



**Joint Media Statement of the Twelfth Meeting of ASEAN Tourism Ministers
(12th M-ATM)
Ha Noi, 8 January 2009**

1. The Twelfth Meeting of ASEAN Tourism Ministers (12th M-ATM) was convened on 8 January 2009 in Ha Noi in conjunction with the ASEAN Tourism Forum 2009 (ATF 2009). The Meeting was chaired by H.E. Mr. Tran Chien Thang, Vice Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism, Viet Nam and co-chaired by H.E. Pehin Dato Yahya, Minister of Industry and Primary Resources, Brunei Darussalam.
2. Despite of challenges posed by the global financial crisis in 2008 and political situations in some ASEAN Member States, the total international visitor arrivals 2008 in the region was still in positive growth with more than 58 million arrivals, 7 per cent higher than last year.
3. The Ministers, anticipating the global economic slowdown in 2009, agreed to focus on Intra-ASEAN travel. The Ministers tasked the ASEAN Tourism Officials to work closely with the private sector to work out a tactical program which offers cost effective tour packages for Intra-ASEAN travellers and other key markets of ASEAN. The Ministers reiterated their keen interest in promoting youth travel and shall be a key segment target for 2009-2010.

Tourism Integration towards the establishment of ASEAN Community 2015

4. The Ministers were pleased with the progress of the implementation of the Roadmap for Integration of Tourism Sector (RITS) 2004-2010 with more than 90 per cent of tourism specific measures have been completed. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to accelerate the integration process and, endorsed the initiative of the ASEAN NTOs to formulate the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2011-2015 as the successor of RITS to further integrating tourism sector towards the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in 2015 and to encourage joint tourism integration and promotion as well as travel facilitation and connectivity within ASEAN. As Thailand will be hosting the 14th ASEAN Summit in February 2009, the Ministers requested the Minister of Tourism and Sports of Thailand to convey these commitments to the ASEAN Leaders. The Ministers requested the senior officials to report the progress of this activity at the 13th M-ATM.
5. In further strengthening the competitiveness and integration of ASEAN tourism sector, the Ministers thanked US Government for the technical assistance in tourism provided through ASEAN Competitiveness Enhancement (ACE) Project and welcomed the signing of MOU between ACE and ASEANTA which signifies both parties intention to work together to develop a more effective marketing strategy. They requested all relevant tourism task forces/working groups to provide guidance and necessary assistance to ACE to ensure the success of this project.
6. The Ministers also welcomed the concrete collaboration between the ASEAN National Tourism Organisations (NTOs) and the Senior Transport Officials Meeting (STOM) in facilitating land and sea travels in the region. The Ministers noted the closer integration of land links through initiatives such as facilitation of cross border land travel by tourist buses and the development of common ASEAN tourism road signage. The Ministers also noted the establishment of regular consultations between the officials of cruise tourism and maritime transport working groups, as well as the involvement of Asia Cruise Association in the development of cruise industry in ASEAN.

7. They also welcomed the conclusion of the ASEAN Multilateral Agreement on Air Services that will create the competitive space for greater expansion and opportunities for air travel within the ASEAN region, in terms of more destinations, increased capacities and lower fares. In light of the focus on intra-travel within ASEAN for 2009 and 2010, the Ministers proposed to the Transport Ministers to expeditiously implement the Agreement and its protocols.

Human Resource in Tourism

8. The Ministers are unanimous in adopting a Mutual Recognition Arrangement that will increase the equality of tourism human resources and facilitate the mobility of professionals in tourism within the region. The Ministers tasked the ASEAN NTOs to prepare and establish the MRA follow-up requirements including the capacity development for members of related organisations under MRA at the regional and national level. They also agreed to develop learning resources and supporting materials to support the delivery of assessment and training in the workplace and educational institutions.

9. The Ministers took note of and were pleased with the success of the Training on Tourism Heritages held on 14 – 16 October 2008 in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, as well as the Training on Home Stay held on 2 – 6 November 2008 in Kampung Seri Tanjung, Melaka, Malaysia.

10. The Ministers welcomed the formation of Southeast Asia Tourist Guides Association (SEATGA) that would further enhance the capacity and competency, as well as promote and protect the interests of tourist guides in the region.

Youth Travellers' Year

11. The Ministers took note of and were pleased with the success of the ASEAN Plus Three Youth Festival held in Singapore, from 29 July – 3 August 2008 with the aim to encourage active youth participation in regional youth affairs and help youths appreciate the diverse cultures within the region. The Ministers appreciated Thailand, as chair of ASEAN, for the hosting of the forthcoming ASEAN Youth Tourism Ambassador Project to be held on 15-24 January 2009, ASEAN Family Rally to be held on 1-3 March 2009 and 8-10 March 2009 and ASEAN Youth Football to be held in June 2009. They also looked forward to the ASEAN Plus Three Tourism Student Summit to be held in Bali, Indonesia, in June 2009.

