



## **TWENTY SIXTH MEETING OF THE GMS TOURISM WORKING GROUP**

**Jinghong, Xishuangbanna, Yunnan, PRC, Wednesday 24 November 2010**

### **SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS**

#### **Introduction**

1. The 26th Meeting of the GMS Tourism Working Group (TWG-26) was held in Jinghong, Xishuangbanna, Yunnan, People's Republic of China on 24 November 2010. Representatives of (Cambodia, People's Republic of China-Yunnan Provincial Tourism Administration and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region Tourism Administration, Lao PDR, Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam), the Mekong Tourism Coordinating Office (MTCO), development partners including ADB, SNV and UNIAP attended. A list of participants is in [Appendix 1](#).

#### **Agenda item 1: Opening Session**

2. The Meeting commenced with opening remarks by Mr. Wu Wenxue, China National Tourism Administration, followed by welcome remarks from Mr. Yu Dingcheng, on behalf of Yunnan Provincial Government, Mr Pradeep Srivastava, Senior Regional Cooperation Specialist, Asian Development Bank, Vice Governor of Xishuangbanna Prefectural Government, and Mr Mason Florence, Executive Director, Mekong Tourism Coordinating Office.
3. The chairman expressed his condolences to the people of Cambodia for the recent tragedy which occurred in Phnom Penh at the end of the water festival.

#### **Agenda item 2: Group photo session**

4. All honorary guests and delegates took a group photo together in front of the hotel. Afterwards the Meeting resumed according to the Agenda.

#### **Agenda item 3: Adoption of the Agenda**

5. The Meeting was chaired by Mr. Yu Dincheng, Director-General, Yunnan Provincial Tourism Administration and co-chaired by Mr. Mason Florence, Executive Director, Mekong Tourism Coordinating Office.

6. The Meeting adopted the provisional agenda, copy in Appendix 2.

**Agenda item 4: Business arrangements**

7. China as host informed the participants about the arrangements for the lunch and dinner, as well as recreational program in the evening, hosted by YPTA. Secretariat support was provided by the MTCO.

**Agenda item 5: Report and follow-up of the 25<sup>th</sup> GMS Tourism Working Group Meeting on 6 May 2010 in Siem Reap, Cambodia**

8. Representative of Cambodia briefed participants on the highlights and follow-up actions on items discussed at TWG-25 held in Siem Reap Cambodia on 6 May 2010, as follows:

*a) Marketing Projects: Progress Report and Work Plan 2010-2011.*

- Cambodia successfully conducted the Mekong Tourism Forum 2010, under the theme “New Roads, New Opportunities”. The forum was attended by over 200 people from the public and private sectors, NGOs and local communities; also 25 exhibition booths – several from community-based tourism operators – were exhibited in the lobby area of the Forum venue from 7-8 May 2010.
- For the Mekong Tourism Forum 2011, Lao PDR indicated that if the other GMS member countries would agree, they would have no objection to the proposal for the next Forum to be held back-to-back with the 27<sup>th</sup> Tourism Working Group in 2011 in Lao PDR, possibly in Champassak Province.
- At the 25<sup>th</sup> Tourism Working Group meeting, MTCO prepared a matrix showing the outlook for TWG and MTF schedules over the next 5 years.

*b) Development Projects: Progress Report and Work Plan 2010-2011.*

- Preparation of GMS Tourism Sector Strategy Mid-term Assessment: introduction on a proposed framework for the mid-term assessment of the first 4 years (2006-2009) of the implementation of the GMS Tourism Sector Strategy (TSS). TWG member countries and development partners were asked to communicate their comments and inputs to elaborate the GMS Tourism Sector Strategy Mid-term Assessment.
- Preparation of a New GMS Strategic Framework : the Preparations are now being made to develop a new long-term GMS Strategic Framework for 2012-2022 which would need to take into account the progress made to date – including the findings and recommendations of the Mid-Term Review (MTR) done in 2007, the rapid changes in the global and regional environment and their implications on the Mekong subregion and the GMS Program, and appropriate changes that need to be made on how the GMS Program is to be organized and managed into its third decade in operation. A background paper to the new GMS Strategic Framework has been discussed at the 16<sup>th</sup> GMS Ministerial Meeting in 20 August 2010, Hanoi, Vietnam.
- Update on Advancement of ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan: progress of work being done to prepare the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan (ATSP) for 2011-2015 with

support from the USAID-funded ACE project. Final draft was to be ready in October 2010, for approval by ASEAN Tourism Ministers in January 2011 in Phnom Penh.

