



## **THE TWENTY-SECOND MEETING OF ASEAN TOURISM MINISTERS** **17 January 2019, Ha Long City, Viet Nam**

### **JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT**

1. The Twenty-Second Meeting of ASEAN Tourism Ministers (22<sup>nd</sup> M-ATM) was held on 17 January 2019 in Ha Long City, Viet Nam, in conjunction with the ASEAN Tourism Forum 2019 (ATF). H.E. Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Thien, Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism of Viet Nam, chaired the Meeting, and H.E. Dato Ali Apong, Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism of Brunei Darussalam, served as Vice-Chairman. The 22<sup>nd</sup> M-ATM was preceded by the Forty-Ninth Meeting of ASEAN National Tourism Organisations (NTOs) and senior official meetings with dialogue partners.

2. Based on preliminary submissions by ASEAN Member States, the Ministers were pleased to note that 129 million tourists visited ASEAN in 2018, an increase of 7.6 per cent from 2017. Intra-ASEAN travel continued to be the major share of tourists, making up 37.2 per cent of total international arrivals in 2017.

#### **ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2016-2025**

3. The Ministers applauded the progress made in the implementation of the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan (ATSP) 2016-2025, where 33 key activities have been duly completed. The Ministers commended the active role of the lead countries and are confident that the current progress of implementation would be able to sustain ASEAN tourism's contribution towards the realisation of ASEAN integration goals in 2025.

#### **Promotion and Marketing of ASEAN Tourism**

4. In supporting the implementation of the ASEAN Tourism Marketing Strategy (ATMS) 2017-2020, the Ministers welcomed the appointment of the ASEAN Tourism Marketing Agency and further noted the integrated marketing plan prepared by the Marketing Agency for social voices and themes, blogging, social media marketing, branding and website, and partnerships. The Ministers agreed to focus on the development and implementation of wellness tourism and culture & heritage tourism as the regional thematic experiences for 2019, in line with the ATMS.

5. The Ministers expressed their appreciation to AirAsia as the Airline Partner and to TTG as the Trade Media Partner for their active collaboration and support in marketing ASEAN tourism throughout the year 2018, and looked forward to further strengthen partnerships in the next few years. The Ministers invited other international partners to establish collaboration with ASEAN, to promote and market the region through mutually beneficial activities led by the ASEAN Tourism Marketing Partnership Working Group. The Ministers accepted Viet Nam's invitation to participate in annual international travel marts organised in Viet Nam such as Ho Chi Minh City's International Travel Expo (ITE) and Vietnam International Travel Mart (VITM).

## **Diversifying ASEAN Tourism Products**

6. The Ministers noted the new development of ASEAN Tourism Packages 2019-2020 which had featured more than 130 tourism products covering multi-ASEAN destinations from 38 travel agents with 69 travel packages under the four overarching themes of the ATMS. The Ministers acknowledged the great potential in attracting tourists through numerous festivals in the region. In this regard, the Ministers supported the initiative to develop festival tourism in addition to the existing tourism products, and they looked forward to collaborating with partners as well as sub-regional groupings in the development process. The Ministers also noted the progress development of the Buddhist Tourism Story Book and website of Buddhist Tourism in ASEAN and South Asia initiated by Thailand.

7. The Ministers welcomed the progress made in the implementation of the ASEAN Cruise Work Plan 2018, particularly ASEAN's collaboration at the world's largest cruise trade show, Seatrade Cruise Global 2018, to collectively raise awareness of Southeast Asia within the cruise community. The Ministers noted that the participating ASEAN states will come together for the fifth time at this year's trade show in April 2019 in Miami, USA. The Ministers also welcomed the new ASEAN Cruise Video which would further promote ASEAN as a cruising region of choice.

## **Connecting Heritages for ASEAN Tourism Development in Digital Age**

8. The Ministers welcomed the following outcomes achieved at the world class ASEAN Tourism Conference on "Connecting Heritages for ASEAN Tourism Development in Digital Age" with the participation of a large number of global, regional and national researchers, tourism experts, delegates and governmental officials. The conference was held on 16 January 2019 in Ha Long City, with 4 key points shared: (1) Lessons learnt on the balance between tourism development and heritage preservation; (2) Initiatives and solutions to connect World heritages towards ASEAN tourism development, to establish an e-database of ASEAN's World heritage sites; (3) Solutions to call for investment on creative tourism and smart tourism development; and (4) Creating added value of heritage tourism based on the power of digital technology. The Ministers expected the conference's outcomes would encourage ASEAN member countries to join hands in cooperation and enhancement to enable the connecting of heritages towards ASEAN tourism development, making ASEAN a high-end destination with authentic experiences.

