



**THE 45TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF ASEAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY**
17-23 October 2024
Vientiane, Lao PDR

*The Role of Parliaments in Enhancing Connectivity and
Inclusive Growth of ASEAN*

(Res.45GA/2024/Eco/06)

RESOLUTION ON
HARNESSING ECO AND CULTURAL TOURISM POTENTIAL FOR
SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC RECOVERY IN ASEAN

Sponsored by Malaysia

The Forty-fifth AIPA General Assembly:

Recalling the compounded impact of global crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic, geopolitical tensions, and climate-related disasters, which have severely affected the tourism sector across ASEAN, leading to economic instability, job losses, a decline in tourism revenues, and disruptions in travel and supply chains;

Recalling the AIPA Resolution [Res.43GA/2022/Eco/03](#) on Optimizing the Participation of Micro, Small And Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in The Tourism Sector For Economic Recovery adopted in Phnom Penh, Cambodia in 2022, which urges ASEAN Member States to effectively use the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2016-2025 as a guidance and strategy for economic recovery in the tourism sector;

Highlighting the urgent need for adaptive strategies that facilitate sustainable recovery, build resilience to future global challenges, and address ongoing vulnerabilities in the region's tourism industry;

Recognising that ASEAN's diverse ecosystems, rich biodiversity, and cultural heritage present immense opportunities for the development of eco and cultural tourism as a catalyst for sustainable economic recovery while contributing to environmental conservation and the protection of cultural and natural resources;

Acknowledging the critical role of eco and cultural tourism in driving inclusive economic growth by fostering community-based tourism initiatives, supporting local economies, particularly in rural areas, and promoting the well-being of local populations;

Affirming the alignment of eco and cultural tourism with the [ASEAN Framework on Sustainable Tourism Development in the Post COVID-19 Era](#), particularly those related to responsible consumption and production, climate action, social inclusiveness and economic growth;

Considering previous efforts of AIPA through AIPA Resolution [Res.25GA/2004/Eco/02](#) on Promoting Cultural And Eco-Tourism To Stimulate Economic Growth, AIPA Resolution [Res.37GA/2016/Soc/04](#) on Sustainable Tourism, AIPA Resolution

[Res.42GA/2021/Eco/02](#) on The Post-Covid-19 Economic Recovery: Tourism Cooperation in ASEAN, and AIPA Resolution [Res.44GA/2023/Eco/01](#) on Accelerating Green Transition for Sustainable and Resilient Economic Growth;

Noting the importance of regional cooperation among ASEAN Member States to enhance the development and promotion of eco and cultural tourism, ensuring that the region's natural and cultural assets are conserved while maximising economic benefits;

Emphasising the potential of public-private partnerships, regional collaboration, and digital technologies in advancing sustainable tourism practices that support ASEAN's green growth agenda and build resilience against future economic shocks.

Hereby resolves to:

Urge ASEAN Member States and AIPA Member Parliaments to prioritise eco and cultural tourism as a key driver of economic recovery and long-term sustainability, ensuring that eco and cultural tourism initiatives align with national and regional strategies for sustainable development and environmental conservation;

Appreciate the identification, preservation, and promotion of eco and cultural tourism sites across ASEAN, including protected natural areas, national parks, marine sanctuaries, and cultural heritage sites, while ensuring that tourism activities in these areas are managed in an environmentally responsible and socially inclusive manner;

Encourage the development and adoption of regional sustainability standards for activities, facilities and services and certification programs for eco and cultural tourism operators, focusing on reducing environmental impacts, promoting biodiversity conservation, and empowering local communities through sustainable livelihood opportunities;

Encourage ASEAN Member States to provide and expand facilities and services, recognising the immense potential of halal tourism to complement eco and cultural tourism across the region;

Recommend that ASEAN Member States integrate community-based tourism models into their national eco and cultural tourism strategies, ensuring that local communities are active participants and beneficiaries of tourism development and that traditional knowledge, cultures, and practices are preserved and promoted; increase the organisation of international fairs and exhibitions to enhance cultural exchanges and promote regional eco and cultural tourism;

Promote public-private partnerships to develop eco and cultural tourism infrastructure, including transport, accommodation, and digital platforms, that enhance connectivity and improve the accessibility of eco and cultural tourism destinations and clusters while ensuring that infrastructure investments are sustainable and environmentally friendly;

Advocate for the inclusion of eco and cultural tourism in ASEAN's broader regional development policies, ensuring that its contribution to both the protection of natural resources and the diversification of the region's economic base, thereby enhancing resilience to future economic and environmental shocks;

Support the use of digital platforms and technology to promote ASEAN's eco and cultural tourism destinations and clusters, streamline booking and payment processes, and educate travellers on sustainable practices while enhancing the competitiveness of ASEAN's tourism sector in the global market;

Encourage AIPA Member Parliaments to collaborate with ASEAN's external partners, international organisations, and the private sector to share resources, technical assistance, and best practices for advancing eco and cultural tourism development and ensuring that the sector remains a key pillar of sustainable economic growth.

Adopted on the twenty-first day of October 2024 in Vientiane, Lao PDR.



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EXPLANATORY NOTE

**RESOLUTION ON HARNESSING ECO AND CULTURAL TOURISM
POTENTIAL FOR SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC RECOVERY IN ASEAN**

Eco and cultural tourism, which focuses on responsible travel to natural areas that conserve the environment and improve the well-being of local communities, has gained global prominence as a sustainable and viable alternative to mass tourism. ASEAN, being home to some of the world's richest biodiversity, natural landscapes, and diverse cultures, is uniquely positioned to benefit from the growing eco and cultural tourism trend. As ASEAN Member States recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, which deeply affected the tourism sector, there is an urgent need to harness this untapped potential. ASEAN's eco and cultural tourism potential lies in its vast ecosystems, including rainforests, marine parks, and protected areas, which are rich in flora and fauna. From the world-renowned islands of Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines to the cultural and natural wonders of Vietnam, Thailand, and Laos, ASEAN presents numerous opportunities for the development of eco and cultural tourism. This approach aligns with global trends towards sustainable travel, where tourists seek meaningful experiences that allow them to connect with nature while contributing positively to the environment and local economies.

Eco and cultural tourism presents an opportunity for ASEAN Member States to diversify their economies while protecting the environment. The region's reliance on traditional tourism is often associated with environmental degradation, resource depletion, and negative social impacts on local communities. By shifting focus towards eco and cultural tourism, ASEAN can balance economic growth with environmental conservation. This transition is not only critical for maintaining biodiversity but also for ensuring that tourism benefits are distributed more equitably across rural and underserved areas. Eco and cultural tourism also encourage the preservation of natural resources and cultural heritage by placing economic value on ecosystems and traditions. This incentivises both governments and local communities to engage in sustainable practices, reducing deforestation, pollution, and loss of biodiversity while promoting sustainable livelihoods. Importantly, eco and cultural tourism can foster long-term resilience in the tourism sector by attracting a more conscious and sustainable type of travellers, mitigating the impact of future global crises.

The development of eco and cultural tourism is consistent with ASEAN's strategic goals as outlined in the [ASEAN Economic Community \(AEC\) Blueprint 2025](#) and the [ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2016-2025](#), which prioritises sustainable development, cultural

preservation, and community engagement. ASEAN's geographic proximity and the strong intra-regional ties among its member states offer a strategic advantage for developing cross-border eco and cultural tourism corridors. These corridors can connect multiple eco and cultural tourism sites across borders, fostering greater regional cooperation, enhancing tourism flows, and promoting sustainable economic development.