

2025 ASEAN-INDIA JOINT LEADERS' STATEMENT ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Adopted in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 26 October 2025

We, the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Republic of India, gathered on the occasion of the 22nd ASEAN-India Summit on 26 October 2025 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia;

REAFFIRMING our commitment to promote the ASEAN-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, guided by the fundamental principles, shared values and norms that have steered the ASEAN-India Dialogue Relations since its establishment in 1992, including those enunciated in the Vision Statement of ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit (2012), the Delhi Declaration of the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit to mark the 25th Anniversary of ASEAN-India Dialogue Relations (2018), the ASEAN-India Joint Statement on Cooperation on the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific for Peace, Stability, and Prosperity in the Region (2021), and the Joint Statement on ASEAN-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (2022);

RECOGNISING the vital contribution of the tourism sector to economic growth, including its role in job creation, infrastructure development, and fostering cross-cultural understanding, social development, and cultural exchange in the region, while acknowledging the need for continuous improvement in service quality, safety, and visitor satisfaction to maintain ASEAN's attractiveness as a premier tourism destination;

ACKNOWLEDGING the deep civilizational linkages and cross-cultural exchanges that provide a strong foundation for the ASEAN-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership;

RECOGNISING that tourism is an effective way to enhance people-to-people contacts between ASEAN and India;

WELCOMING growing bilateral tourism and connectivity between ASEAN and India;

WELCOMING the series of activities conducted under the ASEAN-India framework to celebrate the year 2025 as the ASEAN-India Year of Tourism;

NOTING that tourism has become one of the important drivers for economic growth for both ASEAN and India and is one of the biggest indirect drivers having multiple-effect of trade, investment, infrastructure development and job creation for local communities;

BUILDING on the successful implementation of the ASEAN-India Memorandum of Understanding on Strengthening Tourism Cooperation signed in 2012;

NOTING that tourism has been included as targets in Goals 8, 12 and 14 in the UN Sustainable Development Goals and that tourism has the potential to contribute, directly or indirectly, to other sustainable development goals;

NOTING ASEAN Framework on Sustainable Tourism Development in the Post Covid19 Era and the strategies under the ASEAN's Action Roadmap for Sustainable Tourism Development endorsed in 2023 and 2024 respectively and India's National Strategy for Sustainable Tourism adopted in 2022;

NOTING that over tourism may have a negative impact on the natural environment and on the wellbeing and culture of host populations, resources, notably land and water;

DO HEREBY DECLARE TO:

1. **PROMOTE** sustainable tourism guided by green, blue and circular economy principles that are pro planet and nature-positive and addresses local communities and eco-system needs, while ensuring a high-quality tourist experience and industry growth. Support the conservation of cultural heritage, promote resource efficiency, bio-diversity protection, and share best practices for inclusive and resilient tourism development and ASEAN tourism standard;
2. **FOLLOW** the principles of including (i) Environmental Sustainability; (ii) Sociocultural Sustainability; and (iii) Economic Sustainability; and achieve these objectives through (i) sharing of information; (ii) capacity building; and (iii) building institutional linkages between ASEAN and India;

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

3. **ADOPT** environmental sustainability as one of the important objectives as laid down inter alia in UN Tourism, which could be achieved through the adaptation of model of Reduce, Reuse and Recycle, sustainable pro-planet, pro-community practices, including the optimal use of resources such as land, water and decarbonisation efforts, by following Travel for LiFE actions, minimising over-crowding, over utilisation of natural resources and, adopting biodiversity-friendly practices, sourcing supplies sustainably, minimising unnecessary packaging, recycling tourism supplies, ensuring the non-use of plastics and enhancing destination management protocols to ensure better environmental stewardship and long-term sustainability;

MINIMISE POLLUTION

4. **ADHERE** to the norms and standards to reduce air, water and land pollution by changing the consumption patterns of tourists and the related industry; enforcing prevailing regulations in respective countries; promoting Travel for LiFE protocol; Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) Protocols adherence and applying the principles of reduce, reuse and recycle for waste products to proactively promote the application of Resilient and Replicable practices in renewable energy in touristic sites to enhance carbon sink initiatives; deploy means of renewable energy wherever possible; encourage the ASEAN Center for Energy and The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) of India to proactively promote the application of renewable energy in touristic sites hosting monuments which are pollution sensitive;
5. **SHARE** information on investment opportunities and encourage mutual investment in low-carbon and resource-efficient infrastructure such as low-carbon transportation, renewable energy for hotels, resorts tourism businesses, and tourist attractions such as through using local materials, traditional wisdom and practices of local communities;
6. **PROTECT** biological diversity by developing new sustainable tourism products and experiences while ensuring responsible business and safe travel. Involve the ASEAN's Center for Biodiversity and India's Ministry of Environment and Forest wherever required to develop ideas and projects to address this issue;

7. **ENCOURAGE** women, youths and local communities to support tourism while maintaining the environmental landscape, local cultural sanctity and sustainability by bringing tourism and conservation communities together;

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

8. **PROMOTE** viable, sustainable economic operations, and providing socioeconomic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed including stable employment and income-earning opportunities;
9. **ENCOURAGE** ecotourism by balancing the needs of tourists and local communities to avoid over-exploitation and over-crowding while encouraging women, youth and local communities to be part of the process;
10. **MAXIMISE** the contribution of tourism benefits to the economic prosperity of local communities which includes youth, women, and tourism providers by involving them in tourism promotion; offering training to build their capacities; ensuring greater ownership of tourism initiatives and promoting sustainable practices and encouraging tourism investment and private sector engagement in tourism to promote sustainable tourism;
11. **SUPPORT** data driven tourism development by using digital technologies, improving digital infrastructure of touristic sites, leverage technologies to enhance visitors' experience, encourage data collection to analyze tourist flows and to exchange best practices;

SOCIO-CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY

12. **CONSERVE** historic and cultural heritage features and **PROMOTE** the inclusion of sites on the World Heritage Convention list;
13. **INVOLVE** local communities in promoting local heritage and culture by integrating fashion, handicraft, and gastronomy tourism to improve the quality of life of local communities. Promote capacity building and enhance competitiveness through the tourism certification and standards. Tourism to be promoted in a way that enhances the quality of life for local communities while minimising any negative impact;
14. **SHARE** best practices, case studies on capacity building and disseminate best practices for replication and scalability in Sustainable Tourism Development;
15. **ORIENT** existing collaborations such as the ASEAN-India Network of Museums Monuments, Craft, Textile, Gastronomy, and the development of ASEAN Cultural Heritage List towards sustainable tourism; and
16. **UTILISE** the existing collaborations mechanism of ASEAN and India Tourism Working Group and Tourism Ministers' Meeting to promote Sustainable Tourism in the region.