## **Developing Quality Tourism**

9. The ASEAN Tourism Standards Awards was organised on 18 January 2019 in Ha Long City. 30 homestay establishments in the region were honoured with the ASEAN Homestay Award; whereby the implementation 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. 26 entities received the ASEAN Community Based Tourism (CBT) Award, which is based on the ASEAN CBT Standard covering performance indicators for the coordinated management of tourism products offered by communities under the organisation of a CBT Committee. The Ministers presented the 1<sup>st</sup> ASEAN Spa Services Awards to 44 establishments. The application of the ASEAN Spa Services Standard would increase the quality of human resources, services and facilities of the spa industry in the region, while still being respectful of cultural diversity and traditional heritage. In providing an opportunity to promote the ASEAN Public Toilet Standard to ensure the quality, comfort, safety and proper

waste management of public toilets at tourist destinations in the region, the Ministers granted the 1<sup>st</sup> ASEAN Public Toilet Award to 42 entities.

10. The Ministers adopted the ASEAN MICE Venue Standard for Meeting Rooms in Convention/Exhibition and Public/Private Sector and the ASEAN MICE Venue Standard for Exhibition Venues and its certification process, and tasked senior officials to encourage relevant establishments to adhere to the standards. The Ministers also noted the progress of expanding the ASEAN MICE Venue Standard to another category, namely Special Event Venues.

### **Attracting Tourism Investments**

11. The Ministers noted the harmonised development of the ASEAN Tourism Investment Guide and the ASEAN Tourism Investment Portfolio, which would provide information on ASEAN conditions, opportunities, as well as rules and regulations for international investors to invest in the ASEAN tourism sector. The Ministers were pleased to note the successful outcomes of the ASEAN-Korea Tourism Investment Seminar 2018 held on 8 June 2018 in collaboration with the ASEAN-Korea Centre. The Ministers looked forward to the organisation of the ASEAN-Japan Tourism Investment Seminar 2019 to be held in October 2019, in close cooperation with the ASEAN-Japan Centre.

### **Enhancing Capabilities of Tourism Professionals**

12. The Ministers were pleased with the adoption of the ASEAN MRA-TP Work Plan 2019-2023. The Work Plan envisions that tourism professionals in the region are certified to deliver quality tourism services, through the completion and continuation of existing initiatives and achievements, such as: improving existing tools and infrastructure, operationalising the Regional Secretariat for the Implementation of the MRA-TP, and developing regional infrastructure and capacity. The Ministers looked forward to the active role of the lead coordinators and all ASEAN Member States in the implementation of the Work Plan. The Ministers also noted the progress in revamping the ASEAN Tourism Professionals Registration System (ATPRS) to facilitate the registration of tourism professionals and MRA-TP related stakeholders, and serve as a matchmaking mechanism between tourism professionals and their potential employers.

13. The Ministers commended all ASEAN Member States for the full submissions of instruments of ratification for the Agreement on the Establishment of the Regional Secretariat for the Implementation of the MRA-TP. In realising the establishment of the Regional Secretariat, the Ministers noted the decision of ATPMC to hire a MRA-TP Officer to study the viability of the Regional Secretariat, review functionality and sustainability of the ATPRS, and enhance awareness and promote the implementation of MRA-TP.

14. In line with the ATSP 2016-2025 to expand the implementation of MRA-TP to other related tourism and hospitality job titles, the Ministers noted the finalisation of the ASEAN Competency Standards for MICE and Event Professionals covering 32 job titles. In addition, the Ministers noted the progress of expansion of MRA-TP implementation to Spa Professionals, based on the requirements and needs of the spa industry in ASEAN Member States.

15. The Ministers applauded the successful outcomes of the Second International Conference on ASEAN MRA-TP held on 20-21 June 2018 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, which was highly presided over by Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo HUN SEN, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia at the closing ceremony, to whom we have owed a great gratitude for his strong support. The Conference addressed various issues on the MRA-

TP, namely the challenges in delivering quality in a competitive world, the tourism industry's role in job creation and global economy for sustainable development, MRA-TP and regulatory framework, as well as shaping the future of Tourism Vocational Education and Training. During the Conference, nine tourism training and education centres in the region were given Plaques of Appreciation for their active support and implementation of the ASEAN MRA-TP. In addition, the Handbook of ASEAN MRA-TP and Guidelines for ASEAN MRA-TP Trainer and Assessor were also launched during the Conference. The Ministers expressed appreciation to the Government of Australia for its continued support to ASEAN in the operationalization of the MRA-TP through the ASEAN-Australia Development Cooperation Programme II.

