



JOINT PRESS STATEMENT

THE 15TH MEETING OF THE ASEAN DIRECTORS-GENERAL OF IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENTS AND HEADS OF CONSULAR AFFAIRS DIVISIONS OF THE MINISTRIES OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (DGICM)

SINGAPORE, 3 – 5 OCTOBER 2011

The 15th Meeting of the ASEAN Directors-General of Immigration Departments and Heads of Consular Affairs Divisions of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs (DGICM) was held between 3 and 5 October 2011 in Singapore.

2. The Meeting is a regular annual gathering of Heads of Immigration Departments of the ASEAN Member States to discuss and coordinate regional cooperation on immigration matters towards the achievement of ASEAN goals. It meets annually and the chairmanship is rotated in alphabetical order among the ASEAN Member States.

3. The DGICM epitomizes the essence of the ASEAN Vision 2020 which is to have a shared vision of achieving an ASEAN Community that is outward looking, stable and prosperous through collaboration, cooperation and capacity-building.

4. Guest-of-Honour, Mr. Masagos Zulkifli, Minister of State for Ministry of Home Affairs and Foreign Affairs, officially graced the DGICM meeting on 4 October. Mr. Clarence Yeo, Commissioner of the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) of Singapore chaired the meeting. About 70 delegates including the Directors-General of Immigration Departments 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 from Australia were present.

5. The Meeting had fruitful discussions and achieved the objectives of the meeting as all ASEAN Member States charted out the directions and strategies for further collaboration on immigration and cross border issues.

6. The ASEAN Member States shared on challenges and updated on important national developments in immigration matters. These included immigration control, development of its infrastructure and technologies, information sharing, visa exemption arrangements, and capacity-building of immigration personnel. The Meeting also reviewed the progress of the Work Programme which operationalized the ASEAN Plan of Action on Immigration Matters.

7. The Meeting was updated on the progress of the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Visa Exemption. Most of the ASEAN Member States have generally implemented the visa-free facility to ASEAN nationals holding ordinary passports.

8. In line with capacity building efforts, the Meeting noted the ASEAN Member States' sharing on their capability development efforts through the various training programmes such as e-learning, Game-based learning and capacity-building initiatives like e-Passport and Auto-gates.

9. The 7th ASEAN Immigration Intelligence Forum (AIIF) was held in conjunction with the 15th DGICM. The AIIF encouraged regional and international cooperation in the area of immigration, and discussed topics on the information sharing cycle, threat assessment and fraud detection. The Meeting endorsed the Report of the 7th AIIF and recognized the important role of the AIIF in gathering immigration information among ASEAN Member States.

10. The 7th AIIF and 15th DGICM Meetings were held in the traditional spirit of ASEAN solidarity and cordiality. The delegates appreciated the warm hospitality and congeniality of the Government and the people of the Republic of Singapore during the Meetings.

11. The Meeting welcomed the offer by Thailand to host the 16th DGICM in Phuket, Thailand from 3 to 7 September 2012.

12. The Meetings concluded with the recognition of the importance of continued collaboration and cooperation on immigration-related issues among ASEAN Member States, and between them and Australia, which is a key Dialogue Partner of ASEAN on immigration matters.

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IMMIGRATION & CHECKPOINTS AUTHORITY, SINGAPORE

5 OCTOBER 2011