



**THE 23rd MEETING OF ASEAN TOURISM MINISTERS
15 January 2020, Bandar Seri Begawan,
Brunei Darussalam**

JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT

1. The 23rd Meeting of ASEAN Tourism Ministers (23rd M-ATM) was held on 15 January 2020 in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam, in conjunction with the ASEAN Tourism Forum 2020 (ATF). H.E. Dato Ali Apong, Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism of Brunei Darussalam, chaired the Meeting, and H.E. Dr. Thong Khon, Minister of Tourism of the Kingdom of Cambodia, served as the Vice-Chairman. The 23rd M-ATM was preceded by the 51st Meeting of ASEAN National Tourism Organisations (NTOs) and other Senior Official Meetings with Dialogue Partners.

2. Based on preliminary submissions by ASEAN Member States, the Ministers noted with satisfaction the growth in the number of tourists visiting ASEAN in 2019 to 133.1 million tourists, which represents an increase of 7 per cent from the previous year. The Ministers also noted that intra-ASEAN travel continued to contribute the major share of tourists, making up 36.7 per cent of total international arrivals in 2018.

3. The Ministers commended the work of the ASEAN National Tourism Organisations (NTOs) and their Committees in implementing the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan (ATSP) 2016-2025. The Ministers took note that 47 out of 73 activities or 64.4 per cent of the ATSP have been implemented or completed. The Ministers commended the active role of the lead countries to implement the strategic action programmes under the ATSP to enhance the competitiveness of ASEAN as a single tourism destination and to ensure that ASEAN tourism is both sustainable and inclusive. The Ministers encouraged all ASEAN Tourism Committee and Working Group Meetings to continue their work to sustain the momentum of the tourism sector's contribution towards the realisation of the ASEAN integration goals by 2025.

4. To ensure that the ASEAN tourism sector remains relevant, the Ministers endorsed the proposal by the ASEAN NTOs to undertake a mid-term review of the ATSP 2016-2020 with the Philippines as lead country coordinator. The Ministers likewise noted the conduct of an ASEAN NTOs Retreat for the said activity by September 2020 in Bohol, the Philippines.

Gearing Towards ASEAN as a Single Tourism Destination

5. The Ministers took note of the progress of the implementation of the seven strategic action programmes to ensure ASEAN's competitiveness as a single tourism destination, namely, (i) intensify promotion and marketing; (ii) diversify tourism products; (iii) attract tourism investments; (iv) raise capacity and capability of human capital; (v) implement and expand ASEAN tourism standards for facilities, services and destinations (vi) implement and expand connectivity and destination infrastructure; and (viii) enhance travel facilitation. The Ministers welcomed the review of the ASEAN Tourism Marketing Strategy (ATMS) 2017-2020 in the second quarter of 2019 and noted that the subsequent ATMS would be

developed to cover the next five years (2021-2025) and be aligned with the ATSP 2016-2025.

6. The Ministers expressed their support to strengthen the engagement and collaboration with the private sector in tourism marketing. In this regard, the Ministers acknowledged with appreciation the active support and collaboration by the ASEAN partners in marketing ASEAN tourism and looked forward to expanding cooperation with other partners in the near future through mutually beneficial activities led by the ASEAN Tourism Marketing Partnership Working Group (ATMP-WG).

7. His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah ibni His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkuiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, The Crown Prince and Senior Minister at The Prime Minister's Office, officiated the ASEAN Tourism Forum 2020 and launched the new ASEAN Tourism Website on 14 January 2020, witnessed by the ASEAN Tourism Ministers. The new website would serve as an integrated one-stop platform for the public on ASEAN tourism products and activities. The website can drive more interest to the Southeast Asian region as a preferred destination for travellers to experience the culture and authentic life of the ASEAN people, strengthening people-to-people connectivity and deepening cross-culture understanding.

8. The Ministers expressed their support on the initiative by the ASEAN NTOs to include digital tourism as one of the key activities to be implemented starting this year, to enhance the tourist experience in accessing information and services. In this regard, the Ministers endorsed the ASEAN NTOs' initiative to develop a declaration on ASEAN digital tourism to be considered and adopted by the ASEAN Leaders at the 37th ASEAN Summit in Viet Nam toward the end of 2020.

9. The Ministers noted with satisfaction the progress of the implementation of the ASEAN Tourism Packages 2019-2020, which feature 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 more tourists through numerous festivals in the region. In this regard, the Ministers welcomed the development of festival tourism 2020 which highlighted the various unique festivals and activities in ASEAN Member States throughout 2020.

10. The Ministers reiterated their commitment to further develop cruise tourism as highlighted in the ASEAN Declaration on Cruise Tourism. They acknowledged the proposed solutions and best practices laid out in the first report that elaborates on one of the Declaration's six endeavours. The Ministers also welcomed the progress made in the implementation of the ASEAN Cruise Work Plan 2019, including ASEAN's collaboration at the world's largest cruise trade show, Seatrade Cruise Global 2019, to collectively promote Southeast Asia to the international cruise community and travel operators.

