



MEDIA STATEMENT

MINISTRY OF TOURISM, ARTS AND CULTURE

33rd ASEAN SOCIO-CULTURAL COMMUNITY (ASCC) COUNCIL MEETING AND RELATED MEETINGS

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SARAWAK, 24 APRIL 2025 – ASEAN Ministers and delegations gathered in Kuching, Sarawak for a series of in-depth exchanges and dialogues during the 33rd ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Council Meeting and Related Meetings.

The meeting, which was hosted by the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, and Culture (MOTAC), was attended by ASCC Council Ministers and Senior Officers from ASEAN Member States (AMS) and Timor Leste as an observer country on 24 April 2025.

Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture Dato Sri Tiong King Sing in his speech said that the ASCC pillar has identified five priority areas across cultural heritage which are AI, digitalisation and green jobs; health; youth and sports; and climate action. "These priority areas offer ASEAN a pathway to strengthen regional cooperation, drive inclusive economic growth, and enhance social well-being," he said.

The meeting also discussed the pillar's progress and updates, in addition to the endorsement of the ASCC Strategic Plan and three other strategic plans, which will be adopted at the 46th ASEAN

Summit in May 2025 in Kuala Lumpur. A soft launch of the ASCC Post-2025 Strategic Plan was also held in conjunction with the meeting.

Dato Sri Tiong King Sing also said that the ASSC have identified two Outcome Documents for Adoption and three Outcome Documents for Notation to be presented during the 46th ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur next month. They are the ASEAN Creative Economy Sustainability Framework and ASEAN Declaration of Commitment on ASEAN Drug Security and Self-Reliance.

"I am looking forward to hearing the current updates and way forward on the ASCC Strategic Plan, especially after the first Ad Hoc Working Group meeting on the ASCC Results Framework that was held only two days ago," he said.

The 33rd ASCC Council Meeting and Related Meetings were officiated by The Right Honourable Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Dr. Abang Haji Rahman Zohari bin Tun Datuk Abang Haji Openg, Premier of Sarawak. Also present at the meeting was His Excellency Dr. Kao Kim Hourn, Secretary-General of ASEAN.

During his keynote address, Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Dr. Abang Haji Rahman Zohari bin Tun Datuk Abang Haji Openg said that the Sarawak Government envisions a thriving society driven by data and innovation by 2030. He also emphasised that this vision will anchor on three important pillars: economic prosperity, social inclusivity, and a sustainable environment. He added that this reflects Sarawak's commitment to a greener and healthier environment, in line with the ASEAN-MY Chairmanship 2025 theme, "Inclusivity and Sustainability."

As the ASEAN Chair in 2025, Malaysia upholds the theme of "Inclusivity and Sustainability," reflecting our shared vision: to ensure everyone benefits from regional cooperation without marginalisation or neglect.

This theme not only highlights ASEAN's commitment to peace, stability, and prosperity but also guides us steadily towards a forward-looking, sustainable regional framework, said Dato Sri Tiong King Sing.

Under this vision, culture and art are not just about heritage but also a soft power driving national and regional development. By enhancing cross-border cooperation and creating immersive cultural experiences, we can attract tourists and ensure our proud cultural and artistic heritage is passed down through generations. Dato Sri Tiong King Sing said that the ASEAN success in economic growth is attributed to the close proximity of its 677 million people, especially through the people-to-people relationships and cultural diversity of the region.

"Since 2015, when Malaysia assumed the ASEAN Chairmanship, ASEAN's combined economy has grown from the 15th to the fifth largest globally, with a combined GDP of 3.8 trillion US dollars and a total population of 677 million people. "This phenomenal growth of ASEAN as a region is due to proximity, people-to-people relationships, and cultural diversity," he said.

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