

2020 ASEAN DECLARATION ON DIGITAL TOURISM

Adopted on 12 November 2020

WE, the Heads of State/Government of the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), namely Brunei Darussalam, the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Republic of Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the Republic of the Philippines, the Republic of Singapore, the Kingdom of Thailand, and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, on the occasion of the 37th ASEAN Summit;

REAFFIRMING the importance of strengthening intra-ASEAN cooperation to maintain the dynamic development and economic prosperity of the ASEAN Member States;

ORIENTED by the principles set out in the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Blueprint 2025 on the building of a competitive, innovative, and dynamic community with enhanced connectivity and sectoral cooperation, and the vision for tourism in the AEC Blueprint 2025 for ASEAN to be a quality destination offering a unique, diverse ASEAN experience, which is committed to responsible, sustainable and inclusive tourism development;

ACKNOWLEDGING the strategic importance of the tourism industry in sustaining the socio-economic growth of ASEAN Member States, which would contribute to regional cultural exchanges, poverty reduction, improved quality of life, and peace and prosperity;

RECALLING the objectives of the ASEAN Tourism Agreement signed on 4 November 2002 in Phnom Penh, among others, to strengthen cooperation in the tourism industry among ASEAN Member States, enhance the development and promotion of ASEAN as a single tourism destination with world-class standards, facilities and attractions, and create favourable conditions for the public and private sectors for tourism development;

INSPIRED by the 35th ASEAN Summit in Bangkok where we adopted the ASEAN Declaration on Industrial Transformation to Industry 4.0 which reaffirmed the importance of preparing for the future by utilising advanced technologies to develop ASEAN industries, and expressed the desire to create a prosperous and equitable ASEAN community by embracing innovation and digital technologies in the Fourth Industrial Revolution;

RECALLING the ASEAN Tourism Ministers' support during the 23rd Meeting of ASEAN Tourism Ministers on 15 January 2020 in Bandar Seri Begawan of the inclusion of digital tourism as a key activity to be implemented to enhance the tourist experience in accessing information and services;

FURTHER RECALLING the Joint Statement of the ASEAN Tourism Ministers on Strengthening Cooperation to Revitalise ASEAN Tourism on 29 April 2020, which committed to, among others, exploring creative and innovative solutions to stimulate the tourism sector, including the use of digital technologies, to support the development and implementation of a post-COVID-19 Crisis Recovery Plan;

AFFIRMING that digital technology is the new driving force for global economic growth and that it can transform the tourism sector by making travellers' journeys more seamless and memorable;

EMPHASISING the need to apply digital technology and innovation to tourism development to enhance competitiveness, facilitate growth, and develop sustainable tourism, as well as to provide opportunities and develop capabilities in the tourism sector;

ENCOURAGING the development of a dynamic, competitive, creative, and synchronised ASEAN tourism industry, through digital transformation, to accelerate economic growth and social advancement;

DO HEREBY ENDEAVOUR TO:

1. **PROMOTE** greater cooperation among ASEAN Member States to identify tourism opportunities and gaps in the digital transformation journey, and to consolidate existing ASEAN tourism cooperation mechanisms to encourage technological innovation such as the development of new digital platforms, digital database systems and digital value chain connections;
2. **CREATE** favourable conditions to facilitate the development of tourism policies and infrastructure to reduce barriers to entry and encourage the adoption of digital technology and innovation among tourism businesses and communities such as Start-ups, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), and tourism institutions, as well as to enhance public-private partnerships through collaborating with like-minded partners, stakeholders, and international and regional organisations, to conduct and implement cooperation programmes;
3. **ENHANCE** capacity building and develop human resource development programmes with a focus on up-skilling and re-skilling the tourism workforce comprehensively and synchronously in digital technologies and innovations, in order to equip the labour market with appropriate competencies and to provide equal opportunities for all to benefit from the technology uptake;
4. **ENCOURAGE** the research, development, and application of advanced technologies and innovations in tourism through cooperation in areas such as innovative technologies, tourism investment, joint applied research, development and deployment projects, and through the sharing of policies and best practices among ASEAN Member States and external partners;
5. **ATTRACT** investments to implement digital technology in areas such as product development, tourism promotion, tourism safety and security, and quality destination experiences to improve the overall user experience and benefit the tourism workforce, businesses, and communities; and
6. **ENCOURAGE** the use of digital solutions to promote safe and seamless travel experiences in Southeast Asia both during and after the current COVID-19 pandemic and ease travel facilitation at entry/exit points, such as through moving to contactless immigration processes and payment modes and implementing interoperable mobile contact tracing applications during periods of crisis.

ADOPTED at the Summit, this Twelfth day of November in the Year Two Thousand and Twenty, in a single original copy, in the English language.