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Wednesday, 28 October 2009

Tourism stakeholders map out strategies to raise RP tourism competitiveness

Manila (28 October) -- Tourism stakeholders from all over the country gathered at the Dusit Hotel in Makati City on October 26 to 27, in order to map out new strategies to increase the country's competitiveness in enticing and attracting foreign visitors.

Dubbed as the National dialogue on Enhancing Philippine Competitiveness: the Tourism Act of 2009, the Forum was organized by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Department of Trade and Industry and the Department of Tourism with the funding from the Private Sector Promotion Program of the German Technical Cooperation.

The participants come from various public and private stakeholders in the tourism industry including the Federation of Tourism Industries of the Philippines, Hotel and Restaurant Associations of the Philippines, and the Philippine Tour Operators Association.

The primary objective of the dialogue is to develop consensus on key issues arising from the law and to propose suggestions to the Department of Tourism for the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) due for completion towards the end of the year.

The organizers invited both local and international speakers to share experiences from their countries as inputs to the conference recommendations. Among them are Mr. Uwe Sturmman who is the project director of the GTZ-Private Sector Promotions who talked about World Economic Forum Travel and Tourism Competitiveness of the Philippines.

Another is Mr. Klaus Lengefeld is the manager of the sector project "Tourism and Sustainable Development" at GTZ head office in Germany. GTZ is German Government's agency for Technical Cooperation which implements development programs in more than 100 countries worldwide. Mr. Lengefeld has extensive experience with sustainable tourism development in Asia, Africa, Europe and Latin America.

Mr. Geoff Penrose is the Chief Executive of Qualmark New Zealand Limited, an organization that provides quality assurance, star grading and accreditation services to the tourism sector. Qualmark now annually assesses over 2,200 tourism businesses, provides added value services such as mystery shopping and also conducts contracted assessment services on behalf of New Zealand Trade and Enterprise. Mr. Penrose commenced his role as Chief Executive in 2004.

Mr. Roger Zbinden is the Regional Director for Asia in the Swiss National Tourist Office based in Tokyo, supervising the representative offices in Tokyo, Seoul, Taipei, Hong Kong, Shanghai and Beijing. He specializes in the area of destination marketing and regional development and has been involved in various projects in Japan and China.

Last but not the least is Mr. Shahram Saber who is the Principal of GTMS, a management consulting company that provides business solutions for the travel and tourism industry. He has more than 25 years of experience in the industry, having worked in the Asia Pacific, Europe and North America in the areas of travel and tourism, sports marketing and manufacturing. Mr. Saber was the Regional Director of Asia for PATA, representing the organizations throughout Asia Pacific. (PIA 8)

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