

## **ASEAN TOURISM MINISTERIAL ROUNDTABLE MEETING ON ECOTOURISM**

**22 June 2016, Pakse, Lao PDR**

### **JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT**

1. The ASEAN Tourism Ministerial Roundtable Meeting (MRT) on Ecotourism was convened on 22 June 2016 in Pakse, Champasak Province, Lao PDR, at the initiative of the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism of Lao PDR. The MRT held in conjunction with the ASEAN Ecotourism Forum (AEF). The Meeting was chaired by H.E. Prof. Dr. Bosengkham Vongdara, Minister of Information, Culture and Tourism, Lao PDR and H.E. Ms. Kobkarn Wattanavrangkul, Minister for Tourism and Sports, Kingdom of Thailand, serving as Co-Chair.
2. The Ministers and Heads of Delegation reiterated their commitment to support tourism-related deliverables under Lao PDR's ASEAN Chairmanship in 2016 and welcome Laos' initiative to convene the AEF, creating an opportunity for the public and private sectors in the ASEAN tourism community to network, share and deliberate on plans to grow and prosper the region. The ASEAN Ecotourism Forum 2016 with the theme of **"ASEAN Without Borders: Roadmap for Strategic Development of Ecotourism Clusters and Tourism Corridors"**, aims to capitalise on the capacity and resources of ASEAN partners and supporters to bring about the transformation of sustainable businesses and generate jobs aligned with ASEAN 2016's theme, **"Turning Vision into Reality for a Dynamic ASEAN Community"**.
3. The Ministers and Heads of Delegation emphasised the importance of an ASEAN coordinated roadmap to strategically identify, plan and develop an inter-connected network of ecotourism sites linked to major overland and river passageways as well as inter-islands connection. These ecotourism clusters and tourism corridors shall be developed to traverse within ASEAN, namely: facilitating cross-border travel between borders among region and wildlife frontier, facilitating tourists travel into rural areas and nature reserves, and to experience the essence of ASEAN's ecotourism attractions. The Ministers commended this visionary development to unlock economic opportunities along overland and waterways; a major socio-economic initiative to create employment and uplift communities, revitalise idle natural resources and transform impoverished rural areas.
4. The Ministers and Heads of Delegation adopted the **"Pakse Declaration on ASEAN Roadmap for Strategic Development of Ecotourism Clusters and Tourism Corridors"** and agreed to submit the Declaration to the ASEAN Leaders during the 28<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit in Vientiane, Lao PDR, as one of Key Deliverables under Lao PDR's ASEAN Chairmanship in September 2016. The Ministers and Heads of Delegation requested the ASEAN NTOs to develop a Roadmap together with ASEAN partners including international organisations, ASEAN centres in China, Japan and Korea, and the private sectors.
5. The Ministers and Heads of Delegation expressed their sincere appreciation to the Government and People of Lao PDR for the warm hospitality and the excellent arrangements made for the ASEAN Ecotourism Forum and MRT.

**LIST OF MINISTERS OR HEAD OF DELEGATES**

1. MR. WARDI HJ MOHAMMAD ALI, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism, Brunei Darussalam;
2. H.E. MR.TITH CHANTHA, Secretary of State, Ministry of Tourism, the Kingdom of Cambodia;
3. MRS. ANI INSANI, Director of Tourism Institutional Relations, Ministry of Tourism, Indonesia;
4. H.E PROF. DR.BOSENGKHAM VONGDARA, Minister of Information, Culture and Tourism, Lao PDR;
5. DATO' YEAN YOKE HENG, Undersecretary, Ministry of Tourism and Culture Malaysia;
6. MR. YEE MON, Permanent Secretary, Ministry Hotels and Tourism, Myanmar;
7. MR. JOHN GREGORY CONCEICAO, Executive Director, Singapore Tourism Board, Singapore;
8. H.E. KOBKARN WATTANAVRANGKUL, Minister of Tourism and Sports, Kingdom of Thailand;
9. H.E. DANG THI BICH LIEN, Deputy Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism, Viet Nam; and
10. H.E. LIM HONG HIN, Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN for ASEAN Economic Community.

\*\*\*\*\*