

2021 EAST ASIA SUMMIT LEADERS' STATEMENT ON ECONOMIC GROWTH THROUGH TOURISM RECOVERY

Adopted on 27 October 2021

WE, the participating countries of the East Asia Summit met via videoconferencing on 27 October 2021, under Brunei Darussalam's 2021 ASEAN Chairmanship on the occasion of the 16th East Asia Summit (EAS);

RECOGNISING the severe damage caused by Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic to the global tourism sector and acknowledging the efforts made by the governments of respective countries to rebuild tourism-related industries and to overcome the crisis;

EMPHASISING that a global and regional response based on international cooperation, multilateralism and solidarity is required to mitigate the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and further emphasising the fair, equitable, and timely access to affordable, safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines, on a global scale, plays a very important role for tourism recovery;

STRESSING the crucial role of tourism for socio-economic development, poverty alleviation, employment generation and its capability to accelerate the recovery of the regional and global economies;

STRONGLY SUPPORTING the human resources development and digitalisation of tourism and tourism-related businesses;

UNDERSCORING the value of facilitating safe trips to existing and new tourism destinations, while adhering to health protocols and safety measures of respective countries to reduce risks of public health emergencies and bring back confidence in the tourism-related industries;

EMPHASISING the importance of closer collaboration and coordination, as appropriate, between government and industry including through joint responses and initiatives to rebuild the tourism-related industries, and increase tourism investment opportunities in the region;

RECALLING the Manila Plan of Action to Advance the Phnom Penh Declaration on the EAS Development Initiative (2018-2022), Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025, ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2016-2025, Phnom Penh Declaration on a More Sustainable, Inclusive and Resilient ASEAN Tourism, ASEAN Post-Pandemic Tourism Recovery Plan, and the 2020 ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF) and its Implementation Plan;

DO HEREBY DECIDE TO:

1. **Discuss** the current situation in the region related to tourism, especially on the measures taken by countries to accelerate recovery and the steps taken to reopen tourism destinations while adhering to health protocols and safety measures;
2. **Exchange** experiences and information on travel restrictions and health and safety standards for tourism destinations, to boost trust and confidence of travellers, to build resilience at all levels of the tourism value chain, and to foster quality and sustainable tourism;

3. **Encourage** EAS participating countries to consider reviewing their respective border health measures, implemented as a result of COVID-19, for vaccinated travellers giving due consideration to fairness, equity, science and non-discrimination with the aim to facilitate cross-border travel in a safe and gradual manner;
4. **Promote** sustainable tourism, including but not limited to ecotourism and community-based tourism, as a tool to foster sustained and inclusive economic growth, social development, biodiversity conservation and financial inclusion;
5. **Explore** the possibilities of joint actions to facilitate the recovery of the tourism-related industries, including the safe opening of new and existing destinations, improving infrastructure, advancing digital transformation of tourism, and developing innovative tourism and tourism-related products including cultural tourism;
6. **Further** explore the possibilities to discuss the gradual restoration of safe intraregional and international travel and the use and recognition of interoperable health certificate solutions, including digital, for COVID-19 tests and vaccinations, which respect health protocols and safety measures of respective countries;
7. **Explore** capacity building programme to raise human capital in the tourism and travel-related industries to drive competitiveness especially through sharing of best practices and training programmes in designing, and utilising innovations and digital tourism services for the safe and frictionless interaction and transactions, assisting tourists in emergency situations as well as enhancing digital skills through reskilling and upskilling;
8. **Promote** the development of support programmes for tourism-related Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) that can attract potential investors, and foster job creation in the tourism-related industries for local communities;
9. **Enhance** policy coordination through the implementation, where applicable, of the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework, the ASEAN Post-Pandemic Tourism Recovery Plan, as well as the joint recommendations by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) and the World Health Organisation (WHO); and
10. **Explore** the possibility of holding dialogue on tourism among relevant agencies of the EAS participating countries.

ADOPTED on the Twenty Seventh of October in the Year Two Thousand and Twenty-One.