



PRESS STATEMENT

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“23-Hours Stay Not Feasible - MAH Calls For Realistic Solutions Amid Manpower Shortages And Rising Operational Costs”

KUALA LUMPUR – Recently, YB Dato Seri Tiong King Sing, Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia, called for hotels to implement a 23-hour stay policy to improve guest satisfaction in the hospitality sector. While MAH acknowledge the positive intent behind the proposal and appreciates the efforts of the Ministry to improve satisfaction of our hospitality sector, we must stress that this suggestion is operationally impractical and would create a range of challenges for both hotel operators and guests alike.

Operational Challenges and Industry Standards

The standard check-in time for hotels worldwide is typically between 2:00 PM and 3:00 PM, with check-out times set between 11:00 AM and 12:00 PM. These hours are essential to allow sufficient time for hotels to maintain high standards of cleanliness, safety, and room quality, especially with the increased focus on hygiene post-pandemic. Expecting hotels to turn over rooms within an hour or two, particularly during peak seasons or with high occupancy rates, would severely compromise these standards.

Attempting to implement such a burdening policy in Malaysia would not only lead to compromised cleanliness and quality control but would also push hotels to take operational shortcuts, which could harm the guest experience that we are committed to maintaining and have cultivated so far.

"Internationally, the 23-hour stay is not a common practice in the hospitality industry. While flexibility is sometimes offered during promotional campaigns, it is far from a standard

practice. Hotels must have adequate time to ensure rooms are thoroughly cleaned, sanitized, and prepared for the next guest," states Datin Christina Toh, the President of MAH.

Manpower Shortages and Cost Concerns

The Minister's suggestion of 23-hour stays comes at a time when the hospitality sector is grappling with severe manpower shortages, particularly in housekeeping and maintenance departments. While we appreciate the Ministry's offer to assist with addressing these shortages by facilitating discussions with the Home Ministry and Human Resource Ministry, MAH emphasizes that enacting a 23-hour stay standard nationwide requires more than assurances. It is critical that manpower shortages be fully resolved before implementing any new policies that could exacerbate operational difficulties.

Additionally, implementing this policy would inevitably lead to higher operational costs, which would likely translate to increased room rates. Hotels are already facing rising costs, with the new minimum wage set to take effect in February 2025. This additional financial strain would place further pressure on the industry, at a time when hoteliers are already struggling.

Prioritizing Guest Satisfaction and Intrinsic Flexibility

MAH also wish to once again assert that the hotel industry in Malaysia always prioritizes guest satisfaction above all else. Ensuring our guest's positive experiences drives repeat business and is the main key to our operations. It is untrue to suggest that hotels set early check-out or late check-in times purely for profit. In fact, hotels in Malaysia are known for their flexibility, often accommodating early check-ins and late check-outs at no additional cost when occupancy allows.

"Guest satisfaction is always at the forefront of our business decisions. Many hotels already offer early check-ins and late check-outs as a courtesy, depending on availability, to ensure our guests have a comfortable and flexible experience. However, a rigid 23-hour stay policy would create more problems than it solves," added Datin Christina.

Conclusion

In closing, before imposing a 23-hour stay standard, we strongly urge the government to first address the manpower shortages that continue to burden the industry. Additionally, we call for action on other critical issues such as the regulation of short-term rentals and utility costs, which the industry has consistently raised in various meetings and town halls. Only once these

challenges are resolved should discussions take place regarding operational changes that could potentially benefit both hotels and guests. We welcome further collaboration with MoTAC and other stakeholders to ensure that any proposed changes are practical, sustainable, and aligned with the realities faced by the hospitality sector.

The Malaysian Association of Hotels remains fully committed to ensuring that all guests have a memorable and enjoyable stay in our hotels. We believe that guest satisfaction, operational feasibility, and industry sustainability must all be balanced in any new policy proposal. Once the manpower challenges are resolved, the industry will naturally take steps to enhance guest experiences, which includes offering flexible check-in and check-out times where possible.

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About Malaysian Association of Hotels (MAH)

Malaysian Association of Hotels (MAH) is the umbrella body for hotels in Malaysia formed in 1974 and initially established by a group of concerned and dedicated hoteliers to bring about a more dynamic hospitality industry aimed at building a workforce of highly skilled, innovative and disciplined individuals. Its long-term goal was to enhance the efficiency of the hospitality industry, thus, bringing about a more dynamic Malaysian hospitality industry. MAH, as the official national network for the hotel industry, represents more than 1,000 hotels throughout Malaysia supplying more than 150,000 rooms which is over half of the total number of hotel rooms available as guest accommodation in this country. With 13 chapters across the nation, MAH acts as a voice of the industry, working as one body to promote, protect, represent and advance the interests of its members.

About MAHTEC

MAHTEC Sdn Bhd commenced its fiscal year in 1998 to profile MAH as a human resource development provider and to upgrade the skills and knowledge of staff-in-service in the industry. MAHTEC is the training arm of the Association specializing in developing quality human resources in the hospitality industry. Highly specialized in the areas of Hospitality Skills Training and Managerial Development Training, all programs are facilitated by experienced and qualified Trainers through workshops and practical sessions.

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