



THE TWENTIETH MEETING OF ASEAN TOURISM MINISTERS **19 January 2017, Singapore**

JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT

1. The Twentieth Meeting of ASEAN Tourism Ministers (20th M-ATM) was held on 19 January 2017 in Singapore, in conjunction with the ASEAN Tourism Forum 2017 (ATF). H.E. Mr. S. Iswaran, Minister for Trade and Industry (Industry) of Singapore, chaired the Meeting and H.E. Ms. Kobkarn Wattanavrangkul, Minister for Tourism and Sports of Thailand, was the Vice-Chairperson. The 20th M-ATM was preceded by the Forty-Fifth Meeting of ASEAN National Tourism Organisations (NTOs) and meetings with dialogue partners.

2. Based on preliminary submissions made by Member States, for 2016, ASEAN is expected to receive 116 million international visitors, posting a growth of 6.5 per cent from 2015. The arrivals were dominated by intra-ASEAN travel, accounting for 43 per cent of total international arrivals in 2015, followed by Asia (excluding ASEAN) at 36 per cent. Enhanced connectivity within the region contributed to sustained growth of tourists particularly in facilitating intra-ASEAN mobility.

ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2016-2025

3. The Ministers were pleased with progress achieved in ASEAN tourism cooperation in 2016, particularly with the contribution of the tourism sector to the establishment of the ASEAN Community through the completion of all remaining tourism measures under the AEC Blueprint 2015. The Ministers also noted the progress in the implementation of the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan (ATSP) 2016-2025 where lead countries for implementation of all key activities under the Work Plan for 2016-2017 have been identified. The Ministers were confident that with the current implementation progress and active role of the lead countries, ASEAN tourism would be able to sustain its contribution towards the realisation of ASEAN integration goals laid out in the ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together document. Noting the potential of long-haul source markets, the Ministers requested the ASEAN Tourism Competitiveness Committee to undertake further assessment on their potential and connectivity with ASEAN and their level of awareness of ASEAN tourism.

4. Recognising the vast potential and opportunities offered by technology, the Ministers viewed that ASEAN needs to leverage digital marketing more effectively by enhancing capabilities in responding to fast-changing trends. The Ministers also emphasised the importance of improving capabilities in tourism statistics and data collection and analytics, and tasked the senior officials to strengthen collaboration among ASEAN Member States and with international organisations. The Ministers noted the convening of the 6th International Conference on Tourism Statistics on 21-24 June 2017 in the Philippines as a platform to discuss this initiative.

5. The Ministers requested senior officials to prepare an ASEAN tourism investment program that identifies opportunities to enhance tourism infrastructure and product

developments. The Ministers noted that WTTC Global Summit would be organised in Bangkok on 25-27 April 2017 where Member States would jointly promote ASEAN's tourism investment.

ASEAN Joint Declaration on Cruise Tourism

6. The Ministers reiterated their commitment to develop Southeast Asia into a vibrant cruising destination. The Ministers noted that by 2035 passengers expected to cruise in Southeast Asia would reach approximately 4.5 million¹. In support, they agreed to develop a Joint Declaration on Cruise Tourism as part of the cruise workplans under the ASEAN Tourism Competitiveness Committee. The Joint Declaration will set out principles to spur port and destination development in the region, and further encourage industry stakeholders to collaborate and grow cruise tourism in the region.

Visit ASEAN@50 Golden Celebration Campaign

7. In commemorating the 50th Anniversary of ASEAN in 2017, the Ministers launched *Visit ASEAN@50 Golden Celebration* campaign, a joint effort among ASEAN Member States to showcase the region's rich diversity and promote ASEAN as a single tourism destination. The campaign would provide ASEAN travel deals and multi-country packages ranging from 2 to 26 nights created by leading tour operators and cruise lines in Southeast Asia to entice travellers to visit the region. In supporting the campaign, a Visit ASEAN@50 microsite (visitasean50.com) was launched in early November 2016. The Ministers noted that various preparatory activities were undertaken in 2016 for the Campaign, including event promotions at ITB Berlin, Korea World Travel Fair, JATA Travel Expo and China International Travel Mart; partners announcement at ITB Asia 2016; the launch of travel deals and packages at World Travel Mart 2016 in London; and the launch of the Visit ASEAN@50 logo at the 28th and 29th ASEAN Summit in September 2016 in Vientiane.

8. With strong commitment of ASEAN Member States and partners, the Ministers were confident that the target of 121 million international tourist arrivals to the region in 2017 could be exceeded. The Ministers expressed their appreciation to international partners that have pledged support for the Campaign, among others, including the ASEAN-China Centre (ACC), ASEAN-Japan Centre (AJC), ASEAN-Korea Centre (AKC), AirAsia, Mastercard, TTG, and GoASEAN. The Ministers noted joint efforts undertaken by the ASEAN Promotional Chapters for Tourism (APCTs) in Sydney and Mumbai in 2016 to promote ASEAN tourism through production of ASEAN Cruise Guide, airport advertisements and networking dinners.

