

**THE 23rd MEETING OF ASEAN TOURISM MINISTERS PLUS THREE
(23rd M-ATM Plus Three)
26 January 2024, Vientiane, Lao PDR**

JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT

1. The 23rd Meeting of ASEAN Tourism Ministers Plus Three (23rd M-ATM Plus Three) was held on 26 January 2024. H.E. Suanesavanh Vignaket, Minister of Information, Culture and Tourism, Lao PDR, chaired the Meeting and Mr. Wang Chang, Charge d'affaires of the Chinese Embassy in Lao PDR, as Co-Chairs. The 23rd M-ATM Plus Three was preceded by the 44th Meeting of the ASEAN Plus Three National Tourism Organisations (NTOs) on 23 January 2024.
2. The Meeting noted that based on the preliminary figures in 2023, ASEAN Plus Three countries attracted over 147 million visitors. The Meeting expressed its optimism that the tourism sector would continue to recover as demand for travel continues to grow.
3. The Meeting exchanged views and information on the progress of their respective tourism sector in the past year. The Meeting noted that 24 activities or 61.5% of the ASEAN Plus Three (APT) Tourism Cooperation Work Plan 2021-2025 have been implemented. The Meeting expressed appreciation to the Lead Country Coordinators for their continued contribution in implementing the Work Plan and further encouraged the APT NTOs to enhance activities on human resource development, sustainable tourism development, marketing, and transforming the tourism sector by using digital technology. The Meeting noted that a new APT Tourism Cooperation Work Plan post-2025 would be developed for endorsement at the 25th M-ATM Plus Three in 2026, and tasked the APT NTOs to review the implementation of the APT Tourism Cooperation Work Plan 2021-2025 and identify the post-2025 priorities in line with the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan (ATSP) post-2025.
4. The Meeting emphasised the importance of upskilling and reskilling the tourism workforce and equipping them with valuable tools, including digital technology to enable them to adapt to the new ways of doing business in the tourism sector. Thereby, the Meeting expressed appreciation to the Plus Three countries for their continued commitment in advancing the skills and knowledge of ASEAN Tourism Professionals through various training programmes and activities. The Meeting also congratulated the implementation of the ASEAN Plus Three Tourism Training and Education Network (APTTTEN) Forum 2023, back-to-back with the 4th International Conference on ASEAN MRA-TP which was held on 8-9 May 2023 in Bandung, Indonesia.
5. The Meeting expressed appreciation to China for its support in ASEAN-China tourism cooperation activities. The Meeting noted that in 2023, China convened three activities, namely the China-ASEAN Expo Tourism Exhibition, China International Travel Mart, and China-ASEAN Tourism Personnel Training Programmes. The Meeting was pleased to note the launch of the Southeast Asia Tourism Website for the Chinese market, an initiative under the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025, available at <https://www.visitsoutheastasia.cn>. The website serves as a dedicated platform aimed at attracting potential Chinese visitors by providing comprehensive and up-to-date information on the diverse tourism options available in ASEAN countries with the ultimate objective is to

increase tourism flows, boost economic growth, enhance people-to-people connectivity, and foster mutual understanding between ASEAN and China through the power of tourism. The Meeting looked forward to further cooperation between ASEAN and China, particularly on tourism promotion by leveraging the newly-launched Southeast Asia Tourism Website for the Chinese market.

6. The Meeting expressed appreciation to Japan for holding the ASEAN-Japan Tourism Ministers' Special Dialogue in October 2023 and its support in tourism cooperation activities between ASEAN Member States and Japan. The Meeting also encouraged ASEAN and Japan to enhance further cooperation in the tourism sector and implement initiatives to promote sustainable tourism including sharing best practices, and advance mutual exchange, based on the Joint Media Statement adopted at the Special Dialogue.

7. The Meeting expressed appreciation to the Republic of Korea (ROK) for its continued support in ASEAN-ROK tourism cooperation activities through the Korea Partnership Initiative for Sustainable Tourism (KOPIST) Programme including the High-Level Policy Forum and Working Level Workshop held in April 2023. In addition, the Meeting extended gratitude to ROK for further strengthening regional tourism cooperation through the 17th UNWTO Asia-Pacific Executive Training Programme on Tourism Policy and Strategy in November 2023. The Meeting encouraged ASEAN and the ROK to discuss ways to enhance cooperation with a focus on activities to support sustainable tourism.

8. The Meeting also expressed appreciation to the ASEAN-China Centre (ACC), ASEAN-Japan Centre (AJC) and ASEAN-Korea Centre (AKC) for their continued support in strengthening people-to-people connectivity and cultural understanding through various activities and projects. The Meeting encouraged the Centres to continue supporting the APT NTOs by contributing to the implementation of the APT Tourism Cooperation Work Plan, awareness campaigns and marketing efforts to increase the competitiveness and sustainability of the tourism sector. The Meeting expressed expectation to the ASEAN-Japan Centre (AJC) for its implementation of the follow-up initiatives of ASEAN-Japan Tourism Ministers' Special Dialogue.
