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MINISTERIAL UNDERSTANDING ON ASEAN COOPERATION IN TOURISM

WE the undersigned, attending the Meeting of ASEAN Tourism Ministers (M-ATM) held in Mactan, Cebu, Philippines on 10 January 1998;

RECALLING the :

1. Declaration of ASEAN Concord signed in Bali, Indonesia on 24 February 1976, which stated that Member States shall take cooperative action in their national and regional development programmes, to broaden the complementarity of their respective economies;

2. Manila Declaration of 1987 signed on 15 December 1987, which expressed that ASEAN shall encourage intra-ASEAN travel and develop a viable and competitive tourist industry;

3. Singapore Declaration of 1992 signed on 28 January 1992, which expressed that ASEAN shall continue with its concerted efforts in the promotion of tourism;

4. Framework Agreement on Enhancing ASEAN Economic Cooperation signed on 28 January 1992 provided that Member States agree to increase cooperation in tourism promotion; and

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5. The Bangkok Summit Declaration of 1995 signed on 15 December 1995 which stated among others that:

   (a) ASEAN shall focus on promoting sustainable tourism development, preservation of cultural and environmental resources, the provision of transportation and other infrastructure, simplification of immigration procedures and human resource development;

   (b) ASEAN shall continue to support sub-regional arrangements;

   (c) ASEAN shall move towards enhancing cooperation and freer trade in services to include tourism, through the implementation of the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services; and

   (d) ASEAN Sectoral Ministers as well as Senior Officials shall meet regularly to embark on new initiatives to strengthen economic cooperation. ASEAN Economic Ministers and the Senior Economic Officials Meeting shall continue to be the coordinating bodies for all economic activities.

REITERATING our commitment to the foregoing directives provided for in the said documents, for increased cooperation in tourism and initiation of new areas of cooperation, among others;

RECOGNIZING the strategic role of the tourism sector in the further economic growth of the Member States of ASEAN and the region in particular, and in advancing the rich social, cultural and historical heritage and image of ASEAN, in general; and

REAFFIRMING that meaningful ASEAN cooperation can be best achieved through the strengthening of the existing national linkages in the tourism sector in both the public and private sectors of the Member States of ASEAN and that Member States must incorporate and promote regional common needs oriented programmes into ongoing national programmes;

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DO HEREBY AGREE THAT:

Article 1
OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this Ministerial Understanding on ASEAN Cooperation in Tourism are:

(a) To develop and promote ASEAN as a single and collective tourism destination with world class standards, facilities and attractions;

(b) To enhance cooperation in the tourism sector among Member States, involving both public and private sectors, in order to achieve facilitation of intra-ASEAN travel and free trade and investment in tourism services;

(c) To provide a common forum for discussion of major issues and developments in travel and tourism; and

(d) To provide a mechanism to coordinate and supervise cooperation projects and activities for the tourism sector in ASEAN.

Article 2
AREAS OF COOPERATION

1. In general, ASEAN cooperation in tourism shall entail policy cooperation and coordination in areas such as investment policy, tourism development planning, human resources, environmental and cultural preservation, etc., to achieve continued and long-term viability of the ASEAN tourism industry. The resources of both the public and private sectors shall also be efficiently utilized in functional or operational areas like marketing, research and training programmes, for the benefit of ASEAN tourism as a whole.

2. More specifically, cooperation shall focus on the following:

   (a) Exchange of information and experience;

   (b) Coordination and/or harmonization of tourism policies and programmes;

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(c) Enhancement of cooperation in the areas of marketing, training, research and information dissemination;

(d) Facilitation of intra-ASEAN travel;

(e) Promotion of tourism incentives to facilitate the development of tourism infrastructure and other related travel and tourism facilities;

(f) Promotion of private sector participation and enhancing public-private sector collaboration;

(g) Closer cooperation with ASEAN Dialogue Partners and other emerging markets to promote tourism to ASEAN; and

(h) Strengthening cooperation and joint approaches in addressing international and regional tourism issues in areas of common interest.

3. Member States, through the ASEAN NTOs, shall collectively develop work programme or plan for the above areas of cooperation, for consideration and approval by the M-ATM. Participation of the private sector shall be encouraged in the development and implementation of the work programmes on ASEAN cooperation in tourism.

Article 3
ORGANIZATION AND COORDINATION

1. The Chairmanship of the Meeting of ASEAN Tourism Ministers (M-ATM) and the Meeting of ASEAN National Tourism Organizations (ASEAN NTOs) shall be rotated annually. The M-ATM shall be preceded by the Meeting of ASEAN NTOs.

2. The M-ATM shall meet annually to discuss issues and developments of common interest and to set policy directions in the tourism sector. In particular, the M-ATM shall consider, review and approve the policies and work programmes/plans as may be endorsed by the ASEAN NTOs.

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3. The ASEAN NTOs shall meet at least twice a year. The ASEAN NTOs shall be the operating arm of M-ATM in the supervision, coordination, and review of programmes and policy directions set by the ASEAN Tourism Ministers. The ASEAN NTOs shall:

(a) Develop, coordinate and implement work programmes/plans to enhance cooperation in tourism, including the approval of the necessary cooperation programmes, projects and activities;

(b) Provide a mechanism to promote participation from the private or business sector and non-governmental organizations; and

(c) As and when necessary, establish working groups with clear terms of reference and specific time frames, to assist in the development and implementation of its policies and work programmes/plans. Experts from regional and international organizations in the tourism sector may also be invited for the purpose.

4. The implementation of the approved work programmes or plans shall be carried out by Member States, through designated national focal points.

5 The ASEAN Secretariat shall be the focal point to assist the ASEAN NTOs in carrying out its functions including technical support in the supervision, coordination and review of cooperation programmes and activities. The ASEAN Secretariat shall also coordinate and monitor all approved projects and activities under the work programmes/plans with the relevant ASEAN coordinating bodies and concerned focal points and/or agencies of the Member States.

6. Recognizing that the ASEAN Economic Ministers (AEM) and the Senior Economic Officials Meetings (SEOM) are the main coordinators of all ASEAN economic cooperation activities, M-ATM and ASEAN NTOs shall coordinate their activities with the AEM and SEOM respectively through the Secretary-General of ASEAN.

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Article 4
Final Provisions

1. This Ministerial Understanding shall enter into force on the date of signature.

2. This Ministerial Understanding may be amended or modified by mutual agreement of the Member States.

3. This Ministerial Understanding shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of ASEAN who shall promptly furnish a certified copy thereof to each Member State.

DONE at ***Mactan, Cebu, Philippines,*** this ***10th day of January 1998,*** in a single copy in the English language.

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PEHIN DATO ABDUL RAHMAN TAIB
Minister of Industry and Primary Resources
Brunei Darussalam

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JOOP AVE
Minister of Tourism, Post and Telecommunications
Republic of Indonesia

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KHAMSAY SOUPHANOUVONG
Minister to the Prime Minister's Office
Lao People's Democratic Republic

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DATO' SABBARUDDIN CHIK
Minister of Culture, Arts and Tourism
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MAJ. GEN. SAW LWIN
Minister of Hotels and Tourism
Union of Myanmar

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MINA T. GABOR
Secretary of Tourism
Republic of the Philippines

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BG (NS) GEORGE YONG-BOON YEO
Minister for Information and the Arts
and Second Minister for Trade and Industry
Republic of Singapore

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JURIN LAKSANAWISIT
Minister to the Prime Minister's Office
Kingdom of Thailand

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VO THI THANG
Chairperson of Vietnam National Administration of Tourism
Socialist Republic of Vietnam

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