News Release

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Myanmar, Cambodia, Indonesia and the Philippines Agree to Work on ASEAN Common Smart Tourism

5 June 2013

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Language of Myanmar

- Ministers and tourism authorities from Myanmar, Cambodia, Indonesia and the Secretary of Tourism of the Philippines have today agreed to collaborate on a smart tourism system
- Letter of intent was signed in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, during the World Economic Forum on East Asia
- Over 900 participants from 55 countries are taking part in the meeting on 5-7 June
- For more information about the meeting, please visit http://wef.ch/ea13
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Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, 5 June 2013 – Ministers and tourism authorities of Myanmar, Cambodia, Indonesia and the Secretary of Tourism of the Philippines have expressed their intention to collaborate with relevant government agencies and other stakeholders to facilitate travel in the region by developing a common smart visa system, and have signed the "Statement of Intent on SMART Visa" today at the 22nd World Economic Forum on East Asia. The meeting is taking place in Nay Pyi Taw from 5 to 7 June.

"By signing this letter of intent, ministers and tourism authorities agree to work hand-in-hand for the implementation of this system, whose objective will be that of eliminating those barriers to the movement of tourists which are currently creating disincentives to travel. Such objectives will be achieved in close coordination with the governmental entities in each of their respective countries," said **U Htay Aung**, Union Minister of Hotels and Tourism of Myanmar. The statement of intent forms a part of joint efforts to improve growth of the national and regional travel and tourism sectors along with social integration.

More specifically, ministers of tourism have agreed to collaborate on working towards the ASEAN Common Visa initiative as called upon by leaders at the ASEAN Summit, which took place in Jakarta in November 2011. It also builds on the single visa scheme for tourism travel between Cambodia and Thailand, which was implemented on 1 January 2013. Progressive relaxation and an ASEAN common visa would also benefit non-ASEAN nationals who intend to visit the ASEAN countries.

According to **Mari Elka Pangestu**, Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy of Indonesia, "Considering that tourism is a priority sector under the ASEAN Economic Community and that it constitutes a significant contribution to the integration of ASEAN countries, it is important to be 'smart' about visa facilitation for travel." Given the experience of other countries and regions, it is expected that ASEAN countries will also experience the positive impact of implementing a smart visa on the growth of the tourism sector, increased investments in the travel and tourism industry, and job creation.

"By recognizing the importance of the connectivity in tourism activities, the statement of intent expresses our desire to give a boost to the tourism sector by facilitating the movement of tourists across borders; by going towards a smart visa through adopting best practices; and maximizing the use of technology to reduce the inefficiencies of the traditional visa application process," stated **Ramon R. Jimenez Jr**, Secretary of Tourism of the Philippines.

The statement of intent was signed during the World Economic Forum's Travel & Tourism High-Level meeting held

today under the theme “ Building Myanmar's Travel & Tourism Industry: Driving Growth and Job Creation ” . “ Facilitating travel to stimulate economic growth and job creation is one of the pillars of the summit, and is a core activity of the Forum ’ s Industry Partners and Members of the Global Agenda Council on New Models for Travel & Tourism, ” said Thea Chiesa, Director, World Economic Forum.

Over 900 participants from 55 countries are taking part in the World Economic Forum on East Asia, which is being held for the first time in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar. The meeting welcomes over 100 public figures representing 15 countries, including heads of state or government of Laos, Myanmar, the Philippines and Vietnam. More than 550 business leaders, over 60 Global Growth Companies and nearly 300 young leaders from Young Global Leaders and Global Shapers communities, together with other members of civil society, academia and media are convening to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing Myanmar and East Asia today.

Sky Net is the host broadcaster of the 2013 World Economic Forum on East Asia.

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