

## **Agenda Item 6.1**

**The 27<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Greater Mekong Sub-region Tourism Working Group, Pakse, Champaksak Province Lao PDR, 26<sup>th</sup> May, 2011.**

### **Tourism Arrivals in 2010 and 2011 (January-April)**

Tourist arrivals during 2010 compared to 2008-2009 and 2011 (January to April) by modes of transport are as follows;

	2008	2009	2010	2011 (January to April)
By Air	182571	236285	310741	137676
By Water ways	4725	1700	547	2983
By land	<u>543934</u>	<u>524562</u>	<u>480817</u>	<u>153249</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>731230</b>	<b>762547</b>	<b>791505</b>	<b>293908</b>

With reference to the number of International Tourist Arrivals to Myanmar, there has been a gradual increase year by year as the result of the joint efforts of the public and private sectors of tourism industry.

The International Tourist Arrivals to Myanmar in the year 2010 reached (791505) up over (762547) of the year 2009, representing a growth of 4%. Specifically, the neighboring citizens from Thailand and China are sharing the majority of the total arrivals because they have easy accessibility to visit Myanmar by air and by land.

The major source markets are Asia followed by West Europe, North America, Oceania, East Europe, Middle East and Africa. From Asia, the top markets are Thailand followed by China, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan, Singapore and India. From West Europe, France tops the list followed by Germany, UK, Italy and Spain. The number of arrivals from Russia has also increased.

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With the assistance of regional organizations such as ASEAN, GMS and ACMECS, Myanmar has been actively participating in the promotional activities so as to get more awareness of the country. Moreover, private sector which mainly covers Myanmar Hotelier Association, Travel Association and Marketing Committee has put its significant efforts hand in hand with the Ministry in the development of the hotel and tourism industry.

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**Update on Border Checkpoints by Myanmar**

Myanmar shares long border with Thailand and Yunnan Province of the Republic of China . The overland entry is permitted to Thai and Chinese Tourists with border pass and to third party tourists with visa at designated checkpoints along Myanmar-China and Myanmar-Thailand border . Tourists with valid passports and visa can leave by air from Yangon which is the main entry point of Myanmar.

**Myanmar – China Border Checkpoints**

(5) border checkpoints have been opened along Myanmar-China border as follows;

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- (a) Muse
- (b) Lauk-kai
- (c) Kwan-long
- (d) Lwe-geil
- (e) Lizer

Although (5) entry points have been designated, **Muse checkpoints** in Muse; a town on the banks of the Shweli River, the opposite of Gelgaung; border town of the Yunnan Province of China is main gateway and most accessible to enter and exit for travelers from the both countries .It is located 190 km from Lashio; the capital of the Eastern Shan State of Myanmar and easy accessible by car to Lashio, Mandalay and up to Yangon in Myanmar.

During 2010, (62358) Chinese tourists visited Myanmar through Muse checkpoints among them, some entered through Lauk-kai and Kanpaiktee chcek points. Moreover, some visitors also visited through other border checkpoints such as **Lwe-jel and Lizar**. The yearly tourist arrivals from China through border checkpoints are as follows;

Year	Muse/Lauk-kai/kanpaiktee	Lwe-jel	Lizar	Total
2007	51340	120	481	51941
2008	75666	482	528	76676
2009	64681	399	511	65591
2010	62358	15	59	62432

### Myanmar – Thailand Border Checkpoint

There are following (4) entry points along the border between Myanmar and Thailand;

- (a) Tachileik
- (b) Myawaddy
- (c) Kawthaung
- (d) Phayathonezu (Three Pagoda Pass)

Among the above (4) checkpoints **Tachileik, Myawaddy and Kawthaung checkpoints** are accessible for tourists from Thailand to Myanmar.

**Tachileik checkpoint** is connected Tachileik which is border town of Myanmar and located in the Golden Triangle Area and Mai-sai in Thailand from Tachileik. It is accessible by air about (2) hours to Yangon and also accessible by car to Kyaingtong; the capital of the Southern Shan State of Myanmar.

**Kawthaung border checkpoint** between Myanmar and Thailand is located in Kawthaung, the southern most town of Myanmar. From Ranoung ;a border town in Thailand , visitors can take (20) minutes boat trips to Kawthaung. There are regular flights from Yangon, the main entry point of Myanmar to Kawthaung and five star shipping line operates cruise vessel “ M.V Thanlwin” to Yangon.

**Myawaddy Checkpoint** is one of the border gateways opposite Mae-sauk in Thailand by passing this checkpoint, visitors can reach to Pha-an , Mawlamyng, Kyaikhteeyo( Golden Rock Pagoda), Bago and Yangon, This is located on the way of East-West Economic Corridor of the GMS.