## **Agenda item 6: Implementation of the GMS Tourism Sector Strategy**

### **6.1 Marketing Program: progress report by MTCO Executive Director**

9. Mr. Mason Florence, Executive Director, Mekong Tourism Coordinating Office, reported on the progress of the Marketing Program as follows:
- a) *New updates of [www.ExploreMekong.org](http://www.ExploreMekong.org)*: The frequency rate of visits of ExploreMekong.org has continued to grow. As the framework and features of the current website is outdated and no longer relevant in the modern age of social media, it was necessary to redesign the website to a bold, stylish design, full of innovative and interactive features, as well as fresh content, while keeping the same strong message of promoting the Mekong Region as a single destination. Website improvements include:
    - Content rich pages for each Mekong country devoted to its natural wonders, major attractions and must-see sights;
    - In-depth resources for the online visitor, divided into all the major tourism activities;
    - Easily readable layout and well-researched content;
    - Special importance and focus on eco-tourism;
    - Hotel booking system;
    - Online forum for travelers, industry insiders and hospitality operators alike to share inside information and news;
    - Constantly updated list providing an indispensable resource for information about travel in the Mekong;
    - Direct connections to social media hubs Facebook, Twitter and Digg to ensure global exposure for ExploreMekong.com.
  - b) *Collateral/promotional items: The Responsible Guide to the Mekong*, which will continue to integrate updates and additions for all GMS member countries on-line, could be re-published in a print format again in 2011.
  - c) *Online Hotel Booking Engine*: It will be officially launched in January 2011, with inclusion of WEGO booking system.
  - d) *Production of Mekong-branded Collateral*: The first phase of collateral production is underway and will be completed by the end of December 2010. This includes t-shirts, polo shirts, coffee mugs, caps, etc. The second phase will start in January 2011 onwards.
  - e) *GMS Travel Map*: The first 1,000 (of 5,000) copies of a detailed GMS regional travel map, with comprehensive notes on cultural and historical information including key places and people, will be printed and delivered in April 2011. A total of 5,000 copies will be purchased by MTCO for only 1\$ per copy. The map will be given away and sold worldwide; each NTO will receive 300 courtesy copies. It will also be distributed at the Mekong Tourism Forum 2011.
  - f) *Mekong Photo Contest*: Due to the loss of initial sponsorship, the Mekong Photo Contest has to be postponed to the new deadlines:

- ✓ 1 Nov-31 Dec 2010 ~ New sponsorship seeking
  - ✓ 1 Jan-31 March 2011 ~Entry submission of photos
  - ✓ 1 April-20 April 2011 ~ Judging
  - ✓ May 2011 onwards ~Travelling exhibition
- g) ***Update on calendar of future GMS tourism events:*** MTCO tentatively plans to participate in the following events in 2011:
- ✓ ATF, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 15-21 January 2011
  - ✓ Mekong Tourism Forum 2011, Pakse, Champasak, Lao PDR, 26-27 May 2011
  - ✓ Thailand Travel Mart Plus, Bangkok, Thailand, June 2011
  - ✓ PATA Travel Mart, New Delhi, India, September 2011
  - ✓ Int'l Travel Expo HCMC (ITE) HCMC, Vietnam, Sept/Oct 2011
  - ✓ ITB Asia, Singapore, October 2011
  - ✓ China International Travel Mart, Kunming, November 2011
- h) ***Explore Mekong Road Show in Tokyo:*** Joint collaboration between MTCO and ASEAN-Japan Center, the Explore Mekong Road Show is being considered to expose and promote new GMS Travel products to the Japanese market. Planned activities could include cultural shows, a food festival and a GMS Travel Fair.
- i) ***MTCO/Mekong media clippings for May – November 2010: Recent*** travel news on the Mekong was compiled by MTCO and will also be presented on ExploreMekong.org A folder containing hard copies of select media clippings was also distributed.
- j) ***Update on Mekong Tourism Forum 2011:*** The MTF2011 will be organized in late May 2011, back to back with TWG-27 Meeting and STDP Steering Committee Meeting.
10. A copy of his presentation is in [Appendix 3](#).