12. The Ministers were pleased to declare that 2009/10 as the Youth Travellers' Year within ASEAN. Building on the past youth related activities, ASEAN NTOs will work together with ASEANTA and ACE Project to develop a tactical Youth campaign under the Visit ASEAN Campaign. The Ministers tasked the Marketing Task Force to come up with a proposal for their consideration before the 14th ASEAN Summit.

Joint Promotion of ASEAN tourism

13. The Ministers were pleased to note the progress of ASEAN tourism joint promotion, especially on the activities of the ASEAN Tourism Promotional Chapter (APCT) in Sydney, Seoul and Shanghai in 2008 through production of promotional material and participation in international tourism events in their respective source markets.

14. The Ministers expressed appreciation to the Republic of Korea for the establishment of the ASEAN-Korea Centre in Seoul to further stimulate among other things, tourism between ASEAN Member States and ROK. The Ministers also thanked the ASEAN-Japan Centre for its support in promoting ASEAN tourism, particularly on promotion of Visit ASEAN Campaign activities in Japan, training program for ASEAN travel trade conducted in 2008, and production of promotional material.

15. The Ministers welcomed the outcome of the ASEAN-India Workshop on the Development of Buddhist Pilgrimage Tourism convened on 24-28 August 2008 in Yangon, Bagan and Mandalay, Myanmar, and thanked the Government of India for her technical support in making the event a great success.

16. The Ministers applauded the success of the holding of the Third ASEAN Tourism Investment Forum (ATIF) on 6-9 July 2008 in Manila and agreed with the recommendation of the ASEAN NTOs on the need to continue the convening of this event in 2010 to promote the establishment of the ASEAN Tourism Investment Corridor Development.

Quality Tourism

17. The Ministers appreciated the effort of NTOs in upgrading tourism standards and awarding those in tourism industries that have met the criteria and requirements of the ASEAN Tourism Standards.

18. The Ministers were pleased with outcome of the Train-the-Trainer in Crisis Communications workshop held on 18-19 June 2008 in Bangkok and encouraged all ASEAN Member States to conduct similar training at the national level to enhance awareness about the importance of intra-ASEAN communication & ACCT's role in relaying information on the region in times of crises.

ASEAN Tourism Forum 2009

19. The Ministers were pleased that the ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF) held in Ha Noi from 5 to 12 January 2009 with the theme: "ASEAN Tourism – Striving for a New Height" attended by more than 466 foreign tourism companies as buyers and more than 590 sellers in ASEAN. The Ministers welcomed the continued partnership with CNN International as the "Official International Cable and Satellite Media Partner" for ATF 2009.

20. The ATF 2010 will be convened in Bandar Seri Begawan from 21 to 28 January 2010 under the theme "ASEAN, The Heart of Green; 10 Destinations, One Conservation Vision", and ATF 2011 will be convened in Cambodia.

21. The Ministers expressed their sincere appreciation to the Government and People of Viet Nam for the warm hospitality accorded to the delegations and the excellent arrangements made for the Meeting.

LIST OF MINISTERS

The Meeting was attended by:

- (i) H.E. Pehin Dato Yahya, Minister of Industry and Primary Resources, Brunei Darussalam;
 - (ii) H.E. Dr. Thong Khon, Minister of Tourism, Cambodia;
 - (iii) H.E. Mr. Jero Wacik, Minister of Culture and Tourism, Indonesia;
 - (iv) H.E. Mr. Somphong Mongkhonvilay, Minister, Chairman of Lao National Tourism Administration, Lao PDR;
 - (v) H.E. Dato' Sri Azalina Dato' Othman Said, Minister of Tourism, Malaysia;
 - (vi) H.E. Brig. Gen. Aye Myint Kyu, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, Myanmar;
 - (vii) H.E. Mr. Oscar P. Palabyab, Undersecretary of Tourism, Philippines;
 - (viii) H.E. Mr. S. Iswaran, Senior Minister of State for Trade and Industry, Singapore;
 - (ix) H.E. Mr. Chumpol Silapa-archa, Minister of Tourism and Sports, Thailand;
 - (x) H.E. Mr. Tran Chien Thang, Vice Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism, Viet Nam; and
 - (xi) H.E. Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, Secretary-General of ASEAN
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