

**Interface Meeting between
ASEAN Tourism Ministers and ASEAN Transport Ministers**

10 November 2023, Luang Prabang, Lao PDR

JOINT MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

1. The Interface Meeting between ASEAN Tourism Ministers and ASEAN Transport Ministers was held on 10 November 2023 in hybrid format. The Meeting was co-chaired by H.E. Mrs. Suanesavanh VIGNAKET, Minister of Information, Culture and Tourism of Lao PDR, and H.E. Ngampasong MUONGMANY, Minister of Public Works and Transport of Lao PDR.

2. The Meeting noted that the ongoing resumption of tourism, complemented with the economic recovery of ASEAN Member States, will create a stronger demand for travel. The Meeting further noted that the capacity and connectivity of transport play a significant role in how a destination will be developed, particularly in influencing the mobility and overall experience of visitors.

3. In fostering a thriving regional tourism industry, the Meeting committed to further enhance cooperation, foster collaboration, and facilitate the exchange of best practices to overcome challenges and capitalise on opportunities. The Meeting agreed that stronger cooperation between the tourism and transport sectors is essential towards achieving the common objectives of sustainable tourism development, increasing connectivity, and promoting seamless travel experiences in the ASEAN region.

4. The Meeting emphasised that the two highly interconnected tourism and transport sectors should continue to work closely to explore a more viable approach to boost the tourism sector and provide a platform for more integrative action. As such, the Meeting agreed to:

- a. **Strengthen Connectivity:** Acknowledging the importance of improving transportation infrastructure and connectivity within and between ASEAN Member States, both sides will strive to further enhance air, maritime, and land connectivity to promote seamless cross-border travel.
- b. **Promote Sustainable Development in Transport and Tourism:** Recognising their joint responsibility for environmental protection and to support the goal towards global net zero emissions, both sides will actively promote sustainable transport and tourism practices, both at the regional and national levels. This includes encouraging the use of more eco-friendly transportation modes, introducing wider eco-tourism standards, adopting sustainable development guidelines for the transport and tourism sector in ASEAN, and supporting the advancement of relevant policy recommendations to facilitate the transition towards more eco-friendly transport options, and enabling destinations to establish themselves as champions of sustainability.

- c. **Strengthen Collaboration with Relevant Stakeholders:** Both sides will encourage public-private partnerships such as with travel agencies, tour operators, airlines and transport service providers to share knowledge, and exchange best practices to capitalise on opportunities to promote and market the region as one single destination, as well as amplify the ASEAN Tourism brand “A Destination for Every Dream” for mutual benefit. In this regard, the Meeting underscored that effective collaboration could encourage and ensure that local communities participate in the decision-making process and that their needs are considered.
- d. **Utilise Technology to Enhance the Quality of Data Sets:** Both sectors will exchange quality data to address existing information gaps.

5. Noting that tourism is a vehicle for achieving the UN-Sustainable Development Goals, the Meeting emphasised the importance of promoting the integration of environmentally sustainable transportation and renewable energy solutions to support the ASEAN Strategy for Carbon Neutrality and the ASEAN Framework on Sustainable Tourism Development.

6. The Meeting agreed to establish an Ad-hoc Task Force comprising of representatives appointed by the ASEAN National Tourism Organisations (NTOs) and the ASEAN Senior Transport Officials Meeting (STOM) to facilitate dialogues with the relevant agencies to ensure a more systematic, integrative and coherent approach in towards advancing the Pillar’s work, particularly in the areas stated in Point 4 above. The Meeting further tasked the ASEAN Secretariat to develop the Terms of Reference together with the ASEAN NTOs and ASEAN STOM for ad-referendum approval by the ASEAN Tourism and ASEAN Transport Ministers respectively.

7. The Meeting reaffirmed its their commitment to work together to enhance cooperation between the tourism and transport sectors. Through ensuing joint efforts, both sectors will play a pivotal role in further fostering sustainable economic growth and inclusive development within the ASEAN region.