## **Discussion**

11. Cambodia commented that emphasis should not only be put on pro-poor tourism, but also on eco-tourism.
12. Myanmar urged the MTCO to move forward to print a new edition of the Responsible Guide to the Mekong and indicated its willingness to assist the MTCO with content development for the Myanmar section of the guide.
13. Lao PDR asked MTCO to expedite the production the GMS Travel Map.
14. Vietnam expressed its appreciation to MTCO's work and suggested that a special focus should be given to Japan as source market and that MTCO should cooperate with ASEAN-Japan Center to create marketing activities. Vietnam also added that MTCO should incorporate more pro-poor tourism in its marketing plan by developing activities awarding best practices.
15. In response to Vietnam's remark, Mr. Florence said that Japan is indeed an important source market and that while the MTCO regards the entire world as a source market of the Mekong it should give much importance to intra-regional travel.

16. Ms. Christine Jacquemin, Project Coordinator, MTCO, added that a comprehensive data collection and primary analysis of source markets and their impacts on local economic development (according to data available) had been compiled and would be soon available on the Internet. She also added that an award ceremony was planned as one activity suggested in the GMS TSS mid term review and it would be indeed interesting to focus it on PPT as there are already many awards for green tourism, however a more comprehensive selection criteria based on both environmental and socio-cultural responsibility would be the best.
17. Chairman suggested that every party should join hands to support the work of the MTCO and discuss more concrete and detailed issues at the Meeting. He also encouraged more participation at each other's respective tourism events and travel fairs, noting that we are all mutual source markets for each other.
18. Thailand suggested to identify more clearly tourism sights along regional GMS travel routes
19. In response to the question about the copyright of the GMS travel map, Mr. Florence explained that copyright for reproduction of the map lies with the publishing company. The agreement with the company was for the MTCO to have a first print run of 5,000 copies for US\$5,000 (US\$1 a copy). The map will be given away and also sold at US\$10. Copies sold by the MTCO will generate income for the MTCO to help recoup the investment, while for copies sold by the publishing company no profit from sales will accrue to the MTCO, but will however significantly promote Mekong Tourism branding worldwide.
20. Christine Jacquemin suggested asking the company to return one copy of the map for each sold or several.

**6.2 Development Program: progress report by MTCO Project Coordinator** (the agenda due to delays was modified and Item 6.3 was presented first to allow time for discussion. Item 6.2. was presented only briefly after the lunch break and development partners presentations)

21. Ms. Christine Jacquemin, Project Coordinator, MTCO, presented the newly re-launched [www.MekongTourism.org](http://www.MekongTourism.org), which was redesigned and equipped with new sections, i.e. Development projects, Business opportunities, Statistical data display and improved contents.
22. She also gave a brief report on activities which have been carried out during the past period. Three tourism development network meetings were organized in Cambodia, Vietnam, and Lao PDR from June to November 2010. MTCO also provided inputs and expertise, and coordinate the midterm review between the consultant hired by the Asian Development Bank, the National Tourism Organizations, development partners and the private sector. She had prepared a presentation on the draft midterm review which was presented earlier (see agenda item 6.3).
23. She presented a new concept paper designed to jumpstart Project 13 & 16 compiling main activities of both projects. This project is meant to improve the understanding of the impacts of tourists by source markets and by type of products consumed, to raise the capacities of the NTAs in collecting, compiling and analyzing market data, and thus to gather essential

information necessary for planning and managing tourism at destination level in the most sustainable and profitable way for the local economies, as well as to provide the private sector with sufficient information enabling them to invest, thus facilitating the development of sustainable multi country circuits within the GMS.

