

**OPENING REMARKS BY
HIS EXCELLENCY DATO SERI SETIA AWANG HAJI ALI BIN APONG
MINISTER OF PRIMARY RESOURCES AND TOURISM**

AS

**CHAIRMAN OF THE TWENTY – THIRD ASEAN TOURISM MINISTERS
MEETING**

(The 23rd M – ATM)

15 January 2020

**INDERA KAYANGAN BALLROOM, THE EMPIRE HOTEL, JERUDONG
BRUNEI DARUSSALAM**

Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam

Your Excellencies, ASEAN Tourism Ministers

Vice-Chair, Your Excellency, Dr Thong Khon, Minister of Tourism, Kingdom of Cambodia,

Your Excellency, Dr Aladdin D.Rillo , ASEAN Deputy Secretary – General for ASEAN Economic Community,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. First and foremost, on behalf of the Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism and the Government of Brunei Darussalam, I would like to extend our warmest welcome to Your Excellencies ASEAN Tourism Ministers, ASEAN Deputy Secretary – General for ASEAN Economic Community, Distinguished Heads of National Tourism Organisations (NTOs), Delegates of ASEAN Member States, as well as officials from the ASEAN Secretariat and other relevant organisations to the 23rd Meeting of the ASEAN Tourism Ministers, held here in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam.

2. Allow me to also take this opportunity to welcome Your Excellencies and Your delegations to Brunei Darussalam – the Abode of Peace. I sincerely hope all of you will have a pleasant stay and will be able to experience Brunei Darussalam despite your busy schedule.
3. I would like to commend our NTOs, senior officials, the Plus Three Centres, ASEAN Tourism Marketing Coordinator as well as the ASEAN Secretariat for the valuable contributions and efforts in progressing the specific initiatives and work-plans for ASEAN tourism over the years.
4. Today, we have important agendas before us to address and discuss. I look forward to the reporting by the NTOs on the progress and development of the initiatives and work-plans in supporting the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2016 – 2025, including the mid-term review in 2020; the progress implementation of the ASEAN Tourism Marketing Strategy 2017-2020; the ASEAN tourism standards; and ASEAN MRA - Tourism Professionals.

Excellencies Ministers, Distinguished Heads of NTOs and Delegates

5. As the technological advancements continue to influence the demands and changes in the travel and tourism industry, this year ATF's theme 'ASEAN – Together Towards A Next Generation of Travel' represents the need for us to work together with the business stakeholders and communities in the tourism sector and adopt various technologies to meet tourists' expectations.
6. Today, digital support has provided the travel and tourism industry a valuable platform that enables better accessibility, visibility of information, strengthen marketing and promotion strategies of tourism products and others.
7. It provides the travellers with recommendations, reviews, experiences or even comparisons for them to make well-informed choices and decisions. Hence, such advancements demand the travel and tourism – related business owners to invest in digital presence, as it is no longer viable not to be seen online in order to remain competitive and appealing to the next generation of travellers.

8. Thus, In order for us to move forward, I would like to invite Your Excellences to discuss on initiatives in smart tourism amongst others and how we can provide for a more personalized and meaningful experience in ASEAN.

9. I look forward to Your Excellencies active participation in this meeting. Thank you.