

Speech by YB Yeoh Soon Hin
CTRIP Gourp & Penang Global Tourism
Memorandum of Understanding Signing Ceremony
Tuesday, 9 July 2019

Good evening to all of you present today. It gives me great honour and pleasure to be part of this strategic partnership signing ceremony with Ctrip Group, marking a great milestone for the Penang state tourism. We are indeed proud to partake in this venture as Penang is the first Malaysian state to undertake this global tourism campaign and the first state as well to collaborate with Ctrip and Trip.com, Asia's leading online travel agency.

We, at PETACH together with Penang Global Tourism are ever keen to explore and approach new ways to work together with major players in the industry of travel and trade as well as media, targeting various worldwide markets. We are certainly looking forward to leveraging on these platforms where it will target various markets globally. Nonetheless, China is the key market for Penang and we are eager to see an increase in number of visitors via Ctrip. At the same time, we also look forward to receiving more tourists from South East Asia, East Asia and Australia via Trip.com.

The tourism sector is one of the state's main economic contributors that is progressing well each year. More visitors were recorded and Penang has received numerous international accolades and recognition. The most recent are by CNN Travel that had listed Penang as one of the *19 Best Places to Travel for the Spring of 2019* and one of the *Best Places to Visit for the Ultimate Asia Experience*. It's without a doubt that Penang is one of the most memorable places to visit in Asia. Travellers from around the world flock to Penang for an immersive experience of Penang's cultural diversity through world-class street food, vibrant festivals, cultural and historical treasure troves, nostalgic old-world charm, modern amenities, splashy seaside excursions, and breathtaking green spaces.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In the era of advanced technology and digitalization, online travel agency is at the forefront of the tourism market compared to 10 years back where OTA is a foreign concept to most people but has since achieved rapid growth. The state government believes that there is a need to constantly be in tune of market trends in order to promote Penang effectively. As such, we actively seek out new opportunities to help bring breakthrough to Penang tourism. In addition to utilising the OTA as a platform, we must be even more outstanding and catchy in our publicity efforts to attract tourists to Penang and experience what Penang is all about.

Ctrip Group is China's largest Online Travel Agency for accommodations and in the transportation, tickets sold in China. The collaboration will help to push our digital campaign to greater heights and reach as there are huge potential with over 800mil internet users in China

Ladies and gentlemen,

This strategic partnership with Ctrip is one of Penang state's initiative and is undertaken to promote the recently launched tourism campaign – "Experience Penang 2020", with the tagline "The Diversity of Asia" in conjunction with Visit Malaysia Year 2020. Experience Penang 2020 or EPY2020 for short, aims to highlight all of Penang's splendor to visitors locally and abroad showcasing every aspect of Penang's amazing diversity in culture, heritage, arts, food as well as its scenic natural surroundings. More announcements will be made in the coming months where you'll see pretty interesting and creative promotions being carried out... so do stay tuned.

Before ending my speech, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to Ctrip.com International Ltd for this strategic partnership and we look forward towards its success as well as many more mutually benefiting campaigns together. We are also delighted to play a part in strengthening ties between Malaysia and China.

Thank you again and have a pleasant evening.