

## APEC TOURISM MINISTERS' STATEMENT ON

### 'HARNESSING SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE TOURISM IN THE ASIA PACIFIC'

June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018

Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea

1. We, Tourism Ministers and senior representatives of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation member economies: Australia; Chile; the People's Republic of China; Hong Kong, China; Indonesia; Japan; the Republic of Korea; Malaysia; Mexico; Papua New Guinea; Peru; the Republic of the Philippines; Singapore; Chinese Taipei; Thailand; the United States of America; and Viet Nam, attended the 10<sup>th</sup> APEC Tourism Ministers' Meeting (TMM) in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2018. The Meeting was chaired by Honourable Emil Tammur, MP, Minister for Tourism, Arts and Culture of Papua New Guinea.
2. We gather under the overarching theme of APEC PNG 2018 "Harnessing Inclusive Opportunities, Embracing the Digital Future" that draws focus on the new digital frontier and encouraging more digitally driven and inclusive trade and growth in the APEC region.
3. Under the APEC 2018 TMM theme of "Harnessing Sustainable and Inclusive Tourism in the Digital Age for the Asia-Pacific", we recognize the economic significance of tourism in terms of regional cooperation, trade, job creation, skills enhancement, innovation, and the development of information and communication technologies. We note the importance of empowering workers and businesses to thrive in an age of digital transformation and encourage economies to utilize inclusive and sustainable measures to drive the growth of tourism, whilst remaining cognizant to the diversity of APEC members.
4. We recognize the implementation of the [Lima Declaration on Connecting Asia-Pacific Tourism through Travel Facilitation](#), the [APEC Travel Facilitation Initiative](#) and [the APEC Connectivity Blue Print 2015-2025](#). We are encouraged to know these foundations will drive our joint effort as a region to reach the target of 800 million international tourist arrivals in APEC economies by 2025.
5. We commend the Tourism Working Group (TWG) for their efforts towards the implementation of the [APEC Tourism Strategic Plan \(ATSP\) 2015-2019](#) that focuses on four priority areas: (i) Promote better understanding and recognition of tourism as an engine for economic growth and prosperity in the APEC region; (ii) Ensure sustainable and inclusive growth in the travel and tourism sector by encouraging socially, culturally and responsible tourism; (iii) Promote job creation, skills development and certification through increased cooperation in order to develop the tourism workforce in the region, and; (iv) Promote competitiveness and regional economic integration through policy alignment and structural reform. We acknowledge the work carried out as a reflection of the region's aspiration to foster and promote inclusive development and generate a robust industry that is competitive and sustainable. Looking forward, we encourage the TWG to review the four priority areas post 2019.
6. We unanimously agree that tourism has a significant effect in stimulating economic growth in the region. Travel and tourism's direct contribution to GDP in 2017 was 3.8% of total GDP, creating approximately 2.9 million jobs in the region with over 8 billion USD worth of

investment by 2017. We stand committed to supporting the growth of the tourism sector in our economies as a means to encourage job creation, entrepreneurship, access to finance for MSME's and innovation.