24. This new project entitled “Improving destination management in the GMS” covers many foreseen activities now included in the marketing program of the mid term review. Approval by the countries to pursue fund raising. ADB format was used to draft this concept paper. See in [Appendix 4](#).
25. She reported on current status of funding of priority projects: Tourism & Biodiversity, Pro-Poor Tourism, Human Resource Development, and Corridors.
26. She finally informed the Meeting of other development activities undertaken such as mediating Thailand’s CBT workshop to train Myanmar officials in January 2011, and still to be developed, such as the designing of a curriculum and manual for Protected Area managers that will be presented during a workshop planned in June 2011 in Viet Nam through STDP and French funds, under STDP Lao PDR and French funds, a workshop on CBT project monitoring in Siphandone and a manual providing models for monitoring and measuring impacts of CBT by Communities themselves, and a workshop on financial sustainability of vocational training schools that is pending on support from AFD in Cambodia. Although these workshop are pending upon the advance of co-organizers advance.
27. She encouraged member countries to submit their news and/or updates to be published on the website, in particular to feed the business opportunities section where the business legal frameworks of each country needs to be described in details. Like wise in order to issue the newsletter which is now under her responsibility, the input from each country is greatly appreciated, to achieve a better balance of news item from each. She stressed that not much could be done by MTCO without the strong, and regular inputs from the countries themselves and their strong support in the area of fund raising. A copy of her presentation is in [Appendix 5](#).

### **6.3 Greater Mekong Sub-region Tourism Sector Strategy 2005-2015 - Mid-term Review**

28. Ms. Jacquemin presented the draft executive summary of the mid-term review of the Greater Mekong Subregion Tourism Sector Strategy 2005-2015. The process of mid-term review included (i) situational analysis, (ii) progress review and lessons learnt, (iii) definition of new directions for the road map 2011-2015, (iv) implementation and monitoring arrangements foreseen. The mid-term review does not change the core of the GMS Tourism Sector Strategy which main goal remains poverty reduction and preservation of heritage, hence not looking at increasing arrivals, as growth in the region is the highest world wide but on increasing the yield per tourist. The mid term review suggests to refocus on the priority projects and adopt a spatial integrated approach that is key to ensure sustainability that is to say one that encompasses together with infrastructures projects the core soft components such as PPT, Environmental and overall heritage preservation and valorization, as well as private sector participation. These areas of intervention need to be closely linked together in a systematic way and not taken separately if we wish to optimize the sustainability (social, cultural, environmental and financial) of projects. The progress of the GMS Tourism Sector Strategy

for the past five years included strong political support, numerous projects at national level, impressive performance in growth of arrivals and level of private/public investment. She showed the roadmap narrowing down the 7 strategic program to 3 core programs: Tourism-Related HRD Program, Pro-Poor Sustainable Tourism Development Program, Subregional Marketing and Product Development Program. The 13 priority destinations have been refocused on 7 main areas drafted in the executive summary but which remain to be described more thoroughly. She finally explained a simplified diagram of implementation and monitoring mechanism. A copy of her presentation is in [Appendix 6](#) and the [GMS TSS mid term review executive summary in Appendix 7](#).

## **Discussion**

29. Cambodia said they approve the mid term review but asked that that on page 19, paragraph 2, in the draft of GMS TSS executive summary, it should add 4 provinces: Rattanakhiri, Strung Treng, Charkan Kamom, and Mondulkiri, as well for the Heritage necklace, Stung Treng should be incorporated.
30. China remarked that MTCO Executive Director should not only look after marketing program but also development program.
31. Myanmar suggested that a training program should be conducted in priority tourism areas, i.e. upgrade training schools in the main cities such as Yangon and Mandalay. He also added that the deadline of giving comments and approval of the draft should be set as they had limited time to study the document.
32. Guilin Tourism Institute, China added that they had conducted 6 trainings during the past week for Cambodian tourism officials, tour guides and also organized training for Vietnamese entry staff. Also, China would help Lao PDR to develop a Human Resource Development Program. He looked forward to hosting more GMS trainings in the future.
33. Lao PDR agreed with Myanmar that it was necessary to set up a deadline for giving comments on the draft of GMS TSS executive summary.
34. Vietnam added that the organization of multi stakeholders meetings was a good thing and should be expanded, they would like to get more concrete mechanisms enabling the implementation of projects.
35. Thailand would like to know a practical way to implement the strategy.
36. Ms. Jacquemin further clarified that MTCO, for many reasons, among which legal status of MTCO was an issue, was not in a position to raise funds but was able to accompany the countries to formulate project proposals to different donors to raise funds upon their request. She noted that it would be important to receive all comments and validation before December 14 as it is the necessary time for being submitted for approval prior to the ATF Ministerial meeting.

37. ADB added that tourism was an important component of the GMS Strategic Framework and that key issues need to be addressed, not just specific projects. There is a need for a consensus on the framework, notably to narrow down from 7 core programs to 3 programs with enough guidance to implement the GMS Tourism Sector Strategy.

