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PRESS RELEASE
MINISTRY OF TOURISM, ARTS AND CULTURE (MOTAC)

MALAYSIA CALLS FOR PEOPLE-CENTRED ACTION TO ADVANCE ASEAN'S SOCIO-CULTURAL AGENDA

MANILA, THE PHILIPPINES, 4 NOVEMBER 2026 – Malaysia reaffirmed its commitment to an inclusive, resilient and future-ready ASEAN, calling for regional commitments to translate into measurable improvements in people's lives at the **41st Senior Officials' Committee for the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (SOCA) Meeting** in Pasay City, the Philippines.

The meeting brought together senior officials from all ASEAN Member States to discuss regional developments, institutional governance and the implementation of the socio-cultural pillar in support of the **ASEAN Community Vision 2045**.

Leading the Malaysian delegation, **YBhg. Dato' Shaharuddin bin Abu Sohot, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture (MOTAC)**, in his capacity as Malaysia's SOCA Leader, emphasized that ASEAN's progress must be reflected in tangible benefits for its people. Citing more than **2,000 sectoral activities** recorded in the End-Term Review of the ASCC Blueprint 2025, he stressed that success should be measured by the difference these efforts make on the ground, beyond the number of activities undertaken or declarations adopted.

To strengthen accountability and delivery, Malaysia highlighted progress in validating **430 Strategic Measure-level Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**, finalizing the Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (PMEL) Guidelines, incorporating Voluntary National Reporting (VNR), and enhancing ADME System 2.0 with new Learning Management and Outcome Stories functionalities.

With **63 of the 112 Strategic Measures** under the ASCC Strategic Plan spanning multiple pillars, Malaysia called for closer coordination among the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC), ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC), ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) and ASEAN Connectivity. Malaysia also supported a review of the Senior Officials Coordinating Conference on the ASCC (SOC-COM) after two decades of operation, alongside a strategic assessment of overlapping functions with ASCCO, COW and ACCC, to streamline reporting and make more effective use of resources.

Malaysia highlighted the alignment of ASCC priorities, including the care economy, digital literacy, green skills and adaptive social protection, with the **Thirteenth Malaysia Plan (13MP, 2026–2030)** and the **MADANI Economic Framework**. These shared priorities provide a strong foundation for regional cooperation that equips communities to navigate economic, technological and environmental change.

Addressing regional challenges, including the ongoing crisis in the Middle East, Malaysia stressed the importance of safeguarding employment, protecting migrant workers and strengthening social safety nets. Malaysia also supported the transition of the Working Group on Culture of Prevention (WG on CoP) into an ad hoc mechanism under SOCA, as well as collective reviews of summit outcome documents by Socio-Cultural Officials (SCOs), with sufficient time provided for national clearance.

To sustain implementation, Malaysia supported stronger resource mobilization through cross-sectoral initiatives with dialogue partners, particularly in **digital transformation and climate action**. It also encouraged closer collaboration through public-private partnerships (PPPs) and philanthropic contributions to advance shared socio-cultural priorities.

The Malaysian delegation also included Madam Tee Get Lien, Undersecretary; Mr. Mohd Zamzuri Ab Ghani, Principal Assistant Secretary, International Relations Division (Culture), MOTAC; Madam. Khairiah binti Kamaruddin, Counsellor (Socio-Cultural), Permanent Mission of Malaysia to ASEAN; and Mr. Mohd Faizal Sharip, Tourism Attaché, Embassy of Malaysia in Manila, the Philippines.

Guided by the principles of **Malaysia MADANI**, Malaysia remains committed to working closely with ASEAN Member States and the ASEAN Secretariat to turn shared ambitions into meaningful action. Its message at the 41st SOCA Meeting was clear: **ASEAN's shared vision must deliver lasting benefits for the people it serves.**

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