The yearly tourist arrival from Thailand through these entry points are as follows;

<b>Sr.</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Tachileik</b>	<b>Kawthaung</b>	<b>Myawaddy</b>
1	2006	148984	127371	47955
2	2007	268492	112272	35203
3	2008	309152	122035	30048
4	2009	295337	119733	38608
5.	2010	242013	147698	23575

### **Discussion Points**

At present, the route by passing Muse Check point is most accessible and convenient way for the visitors from both Myanmar and China among existing check points along Myanmar-China border. Muse Checkpoint was opened since 1991 and two countries has already signed Memorandum of Understanding to Implement the plan for Outbound Chinese Tourists to Myanmar in 2000. According to this MOU, the travel Agencies from both countries have been jointly operating package tours especially tourists from China and third countries through this check point.

However, the visit of tourists from Yunnan Province through this check point has been suspended since September 2009. According to the information that we have received, there are some restrictions by China side for issuing permission to Chinese visitors to visit Myanmar through this point.

This route is also contributing to the smooth tourism flows within the GMS regions and it has been upgraded with necessary entry formalities and we also recommend to this check point to be included in the thematic routes of GMS region.

Therefore, we would like to request Yunnan Province of China to assist to relax restrictions to be able to revitalize the accessibility though Muse check point.

### **Accessibility to Myanmar**

At present YANGON, MANDALAY and BAGAN are international gateways to Myanmar.

There are (14) airlines operating regular flights to Yangon and the major carriers are Myanmar Airways International (MAI), Thai Airways (TG), Silk Air (MI) and Thai Air Aisa (FD). Yangon has daily air links with Bangkok and Singapore; regular flight schedule with Kuala Lumpur, Kolkata, Kunming, Taipei and Doha. Mandalay has direct links with Kunming. Myanmar has 4 domestic airlines; Myanmar Airways, Air Mandalay, Asian Wings Airlines and Air Bagan.

The Domestic Airports in the tourist destinations such as Bagan, Mandalay, Heho, Tachileik, Kyaung Tong, Monywa, Myitkyina, Putao and Kawthaung have also been upgraded and extended.

### **Infrastructure Development**

Infrastructure development has also been progressing on a self-reliant basis. Existing roads are being upgraded and new ones constructed to facilitate travel to main tourist destinations for both international and domestic tourists.

The visible development in tourism sector is, therefore, the increase in private sector participation in hotel construction, domestic airlines frequency of flights; the number of tourists increasing through the Border checkpoints.

### **Travel Agencies & Tour Guides**

To date, the Ministry has issued license to operate to (1) foreign travel agency (16) joint venture travel agencies and (615) private local travel agencies.

As for tour guide services we have over (4077) trained and licensed tour guides fluent in English, French, German, Japanese, Italian, Thai and Chinese and language interpreters in Spanish, Korea and Russian.

### **Visa Formalities**

On the visa facilities, the tourist and business entry visa to Myanmar is for a stay of (28) days applicable for an extended stay of (14) days in Myanmar.

Visa on arrivals is granted on prior arrangement as applied to the Ministry by the licensed travel agencies in Myanmar for the packaged tours and those travelling on chartered flights and cruise liners. The visa fee is US\$ 20.

### **Human resources training system / organization**

The Directorate of Hotels and Tourism, in collaborations with Kandawgyi Hotel (Htoo Co.Ltd), conducts training courses in Front Office, Housekeeping, F& B Production and F& B Services and other Hotel management related courses.

The Basic Guide Training Courses, Refresher Courses in English and other Languages; and Tourism Management Courses are also conducted by the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism for the personnel of both government and private sector. Tour Guides licenses are issued by the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism to the successful candidates.

To assist the integration of the newer member countries ( Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Viet Nam) into ASEAN, training programmes were conducted in Myanmar, sponsored under the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) and the training programme has been very effective for the government and private sector.

Seminar and workshops relating to sustainable tourism development were hosted with ASEAN Japan Centre, ASEAN Korea Centre and the Union of Myanmar Travel Association.

Another diploma Course Training, is the Diploma in Tourism Management Studies under the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Hotels and Tourism is supporting with the expertise knowledge. Phase by phase we will be able to move on to undergraduate and post graduate levels.

### **Comments for Panel**

There are two plans to extend the accessible route by land to Myanmar in order to integrate in the Thematic Route to GMS.

Plan (A) is entering through muse checkpoint.

At present, Only Muse Checkpoint is most accessible and convent rote to enter Myanmar from the eastern part of Myanmar. It has been used not only for the tourism but also for the trade purpose.

Although, there are other designated check points along Myanmar-China border, there is in needs to develop sufficiently infrastructure such as road connectivity, entry formalities, immigration, custom, bank, travel information centre etc. So, we would like to propose China- Muse – Lasio route to integrate in the GMS route as plan