7. At this juncture, we acknowledge and reaffirm the commitment made at the APEC High Level Policy Dialogue on Sustainable Tourism in Ha Long, Viet Nam, in 2017. The principles and actions agreed to will provide guidance in the region as APEC begins to shape its post-2020 vision.
8. We reiterate the significance of responsible tourism and that respect for social-cultural diversity of host communities is paramount in conserving richly built and living cultural heritage and traditional values. We note with careful consideration the impacts of managing and conserving our natural resources and biodiversity.
9. Given its multifaceted and cross-cutting nature, tourism is a powerful tool for development and economic growth. In 2014, APEC Leaders' reaffirmed their commitment to "ensure that all our citizens have the opportunity to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from global economic growth". We hereby encourage member economies to consider the opportunities in tourism that can facilitate empowerment of all people through education, training, access to finance, infrastructure and employment. We encourage economies to identify collaborative approaches to maximize the economic and social benefits of tourism.
10. We welcome the outcomes of the Women in Tourism Dialogue held on the 28 May 2018 and reaffirm the importance of ensuring greater participation by women to spur economic growth. We therefore agree that there is great potential to expand and create economic opportunities for women in the tourism sector and promote women in leadership roles within the industry.
11. We recognize the significance of emerging trends in the tourism industry such as big data and the sharing economy that facilitate favourable tourism business opportunities that may lie in the digital age to foster innovative, sustainable and inclusive tourism growth.
12. The transformation of technology has altered significantly the productivity and efficiency of work and business in the region. The digital economy, including big data, is revolutionising business processes, particularly for the tourism industry. Big data provides the tourism industry with opportunities to access real-time information to strategically adapt to the changing needs of travellers and emerging trends.
13. The Asia-Pacific region is at a pivotal stage where the transformative power of technology has presented a unique scope of possibilities, providing opportunities for businesses in areas such as the sharing economy and seamless travel. We therefore encourage economies to share best practices on the modernization of tourism policy and regulatory approaches that will stimulate growth and create new jobs by harnessing innovation and technology. We encourage economies to develop inclusive policies that will take into account the technological advancements in the tourism industry, whilst ensuring proper guidelines are in place to support the industry's sustainable growth.
14. We welcome the APEC Guidelines for Tourism Stakeholders (Annex A). The voluntary Guidelines for Tourism Stakeholders are founded on the values of sustainability, inclusivity, respect, responsibility, openness, innovation and partnership of their respective tourism

sectors. We acknowledge that the guiding principles complement the implementation of the ATSP under the objective to 'guide policy and decision makers in APEC destinations in developing policies that support tourism growth'. We endeavour to use the guidelines to improve cooperation and coordination mechanisms to optimize the benefits of tourism within and across all economies.

15. We seek APEC Leaders' consideration to include in the Leaders' Declaration, a statement that will focus on strengthening the competitiveness of travel and tourism in the APEC region by encouraging tourism investment, employment opportunities, development of regional occupational standards to better match the needs of the labour market with various aspects of skills training and MSME's support.
16. In this light, we welcome the adoption of the APEC Strategy for Green, Sustainable and Innovative MSME's at the 29<sup>th</sup> APEC Ministerial Meeting in 2017 and encourage member economies to create an enabling environment for MSME's in the tourism sector to engage in activities that will contribute to our efforts in achieving green and sustainable tourism.
17. We encourage the TWG to explore joint initiatives and promote cross-fora collaboration in APEC as tourism is a cross-cutting sector. The TWG should work toward strengthening collaboration between fora such as: Transportation Working Group; SME Working Group; Oceans and Fisheries Working Group; Counter Terrorism Working Group; Human Resource Development Working Group; Group on Services; Policy Partnership on Science, Technology and Innovation; Policy Partnership on Women in the Economy and other relevant fora, as well as, the APEC Business Advisory Council.
18. As APEC moves towards an era to reinforce our economic, collective strength as a region, we recognize that sectoral APEC fora provide foresight of emerging issues and trends in the tourism industry post-2020. We encourage the TWG to be cognisant of the changing economic landscape from increased trade in travel and tourism services and to provide guidance to assist economies in driving the travel and tourism industry forward in a sustainable and inclusive manner.
19. We welcome the report of the TWG Lead Shepherd on TWG activities since we last met in 2016 and acknowledge the contributions made by APEC economies to engage in vibrant policy discussions that generate sharing of best practices and recommendations to promote partnerships and tourism growth in the region.
20. We recognize that the involvement of multilateral and regional organizations and private sector has a profound effect on creating partnerships in tourism for economic growth and prosperity. We express our sincere gratitude to the international organisations such as the World Travel and Tourism Council; the Pacific Asia Travel Association; the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development for their engagement and collaboration.
21. We express our sincere thanks to the APEC Secretariat and the TWG Lead Shepherd for their efforts and contribution to the success of the meeting. We also sincerely thank the Host Economy, Papua New Guinea, for its hospitality and for ensuring a productive and successful TWG and Ministerial meetings. We highlight the significant efforts of the Papua New Guinea Tourism Promotion Authority in the organization of these meetings.

22. We look forward to the next TMM to be held in 2020 in Malaysia and encourage the future host to ensure themes discussed today are given continuity in forthcoming tourism meetings.