

Opening Remarks to be delivered by Director General U Aung Zaw Win, Directorate of Hotels and Tourism, Ministry of Hotels and Tourism at the Opening Ceremony of “28th GMS Tourism Working Group Meeting on 29th November, 2011 at Nan Myint Viewing Tower, Bagan

Distinguished delegates from the GMS Countries, Asian Development Bank and regional tourism organizations and our colleague development partners and distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Mingalarbar!

It is my great pleasure to warmly welcome all of you. I would like to express my sincere thanks for attending this 28th GMS Tourism Working Group Meeting held in Bagan, Myanmar.

Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The objective of this 28th GMS Tourism Working Group Meeting is to revise the activities agreed up on the previous meeting agendas of the 27th GMS Tourism Working Group Meeting held in Pakse, Lao PDR and to raise the consultations for setting – up new specific tourism development projects covering the whole region.

2011 is very significant for Myanmar because we are able to host 28th GMS Tourism Working Group Meeting and related events, and 4th GMS Summit Meeting in coming December in Nay Pyi Taw, our administrative city.

GMS Tourism Working Group Meeting has been held in rotation as alphabetical basis. Lastly, Myanmar hosted the 22nd GMS TWG meeting in 2008 in Nay Pyi Taw. Now, we have great opportunity to hold it again and this time Myanmar has successfully arranged with other related events such as symposium, photo expo, travel exhibition and Cultural Performance of GMS Member States.

Actually, Tourism is Service Industry which can offer its nature, culture, history, customs and ways of life of people to international tourists. Among the Tourism Co-operations such as ASEAN, GMS, ACMECS, BIMSTEC and CLMV; GMS is second line-up important and strategic one after ASEAN. Therefore, in this GMS Tourism Working Group Meeting, we have to discuss more strategic plans and implementations on tourism co-operation, tourist facilitation, investment, human resource development and tourism facilities improvement.

Based on the mid-term Review of GMS Tourism Sector Strategy and the Roadmap for 2011-2015, GMS Tourism Sector will take the new directions and expected outcome to 2015 would be greater

distribution of the economic benefits of tourism and significant contribution to sustainable development, gender equality and poverty alleviation through tourism in the GMS.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At present, the world has been facing many challenges such as economic situation and political instability. Apart from this, due to the climate change, the natural disasters and severe weather changes have been affected tourism industry largely. Recently most GMS countries, have been flooded due to the storms and heavy rains. Among them, Thailand has been most suffering from big flooded as a critical level during 50 years. Let me express our deep sorrow for Thailand on her trouble and loss of properties. Anyhow, GMS member states have to try to survive and get the targeted tourist arrivals in the coming peak season.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We strongly support that GMS member states also have to particularly encourage, coordinate and implement all agreements at the meeting as well as to monitor the process of the implementation in details.

At this auspicious occasion, on behalf of the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism; Myanmar, I would like to thank GMS NTOs for your representation, MTCO for your valued effort on co-ordination and co-operation, ADB for financial support, PATA, UNESCO, and our colleague development partners for your strong strategic support. I do hope, your participation and continuous support will be invaluable contribution for fruitful and productive outcomes of the meeting for the long run.

Finally, I wish the GMS Tourism Working Group Meeting success and declare the opening of the 28th GMS Tourism Working Group Meeting from now on.