

THE 21st MEETING OF ASEAN PLUS THREE (CHINA, JAPAN AND REPUBLIC OF KOREA) TOURISM MINISTERS

19 January 2022

JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT

1. The 21st Meeting of the ASEAN Plus Three (ASEAN, China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea) Tourism Ministers was held on 19 January 2022 in Sihanoukville, Kingdom of Cambodia. The Meeting was co-chaired by Cambodia and the Republic of Korea. The Meeting was preceded by the Preparatory Meeting for the 21st ASEAN Plus Three Tourism Ministers Meeting on 17 January 2022.
2. The Meeting noted that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic to international travel to the ASEAN Plus Three (APT) region continued in 2021. Based on the preliminary figures of 2021, international visitors to the APT region had further declined by 39.38 per cent¹ compared to that in 2020 as borders continued to be closed for travel. Tourism receipts had also seen a decline by 81.91 per cent² compared to the same period in 2020.
3. The Meeting exchanged information and views on mitigation measures undertaken by the APT members and discussed ways to prepare the region for the reopening of the tourism sector. The Meeting welcomed the endorsement of the Post-COVID-19 Recovery Plan for ASEAN Tourism in September 2021. The Meeting noted that key strategic actions have been incorporated into the APT Tourism Cooperation Work Plan 2021-2025 to further strengthen the cooperation among the APT countries in recovery efforts. In this regard, the Meeting tasked APT NTOs to actively explore ways to forge closer collaboration with stakeholders such as the private sector and the ASEAN Centres in China, Japan and the Republic of Korea to ensure the successful implementation of tourism recovery activities.
4. Despite the challenges in 2021, the Meeting noted that the APT NTOs continued to implement the APT Work Plan 2021 -2025. The Meeting expressed appreciation to the lead countries for their active roles in moving forward the cooperation projects and activities, including the convening of the ASEAN Plus Three Tourism Training and Education Network (APTTTEN) Forum 21 on 23-24 November 2021 and the launching of the APTTTEN Directory website.
5. The Meeting welcomed the endorsement of the ASEAN Guidelines for Hygiene and Safety for Professionals and the Communities in the Tourism Industry and the launching of a safe travel stamp to increase the trust and confidence of international travellers to Southeast Asia when travel gradually resumes.
6. Under the ASEAN-China tourism cooperation, the Meeting applauded China for the convening of the Month of ASEAN Culture and Tourism from 11 April to 10 May 2021 in Beijing, China, ASEAN-China Culture and Tourism Exhibition on 4-21 June 2021 in Beijing, China, and 2021 ASEAN-China Culture and Tourism Week on 26-31 December 2021 in Changsha, China. Additionally, ASEAN and China are working to implement a project under Initiative 12 of Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025 to Enhance ASEAN Tourism Digital Platforms to better promote Southeast Asia as a single tourism destination to the Chinese market.

¹ Based on available data from 12 countries

² Based on available data from 11 countries

7. The Meeting commended the webinars organised in June and July 2021 which shared Japanese sentiments on traveling to ASEAN, and webinar series in September and October 2021, to update the Japanese travel industry on the current safe travel measures to each ASEAN Member States. The Meeting expressed appreciation for Japan's support to promote ASEAN tourism destinations via the new ASEAN travel website (<https://travel.asean.or.jp/>) and the provision of the training programme on non-personal interpretation utilising the digital tools for the ASEAN tourist guides, site managers and officials in December 2021.

8. The Meeting noted with appreciation, the Republic of Korea's continued support and active participation in the ASEAN-ROK tourism cooperation activities, including ASEAN Tourism Promotional Pavilion on 24-27 June 2021 in Seoul, ROK, Seminar on ASEAN-Korea Tourism 2021 on 10 September 2021, ASEAN Week 2021 on 5-6 October 2021, 'Korea Love Box' delivery to frontline healthcare workers in Viet Nam on 12 October 2021, and ASEAN-Korea Tourism Capacity-building Workshop for Cambodia and Lao PDR on 29 November 2021 in Seoul, ROK.

9. The Meeting commended the vital roles played by the ASEAN-China Centre, ASEAN-Japan Centre and ASEAN-Korea Centre in promoting tourism, people-to-people and cultural exchanges between ASEAN and the Plus Three countries throughout 2021. The Meeting also encouraged all the Centres to support the ASEAN NTOs in implementing projects and activities that complement the APT Tourism Work Plan 2021-2025 as well as activities that support the recovery efforts of the tourism sector.