9. Taking momentum of the Visit ASEAN@50 Campaign, the Ministers supported the development of the ASEAN Tourism Marketing Strategy (ATMS) 2017-2020, as an instrument to translate ATSP into a shorter and detailed plan of marketing activities for ASEAN. The establishment of ATMS 2017-2020 would provide a framework and strategic marketing direction for tourism collaboration in order to enhance the competitiveness and awareness of ASEAN as a single tourism destination and provide clear marketing directions after 2017.

Developing ASEAN Tourism Products

10. The Ministers noted the expansion of ASEAN Tourism Packages used as the basis for Visit ASEAN@50 travel packages. The Ministers also supported the initiative to expand

¹ Projections by Bermello Ajamil and Partners Inc: Report on Cruise Development in Southeast Asia 2016

the existing tourism products (adventure, nature, cruise, culture and heritage, education, food, leisure, health and spa, MICE, pilgrimage, and senior and long stay), and collaboration with partners in developing and marketing them. In expanding ASEAN tourism products, the Ministers requested the NTOs to also involve dialogue partners and sub-regional groupings (BIMP-EAGA, GMS, CLMV, ACMECS, IMT-GT and other sub-regions) to consolidate their programmes and develop new activities.

11. To further realise the potential of cruise tourism in the region, an inaugural Cruise Dialogue was held on 19 January 2017. Organised by Singapore, the ASEAN lead coordinator for cruise development, the Dialogue discussed the growth potential of the cruise industry, cited examples of cruise port development projects around the world, and examined how cruise lines and entities like World Bank can partner the ASEAN member states to support cruise port development.

12. The Ministers were pleased to note the concurrent efforts that respective ASEAN member states were also undertaking to develop cruise tourism. For example, Indonesia would like to promote developments in Bali and beyond. They will be prioritizing infrastructure development in five ports – Tanjung Priok, Tanjung Perak, Belawan, Makassar and Benoa Bali – to allow them to berth larger cruise ships. They are also reviewing their immigration clearance processes to ensure consistency across all checkpoints and communication channels to support the cruise industry on cruise-related matters. Meanwhile, the Philippines have implemented in 2016 the National Cruise Tourism Development Strategy (NCTDS), which entailed infrastructure and destination development, and refinement of regulations and processes.

13. The Ministers welcomed the finalisation of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) report on Sustainable Cruise Tourism Development Strategies. The report was commissioned to obtain an understanding of current sustainable development practices across the region, and analysed the cruise tourism in ASEAN countries who participated in the study. It also touched on some of the best practices around the world to provide a reference in helping ASEAN countries develop their own sustainable cruise tourism strategies.

14. The Ministers also tasked senior officials to look into developing new products and experiences in the areas of yachting, river cruises, youth tourism, and sports tourism. In this regard, the Ministers requested NTOs to study the possibility of convening an ASEAN sports tourism conference in conjunction with major sports events in the region.

Quality Tourism

15. The ASEAN Homestay and Community Based Tourism (CBT) Awards Ceremony was organised on 20 January 2017, where 28 homestay establishments in the region that have fulfilled the ASEAN Homestay Standard were honoured with the Awards. The application of the ASEAN Homestay Standard would increase the quality of services, facilities and human capital in the homestay programmes taking into consideration the needs, capability and cultural diversity of ASEAN Member States. In line with the vision of ATSP 2016-2025 that invites more participation of and empowers local communities in tourism sector, the Ministers presented ASEAN CBT Awards for the first time to 26 recipients. The Award is based on the ASEAN CBT Standard containing performance indicators for the coordinated management of tourism products offered by communities under the organisation of a CBT Committee.

16. The Ministers noted the completion of the Training of Master Assessors for ASEAN Clean Tourist City Standard organised on 25-27 October 2016 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

The Ministers agreed to organise ASEAN Green Hotel, Public Toilet, Clean Tourist City, and MICE Venue awards in ATF 2018 in Thailand. The Ministers discussed the need for ASEAN to address tourism for all, particularly on accessible tourism for all, and agreed to request ASITDC to further address this initiative.

Enhancing Capabilities and Mobility of Tourism Professionals

17. The Ministers were pleased with the results of the International Conference on Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Tourism Professionals (MRA-TP) held on 8-9 August 2016 in Jakarta. The Conference was a significant milestone in fully launching the MRA-TP initiative, particularly with the readiness of the registration platform called ASEAN Tourism Professional Registration System (ATPRS) to facilitate mobility of ASEAN tourism skilled workers that received certificates under MRA-TP. The Conference addressed a wide range of topics on the MRA-TP, namely expansion of the MRA-TP, usage of English as a basic communication, facilitate and support potential participation of training and educational institutions, and strengthening collaboration amongst industries, training and educational institutions, and governments.

