

**Joint Press Statement of the Sixteenth Meeting of the ASEAN Directors-General of Immigration Departments and Heads of Consular Affairs Divisions of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs (16<sup>th</sup> DGICM)**

**Phuket, Thailand, 5-6 September 2012**

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1. The 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ASEAN Directors-General of Immigration Departments and Heads of Consular Affairs Divisions of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs (DGICM) was held on 5-6 September 2012 in Phuket, Thailand. The Meeting was chaired by H.E. Pol. Lt. Gen. Wiboon Bangthamai, Commissioner, Immigration Bureau, Royal Thai Police, and was attended by the Directors-General of Immigration and Heads of Consular Affairs Divisions of Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the ASEAN Member States, representatives of the ASEAN Secretariat, and DGICM's Dialogue Partner, Australia.
2. The Meeting noted the progress on implementation of the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Visa Exemption. The Meeting commended Lao PDR for exempting visas for all ASEAN Nationals. In realizing the ASEAN Community by 2015 and in conjunction with the ASEAN Connectivity, ASEAN Member States are looking forward to the full ratification of the Agreement.
3. The Meeting welcomed Thailand's progress in having ASEAN Immigration Lanes established at Suvarnabhumi and Phuket international airports. They were encouraged to be informed that other ASEAN Member States are in the process of establishing ASEAN Lanes to facilitate intra-ASEAN travels.
4. The Meeting agreed to follow up on the Provision of Emergency Assistance by ASEAN Missions in Third Countries to Nationals of ASEAN Member States in Crisis Situation. The Meeting welcomed the generous offer of Thailand to host the Third ASEAN Technical Working Group.
5. The Meeting produced the report of the 8th ASEAN Immigration Intelligence Forum (AIIF) held on 4 September 2012 in Phuket, Thailand. The Forum highlighted the significance of immigration intelligence sharing amongst ASEAN Member States particularly in the fight against migrant smuggling, trafficking in persons, drugs trafficking and other transnational crime. Concerned by the increasing threat of criminal network operating on migrant smuggling, the immigration authorities unanimously agreed to take on the issues of People/Migrant Smuggling and Irregular Movement of People under their purview.
6. As such, ASEAN Plan of Action on Cooperation on Immigration Matters would be reviewed by the Technical Working Group in line with ASEAN Community Building Blueprints as well as in response to the prevailing threats in the region.
7. The Meeting agreed that in realizing the establishment of ASEAN Community, secure, practical and systematic immigration and border management system is integral so as to detect, deter and prevent transboundary crimes. The Meeting thus called for a tactical and consolidated regional programme on border

management and immigration with a view to further strengthening regional and inter-agency collaboration.

8. The Meeting was held in the traditional spirit of ASEAN and the Meeting expressed gratitude to the warm hospital accorded by the Government and the People of Thailand.

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