### **Increasing Community and Private Sector Participation**

16. The Ministers were pleased to note the adoption of the “Strategy on Participation of Local Communities and Private Sector in Tourism Development”. The Strategy would help to identify the impact factors, scale of development, and interactions among stakeholders in supporting the ASEAN communities and the private sectors to gradually affirm their roles and positions in contributing to the development of tourism in the region. In further addressing the initiative on accessible tourism for all, the Ministers continue to support a gender sensitive and responsive tourism programs and noted that the ASEAN Tourism for All Development Workshop 2019 would be held in July 2019.

### **Deliverables for Thailand's ASEAN Chairmanship**

17. As a follow up to the Joint Declaration on Gastronomy Tourism, the Ministers noted the progress of the development of the Gastronomy Tourism Master Plan as one of the deliverables for Thailand's ASEAN Chairmanship, with an output of a sustainable gastronomy tourism guideline which could systematically address the sustainable food system and enhance the livelihoods of local communities, and an ASEAN platform and network of experts in the field of agriculture, culture, art, tourism and gastronomy. In this regard, the Ministers noted the convening of the ASEAN Region of Gastronomy Workshop on 18 January 2019 in Ha Long City, as a platform to discuss the development of the ASEAN Gastronomy Tourism Network and the Guideline for ASEAN Region of Gastronomy, and urged ASEAN Member States to actively participate in the Workshop. The Ministers also noted that all ASEAN Member States will participate in the first ASEAN Gastronomy Forum which will be held on 21-22 March 2019, hosted by Ministry of Tourism and Sports, Thailand. An extensive discussion among ASEAN gastronomy experts will be encouraged.

### **Enhancing Travel Facilitation and Connectivity for Tourism**

18. The Ministers commended the enhancement of ASEAN air connectivity with the signing of the Protocol 4 on “Co-Terminal Rights between Points within the Territory of Any Other ASEAN Member State” of the ASEAN Multilateral Agreement on the Full Liberalisation of Passenger Air Services by ASEAN Transport Ministers. The Ministers also noted the progress in engaging ASEAN Dialogue Partners in air services negotiation, including China, European Union, Japan and the Republic of Korea. To further facilitate land travel within ASEAN, the Ministers were pleased to note the progress of studies on “Promoting Drive/Overland Tourism Across ASEAN through Recognition of Domestic Driving Licenses Issued by ASEAN Countries”, and “Promote Development of Road Connectivity along Major Tourism Corridors”.

19. The Ministers noted with interest the progress made on the ASEAN Common Visa (ACV) initiative by the Ad Hoc Working Group on ACV, as well as the progress on the ASEAN Business Travel Card (ASEAN BTC) initiative by the Joint Task Force on ASEAN BTC and looked forward to the development of these initiatives to further boost tourism growth in ASEAN.

### **ASEAN Tourism Forum**

20. The ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF) 2019 held from 14-18 January 2019 in Ha Long City with the theme of “ASEAN – the Power of One” was attended by 362 buyers, 640 exhibitors and 145 media. The Ministers expressed their appreciation to CNN International and BBC as the Official International Cable and Satellite Media Partners of ATF 2019.

21. The Ministers noted that the ATF 2020 would be held from 12-16 January 2020 in Brunei Darussalam, with the theme “ASEAN – Together Towards A Next Generation Of Travel”. ATF 2021 will be hosted by Cambodia.

22. The Ministers expressed their sincere appreciation to the Government and People of Viet Nam 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. Prof. Dr. Bosengkham Vongdara, Minister of Information, Culture and Tourism, Lao PDR;
- (v) H.E. Datuk Mohamaddin Ketapi, Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture, Malaysia;
- (vi) H.E. U Ohn Maung, Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism, Myanmar;
- (vii) H.E. Ms. Bernadette Romulo-Puyat, Secretary of Tourism, Philippines;
- (viii) Mr. Keith Tan, Chief Executive, Singapore Tourism Board, representing H.E. Chan Chun Sing, Minister for Trade and Industry, Singapore;
- (ix) H.E. Mr. Weerasak Kowsurat, Minister for Tourism and Sports, Thailand;
- (x) H.E. Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Thien, Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism of Viet Nam; and
- (xi) H.E. Dr. Aladdin D. Rillo, Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN for ASEAN Economic Community.

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