18. In supporting full implementation of MRA-TP, the Ministers noted the completion of 98 toolboxes for tour operation and travel agency divisions, and trainings for their Master Trainers and Master Assessors organised in Da Nang, Viet Nam, and in Langkawi, Malaysia. The completion of these projects marked the completion of MRA Work Plan 2010-2015 implementation. The Ministers requested the ASEAN Tourism Professional Monitoring Committee to expedite the full establishment of the Regional Secretariat for the Implementation of the MRA-TP in Jakarta Indonesia, including the conclusion of its Host Country Agreement. The Ministers supported the project on development of MRA-TP Work Plan 2017-2020 that would further guide implementation of this initiative and encouraged more participation of tourism stakeholders. In line with ATSP 2016-2025, the Ministers encouraged the expansion of MRA implementation to other professionals, based on the requirements and needs of the industry. The Ministers expressed appreciation to the Government of Australia for the continued support in the operationalization of the MRA-TP through the ASEAN-Australia Development Cooperation Programme II.

Deliverables for Lao PDR's ASEAN Chairmanship

19. The Ministers welcomed the Pakse Declaration on ASEAN Roadmap for Strategic Development of Ecotourism Clusters and Tourism Corridor as a result of the First ASEAN Ecotourism Forum held on 22-25 June 2016 in Pakse, Lao PDR. Ecotourism plays an important role in most ASEAN Member States as key attraction/destinations characterized by involvement of many stakeholders including local communities. Ecotourism provided direct benefits to local communities, protection and conservation of biodiversity. In line with the ATSP 2016-2025, the Ministers agreed that the necessary follow-ups from this Declaration would be subsumed under the existing implementation of ATSP carried out by respective ASEAN tourism committees.

20. The Ministers noted the progress in the development of the Guideline for ASEAN Sustainable Tourism Award (ASTA) as one of deliverables for Lao PDR's ASEAN Chairmanship. ASTA is expected to facilitate the adoption of existing ASEAN Tourism Standards and reward local communities and public-private participation in the value chain. The Ministers supported the decision of NTOs to target the first ASTA award during ATF 2018.

Collaboration with Partners

21. The Ministers noted strong interests showed by international organisations in enhancing collaboration in the implementation of ATSP 2016-2025 to further realise ASEAN's tourism potential. The Ministers requested NTOs to further consult with, among others, UNWTO, WTTC, PATA, World Bank, GIZ, ACC, AJC and AKC, to develop more concrete collaborative activities. The Ministers acknowledged the ASEAN Scholarship for Tourism, a post-graduate scholarship offered by ATRA members as an initiative to promote ASEAN integration. The scholarship covers full tuition fees waiver, as well as allocation of stipend covering the cost of living.

ASEAN Tourism Forum

22. The ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF) 2017 held on 16-20 January 2017 in Singapore with the theme of "Shaping our Tourism Journey Together" was attended by 324 buyers and 355 exhibitors. The Ministers expressed their appreciation to CNN International as the Official International Cable and Satellite Media Partner of ATF 2017.

23. The Ministers noted that the ATF 2018 would be held on 22-26 January 2018 in Chiang Mai, Thailand with the theme of "ASEAN – Sustainable Connectivity, Boundless Prosperity". ATF 2019 will be hosted in Viet Nam.

24. The Ministers expressed their sincere appreciation to the Government and People of the Republic of Singapore for the warm hospitality and the excellent arrangements made for the Meetings.

LIST OF MINISTERS

The Meeting was attended by:

- (i) H.E. Dato Ali Apong, Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism, Brunei Darussalam;
- (ii) H.E. Dr. Thong Khon, Minister of Tourism, Cambodia;
- (iii) H.E. Dr. Arief Yahya, Minister of Tourism, Indonesia;
- (iv) H.E. Mr. Ounethouang Khaophanh, Vice Minister of Information, Culture and Tourism, Lao PDR;
- (v) H.E. Datuk Hj. Ab. Ghaffar A. Tambi, Secretary General, Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Malaysia, representing H.E. Dato' Seri Mohamed Nazri bin Abdul Aziz, Minister of Tourism and Culture, Malaysia;
- (vi) H.E. U Ohn Maung, Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism, Myanmar;
- (vii) H.E. Ms. Wanda Corazon T. Teo, Secretary of Tourism, Philippines;
- (viii) H.E. Mr. S. Iswaran, Minister for Trade and Industry (Industry), Singapore;
- (ix) H.E. Ms. Kobkarn Wattanavrangkul, Minister for Tourism and Sports, Thailand;
- (x) H.E. Mr. Le Khanh Hai, Vice Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism of Viet Nam;
and
- (xi) H.E. Mr. Le Luong Minh, Secretary-General of ASEAN.
