, conventions and exhibitions) segment as well, as hotels would not be able to survive on leisure travellers alone.

Sigrist also said that Pelangi Beach Resort would get extra employees during Global 2004 and its existing staff were now being trained for the occasion, including heightening their awareness on the need for greater security with help from the police force.

Meanwhile, various officials of the national committee involved in organising Global 2004 ended their second meeting here on Wednesday.

The meeting, chaired by Datuk Haji Abdullah Yatim, Deputy Secretary-General in the Prime Minister's Department, who is also the co-chairman of the national committee on Global 2004, was called to review the progress of the various sub-committees.

The other co-chairman is Datuk Dr Ahmed Tasir Lope Pihie, president and chief executive of the Malaysian Industry-Government Group for High Technology (MIGHT).

The sub-committees cover protocol, security and emergency, health, media and promotion, technical, support and services, and accreditation, registration and documentation.

Its members are drawn from agencies like the Prime Minister's Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health, Royal Malaysian Police, Malaysia Airlines, Malaysia Airports Bhd, Department of Civil Aviation, Immigration Department, Langkawi Development Authority and MIGHT.

Close to 30 heads of state and government, mostly from developing countries, have been invited for Global 2004 and the final attendance list is expected to be drawn up after a meeting between Wisma Putra and the heads of foreign missions in Putrajaya next week. All in all, some 600 government leaders, policy makers, corporate leaders and media

practitioners are expected to take part in Global 2004.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said in April this year that he was fully committed to the Smart Partnership Movement Dialogue initiated by former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad in 1995 as it had paved the way for Malaysia and its dialogue partners from Africa in promoting win-win endeavours.

"All our past dialogues have been successful in their own way, I hope this year's dialogue will be equally successful," Abdullah had said at the media launch of Global 2004, whose theme will be "Towards a Smarter Globe".

Global 2004 is expected to re-visit important issues like poverty reduction, addressing health concerns with special emphasis on fighting HIV/AIDS and discuss other challenges faced by developing nations.

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