

Joint Press Statement of the Seventeenth Meeting of the ASEAN Directors-General of Immigration Departments and Heads of Consular Affairs Divisions of Ministries of Foreign Affairs (17th DGICM)

Ho Chi Minh, 29-30 August 2013

1. The Seventeenth Meeting of the ASEAN Directors-General of Immigration Departments and Heads of Consular Affairs Divisions of Ministries of Foreign Affairs (17th DGICM) was held on 29-30 August 2013. H.E Lieut. Gen. To Lam, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Public Security and H.E Nguyen Thanh Son, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the S.R of Viet Nam attended the opening ceremony. H.E Lieut. Gen. To Lam delivered the opening speech and emphasized the important role of the ASEAN Immigration and Consular agencies and the close cooperation among them to facilitate the movement of people, at the same time, effectively combating people smuggling, irregular migration and transnational crimes.
2. The Meeting was chaired by H.E Major General Le Thanh Dzung, Director-General, Immigration Department, Ministry of Public Security, Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and was attended by the Directors-General of Immigration and Heads of Consular Affairs Divisions of Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the ASEAN Member States, and the representatives from the ASEAN Secretariat.
3. The Meeting held candid and fruitful discussions. Information on the progress in immigration control, the development in infrastructure and technology, capacity building programme for immigration personnel was shared.
4. The Meeting reaffirmed that the role of immigration is eminent in effectively mitigating the indelible impact of globalization and responding to the threats of transnational crime. The presence of robust national laws; effective operational procedures; capability development; and the leverage on of IT and the use of electronic passport (e-passport) with a polycarbonate base biodata page are instrumental in effective border control. In this regard, the Meeting commended the ongoing progress being achieved in immigration matters in individual Member States which demonstrates the commitment and the vigilance by the ASEAN Immigration authorities.
5. The Meeting welcomed Myanmar's update on the progress being made in signing bilateral agreements with other ASEAN Member States for visa exemption for ordinary passport holder. As the ASEAN Community is envisaged to be established in 2015, visa exemption for the ASEAN Nationals as espoused in the ASEAN Charter and the Community Blueprints should be a priority.
6. The Meeting took note of Viet Nam's proposal on Abolishing the Requirements of Consular Legalization for Foreign Public Documents among ASEAN Countries for further consideration by Member States.

7. The Meeting noted that as epitomized in the ASEAN Charter, facilitating intra-ASEAN travel, legal movement of people and tourism would amplify the regional development and community building progress.

8. The Meeting also welcomed the updates by Malaysia and Singapore on the establishment of ASEAN Lanes at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport and Changi International Airport respectively.

9. The 9th ASEAN Immigration Intelligence Forum (AIIF) was held in conjunction with the 17th DGICM. The AIIF accentuates bilateral and regional cooperation in the area of immigration, and discussed topics on the information sharing, fraud detection and effective response to irregular movement of people, migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons. The Meeting endorsed the Report of the 9th AIIF and encouraged enhanced regional collaboration in timely sharing of information and conducive immigration networking. In this regard, the ASEAN Member States appreciated the initiative by Viet Nam for the establishment of ASEAN Immigration Hotline.

10. The Meeting was held in the traditional spirit of ASEAN and the Meeting expressed gratitude to the warm hospital accorded by the Government and the People of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.
