

**JOINT PRESS STATEMENT**

**21<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the ASEAN Directors-General of Immigration Departments and Heads of Consular Affairs Divisions of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs (DGICM) and Its Related Meetings**

**Vientiane, Lao PDR, 22-23 November 2017**

1. The 21<sup>st</sup> DGICM and Its Related Meetings were held in Vientiane, Lao PDR on 22-23 November 2017. It was chaired by Pol. Lt. Col. Saysaming SIVILAY, Director-General of Immigration, General Department of Public Security, Ministry of Public Security of the Lao PDR, and attended by the ASEAN Heads of Immigration and Consular Affairs Divisions of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and the ASEAN Secretariat.
2. The Meeting was preceded by the 13<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Immigration Intelligence Forum (AIIF) and the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Ad Hoc* Working Group on ASEAN Common Visa (AHWG on ACV) on 21 November 2017 in Vientiane, Lao PDR. The Forum highlighted the significance of immigration intelligence sharing amongst the ASEAN Member States, particularly in addressing people smuggling and other immigration-related transnational crimes. At the *Ad Hoc* Working Group, the ASEAN Member States deliberated on the way forward for the development of the ASEAN Common Visa initiative.
3. The Meeting exchanged views on challenges and significant national and international developments in immigration, information, capacity building programmes and best practices in border management, consular and immigration-related matters.
4. The Meeting discussed on the development of the Guidelines on Consular Assistance by ASEAN Member States Missions in Third Countries to Nationals of Other ASEAN Member States, the ASEAN Business Travel Card (ASEAN BTC) and the ASEAN Common Visa initiatives. The Meeting also exchanged views on the ASEAN BTC and Initiative 13 of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025 to ease ASEAN travel by facilitating visa processes. The Meeting discussed the possibility of expanding Consultation with relevant partners. The Meeting looked forward to future discussions on these initiatives.
5. The Meeting welcomed the offer by Malaysia to host the 22<sup>nd</sup> DGICM in 2018.
6. The Meeting expressed appreciation to the Government of Lao PDR for the excellent arrangement and the warm hospitality accorded to the delegates.
7. The Meeting was held in the traditional spirit of ASEAN solidarity and cordiality

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