

## **EIGHTH MEETING OF ASEAN-INDIA TOURISM MINISTERS**

### **5 February 2021**

### **JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT**

1. The Eighth Meeting of ASEAN and India Tourism Ministers was held on 5 February 2021, in conjunction with the 24<sup>th</sup> Meeting of ASEAN Tourism Ministers (M-ATM), through video conferencing. The Meeting was co-chaired by H.E. Dr. Thong Khon, Minister of Tourism of Cambodia, and H.E. Mr. Prahlad Singh Patel, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Tourism and Culture, Government of India
2. The Ministers expressed their sympathy for the loss of lives and livelihood for many people in the region as a result of the COVID-19 global pandemic. The Ministers acknowledged that countries in the region continue to face the unprecedented challenges of COVID-19 and, therefore, reiterated the need for cooperative efforts in mitigating the impact of the pandemic on the tourism sector by ensuring a safe and prepared approach for a post-COVID-19 tourism revival.
3. The Ministers were pleased to note that prior to the pandemic, the Southeast Asia region continued to be a major source market for inbound tourism into India. The proximity naturally makes it easy for citizens from both sides to travel to each other's destinations. India received 930,339 visitors from the ASEAN member countries in 2019 which was almost 8.51 per cent of the country's total tourist arrivals. Approximately 4.7 million Indians travelled to ASEAN countries in the year 2019.
4. Although progress had been restrained due to the pandemic situation, the Ministers were pleased to note the relevant updates pertaining to the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding organised through the following activities in 2020:
  - (i) Sharing of best practices for the development of responsible and/or sustainable tourism, particularly in the sharing of information in the development of the ASEAN Sustainable Tourism Assessment Tools (ASITAT);
  - (ii) Sharing resources and facilities to provide mutual assistance in tourism education and training for quality tourism development, including the development of the Concept Paper on the ASEAN-India Tourism Training Programme, as well as the invitation from India for ASEAN countries to depute their tourism professionals to join short courses, workshops or seminars in India;
  - (iii) Crisis communications to protect the reputation and credibility of the relevant tourism organisations and/or tourist destinations, particularly through the establishment of the ASEAN-India Crisis Communications Team;
  - (iv) Exchange information pertaining to statistics and development strategies, investment opportunities and economic data; and
  - (v) Activity under the ASEAN Promotional Chapter for Tourism (APCT) India particularly on the launch of the ASEAN-India Online Contest 2020 in September 2020.

5. The Ministers agreed to further enhance ASEAN-India cooperation in tourism under the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding between ASEAN and India on Strengthening Tourism Cooperation with intensified efforts and activities to revitalise tourism activities in the post COVID-19 pandemic.

### 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. Mr. Prahlad Singh Patel, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Tourism and Culture, Government of India
- (iv) H.E. Mdm. Angela Tanoesoedibjo, Vice-Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy, Indonesia;
- (v) H.E. Mr. Ounethouang Khaophanh, Vice-Minister of Information, Culture and Tourism, Lao PDR;
- (vi) H.E. Dato' Sri Hajah Nancy Shukri, Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture, Malaysia;
- (vii) H.E. Mr. Maung Maung Kyaw, Director General , representing Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism, Myanmar;
- (viii) H.E. Mr. Benito C. Bengzon, Jr. Undersecretary, Department of Tourism, representing H.E. Mdm. Bernadette Romulo-Puyat, Secretary of Tourism, Philippines;
- (ix) H.E. Mr. Chang Chee Pey, Assistant Chief Executive, International Group, Singapore Tourism Board, representing H.E. Mr. Chan Chun Sing, Minister for Trade and Industry, Singapore;
- (x) H.E. Mr. Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn, Minister of Tourism and Sports, Thailand;
- (xi) H.E. Mr. Nguyen Trung Khanh, Chairman, Vietnam National Administration of Tourism, representing H.E. Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Thien, Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism of Viet Nam; and
- (xii) H.E. Mr. Dato Lim Jock Hoi, Secretary-General of ASEAN.

\*\*\*\*\*