11. The Ministers noted the progress of the implementation of the ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Tourism Professional (MRA-TP) Work Plan 2019-2023 including the outcomes of Regional Workshop on Reviewing and Updating ASEAN Common Competency Standard for Tourism Professionals (ACCSTP), held on 10-11 September 2019 in Yangon, Myanmar. Ministers recognised the conducting of National Consultation Meetings in ASEAN Countries to incorporate the views of national tourism stakeholders as a follow up on the said Workshop outcomes. Continuously, the Ministers also encouraged all ASEAN Tourism Stakeholders to fully engage the subsequent Regional Workshop which would be held in March 2020 in Myanmar to consolidate and finalise the job titles and their

competencies. The Ministers looked forward to the completion of the development of curriculum and toolboxes for the ASEAN Competency Standards for MICE and Event Professionals, which cover 32 job titles. To enable the MRA-TP to expand the recognition of more professionals under other related tourism and hospitality industries, the Ministers are working towards signing the Protocol to Amend the MRA-TP in 2020 on an ad referendum basis. The Protocol would facilitate and enhance the mobility of certified tourism professionals across and beyond the ASEAN region and increasing competitiveness in the tourism sector. With the signing of the Protocol, the Ministers also looked forward to the inclusion of the ASEAN Competency Standards for Spa Professionals and the development of the curriculum and toolboxes for the Standards.

12. The Ministers also noted the revamped ASEAN Tourism Professionals Registration System (ATPRS). The new System is expected to better facilitate the registration of tourism professionals and MRA-TP related stakeholders, and to serve as a job-matching platform between tourism professionals and their potential employers across the region.

13. On 16 January 2020, at the sidelines of the ATF 2020, the Ministers accorded a number of Awards to establishments and entities as a token of appreciation and to recognise their achievements and contribution to the promotion of the ASEAN Tourism Standards. 46 establishments in the region were honoured with the 7th ASEAN Green Hotel Award, 41 establishments were awarded with the 2nd ASEAN MICE Venue Awards, 21 cities in ASEAN were honoured with the 2nd ASEAN Clean Tourist City Awards 2020, and 18 establishments were honoured with the 2nd ASEAN Sustainable Tourism Awards 2020. The Ministers hoped that the achievements of those establishments could inspire more to follow suit and participate in strengthening ASEAN as a high-quality tourism region.

14. The Ministers acknowledged the importance of promoting investment to create jobs and contribute to ASEAN's economic growth. The Ministers were also pleased to note the successful outcomes of the ASEAN-Japan Tourism Investment Seminar 2019 held in October 2019 in Osaka, Japan, in conjunction with the Tourism EXPO Japan. The Ministers encouraged all ASEAN Member States to continue participating in regional and international tourism investment events, including the ASEAN-China Tourism Investment Seminar that will be held in conjunction with the China International Travel Market in Shanghai, China in November 2020.

15. The Ministers commended the signing of the Protocol to implement the Eleventh Package of Commitments on Air Transport Services under the ASEAN Framework of Services (AFAS) by the ASEAN Transport Ministers in November 2019 in Ha Noi, Viet Nam. The Protocol would further liberalise air transport ancillary services in the region which would facilitate traffic growth that could result in substantial tourism growth in ASEAN. The Ministers also noted the progress of negotiations with ASEAN Dialogue Partners in air services negotiation, including China, European Union, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and New Zealand.

16. The Ministers acknowledged the result of the study "White Paper to Implement Facilitation of Intra-ASEAN and International Travel Facilitation" and looked forward to the recommendations of the ASEAN NTOs on relevant actions based on the findings and analysis of the White Paper to further facilitate and promote growth of the travel and tourism industry in the region.

17. With regard to the implementation of Pakse Declaration on ASEAN Roadmap for Strategic Development of Ecotourism Clusters and Tourism Corridors, the Ministers noted

the progress of the study to implement the Roadmap for the seven ecotourism clusters and tourism corridors, namely, (i) ASEAN Sea Cruise Tourism Corridor; (ii) Mekong North-South Tourism Cluster; (iii) Heart of Borneo Rainforest Ecotourism Cluster; (iv) Coral Triangle Marine Ecotourism Cluster; (v) Mekong/Irrawady River Tourism Corridor; (vi) ASEAN City Tourism Corridors (ASEAN Pass); and (vii) Rail Tourism Corridor. The Ministers took note and welcomed the initiative of the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Youth (AMMY) on its flagship initiative on ASEAN Eco-Tourism and Agro-Tourism to create more jobs and promote greater awareness on eco-tourism among the youth and advancing their leadership skills toward eco-friendly tourism. In this regard, the Ministers encouraged the ASEAN NTOs to work with the relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies, including the Senior Officials Meeting on Youth (SOMY), and sub-regional groupings in developing and implementing activities of common interests and priorities by synergising the collective efforts.

