

Malaysian To Address UNGC Gathering In New York
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By Manik Mehta

FRANKFURT, May 29 (Bernama) -- An environmentally conscious Malaysian expert on international travel and tourism has been invited to speak at a gathering of the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) in New York.

Anthony Wong, group managing director of Kuala Lumpur-based Asian Overland Services, said he will be speaking on the subject of "Sustainable Tourism and Innovation in a Tropical Resort" on June 18.

The UNGC is a strategic policy initiative for businesses that are committed to aligning their operations and strategies with 10 universally accepted principles in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption.

Wong, who had been the chairman of UNGC's Malaysia chapter, said his "green consciousness" was the reason for the invitation to speak before the UNGC gathering.

"When Soren Petersen, the global director of the UNGC in New York, visited Malaysia he was pleasantly surprised to learn that Malaysia has a rainforest that is 130 million years old right outside Kuala Lumpur," he said.

Wong said he had developed a system to treat polluted water in hotels. "The system is a mixture of constructed wetland using micro-organisms. I felt that we should follow nature to cleanse water," he said.

He said he had pursued science with a "deep passion" and this had also sensitised him to the need for environmental protection.

"I love science. I have my own private laboratory in my house as well as in my hotel," he said, pointing out that he had also helped design the "green certificate" in collaboration with the Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) in Kuala Lumpur.

But Wong admitted that he did not have any formal academic qualification in science. However, his love for science had been "overwhelming" and he was not deterred by the fact that he had not completed a formal education in science.

"That is, however, a secondary issue. One should have the passion that can drive a person to achieving goals in a particular field," he said.

Wong coordinates closely with the hotel associations, the ministries of tourism and environmental protection, and other institutions to develop the Green Hotel Certification which is deemed to be evidence that the recipient hotel had met the prescribed environmental standards set for the hotel industry.

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