18. Following the adoption of the ASEAN Gastronomy Tourism Master Plan in December 2019, the Ministers encouraged all ASEAN Member States to continue exchanging best practices and to utilise the Master Plan as guidelines to strengthen ASEAN's gastronomy development.

19. The Ministers commended the initiative of the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Sports (AMMS) to include sports tourism as one of the new priorities for its ASEAN Work Plan on Sports 2021-2025. The Ministers expressed their appreciation to the AMMS for its support and contribution in the diversification and development of tourism in ASEAN. In this regard, the Ministers looked forward to collaborate with the sports sector in promoting sports tourism activities.

Realising a Sustainable and Inclusive Tourism Development

20. The Ministers took note of the progress of the implementation of the three strategic action programmes to ensure that ASEAN tourism is sustainable and inclusive, namely, (i) upgrade local communities and public-private sector participation in the tourism value chain; (ii) ensure safety and security, prioritise protection and management of heritage sites; and (iii) increase responsiveness to environmental protection and climate change. The Ministers were pleased to note that a comprehensive regional action plan and tools to implement "Strategy on Participation of Local Communities and Private Sector in Tourism Development" are being developed. The Ministers encouraged the ASEAN Member States to actively engage their local stakeholders including private sector at the community level to contribute to the development of tourism in the region.

21. In further addressing the initiative on accessible tourism for all, the Ministers continued to support a gender sensitive and responsive tourism programme and therefore, endorsed the ASEAN Gender and Development Framework and its Work Plan 2020-2030. The Ministers looked forward to the implementation of the Work Plan and encouraged the ASEAN NTOs to collaborate with other relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies in the ASEAN Socio-cultural Community (ASCC) Pillar and exchange best practices and knowledge.

22. With regard to the contribution of the tourism sector to the protection and preservation of ASEAN heritage sites and heritage parks, the Ministers welcomed the outcomes of the "Workshop on Impact Assessment of Existing ASEAN World Heritage Sites and ASEAN Heritage Parks," which was held on 5 – 7 November 2019 in Luang Prabang, Lao PDR and the ASEAN Tourism Resources Management and Development Network for Ecotourism 2019 held in Kinabatangan, Malaysia on 21 to 24 October 2019.

The Ministers stressed the importance of the advocacy work by the tourism sector in improving tourism management at the ASEAN World Heritage Sites, Heritage Parks as well as the Ecotourism Sites.

23. The Ministers were encouraged to note that the ASEAN Sustainable and Inclusive Tourism Development Committee (ASITDC) is working on updating the work plan to enhance community and private sector participation in the tourism sector as well as to address environmental issues and enhance climate change responsiveness in collaboration with other relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies. The Ministers looked forward to the completion of the updated work plan in the near future.

24. The Ministers also noted the outcomes of the ASEAN Sustainable Tourism Assessment Tools (ASITAT) Workshop held on 7 October 2019 at Boracay Island, the Philippines. The Ministers endorsed the recommendation of the Workshop to engage other concerned bodies and agencies as well as their respective industry stakeholders in moving forward. The Ministers looked forward to the development of specific activities in the progression of ASITAT programme.

25. The Ministers welcomed the outcomes of tourism related cooperation implemented by the sub-regional groupings, including the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS), Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT), Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA) and Mekong-Lancang Tourism Cooperation (MLC) that contribute to the tourism development in the region. The Ministers appreciated the past MLC cooperation in the field of tourism and support the initiative of the development of MLC countries heritage routes through seeking funds from the special MLC Fund.

ASEAN Tourism Forum

26. The ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF) 2020 was held from 12 to 16 January 2020 in Brunei Darussalam with the theme of “ASEAN – Together Towards a New Generation of Travel”. The ATF saw 263 exhibitors, 160 international buyers and 109 domestic and international media. The Ministers expressed their appreciation to CNN International as the International Media Partner of ATF 2020.

27. The Ministers noted that ATF 2021 would be held from 17-23 January 2021 in Cambodia, with the theme of “ASEAN – A Community of Peace and Shared Future”. The Ministers also noted that ATF 2022 will be hosted by Indonesia.

28. The Ministers expressed their sincere appreciation to the Government and People of Brunei Darussalam 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. Angela Tanoesoedibjo, Vice Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy, Indonesia;
- (iv) H.E. Prof. Dr. Kikeo Khaykhamphithoune, 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. Bernadette Romulo-Puyat, Secretary of Tourism, Philippines;
- (viii) Mr. Keith Tan, Chief Executive, Singapore Tourism Board, representing H.E. Mr. Chan Chun Sing, Minister for Trade and Industry, Singapore;
- (ix) Mr. Siraphop Duangsodsri, Advisor to the Minister of Tourism and Sports, representing H.E. Mr. Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn, Minister for Tourism and Sports, Thailand;
- (x) H.E. Le Quang Tung, Deputy 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.