### **Decision**

38. The Meeting agreed to submit their comments on or before December 14. After approval on structure of the draft, the complete document will be submitted later on.

### **Agenda item 7 Presentation: “Preserving Cultures – Promoting Income: The Northern Heritage Route” by Ms Julie Graham, Pro Poor Sustainable Tourism Sector Leader, SNV Lao PDR**

39. Ms. Graham shared with the Meeting SNV work on the Northern Heritage Route. She explained about the role of development sector towards tourism, i.e. demonstrable impact on poverty reduction, sustainable interventions, and return on investment. SNV’s criteria for the Northern Heritage Route included livelihood activities to reduce poverty, feasibility, return on investment, and scalability. Key lessons learnt from the project: view project holistically, improve existing products and services, small is good within a bigger context, marketing comes last after training and product development have been conducted. The next steps for the project: set priority project, increase links to revised GMS strategy, build into ADB/STDP project, seek donor funding to expand regionally. A copy of her presentation is in [Appendix 8](#).

### **Discussion**

40. Mr. Sonoda, from Mahidol University, agreed with Ms. Graham to maximize the existing tourism assests.
41. Chairman appreciated Ms. Graham’s presentation and noted that heritage and culture were an integral part of tourism, which required further research.

### **Agenda item 8 Presentation: “Vulnerability to Trafficking Associated With the Tourism Sector” by Ms Wu Yiping, UNIAP China Office**

42. In her presentation, Ms. Wu Yiping, UNIAP China Office, gave a brief introduction about her office. Then, she presented the COMMIT Process, standing for Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative Against Trafficking, which UNIAP serves as secretariat. She mentioned about the situation of human trafficking in the GMS, in particular for sexual servitude for which the GMS is identified as the most problematic region in the world but also for issues such as street children, beggars and sellers are likely exploited. The trafficked victims end up working in massage parlors and karaoke bars in entertainment districts frequented by tourists. The Child Sex Tourism (CST) is the most heinous and ugly face of sex tourism because of the more vulnerable nature of children. The crime is presumed to be expanding in geographic area and increasing in numbers. The best practices for the CST were composed of Prevention, Protection, and Prosecution (3 Ps). A copy of her presentation is in [Appendix 9](#).



## **Discussion**

43. Cambodia remarked that his country had set up a Committee on Child Sex Tourism and distributed brochures and stickers at every airport and checkpoint.
44. Myanmar added that his country had a Central Unit for Anti Child Sex Tourism and also conducted workshops and campaigns through several media.
45. Ms. Jacquemin, Project Coordinator, MTCO, added that all sensitization materials should be translated into Asian languages as they constitute more than 70 % of all tourists and not only in English. She also stressed the fact that apart from sex exploitation of women and children, the growing issue addressed by UNIAP of child beggars was crucial as it was diverting children from school, caught in organized mafia pushing them to sell goods to the tourists. She suggested that do' & don't booklets shall include recommendations on that subject explaining the consequences of child begging. She mentioned that MTCO is welcoming all communications to be posted on its websites.
46. Mr. Florence, Executive Director, MTCO, suggested that both tourists and local people must be educated. Various channels can be used to educate people, i.e. do's & don'ts brochures, in-flight magazines, and other educational media.
47. Chairman suggested 3 ways to prevent vagabonds and street beggars: 1) increase awareness via brochure, giving more information; 2) persuade the government to establish more system to save children from illegal actions; 3) establish more severe punishment system.

## **Agenda item 9   GMS Country Project Updates**

### **9.1 Projects updates by the 6 GMS countries**

- *Update by Cambodia*

48. In 9 months 2010, tourist arrivals to Cambodia was 1,803,180 increased 14.56% compared to same period of 2009. Based on study and survey it is expected that by 2010 Cambodia will receive 2.3 international million arrivals with an increase of over 10% and by 2015 Cambodia will further receive 3.5 million arrivals.
49. For the revenue, in 2008 revenue created by tourism industry was USD 1,595 million and 2009 revenue created by tourism industry was USD 1,561 million decreased about 2% compared to 2008.
50. Cambodia currently has 19 border checkpoints. All international checkpoints and international border checkpoints visa are provided upon arrival, except for Preah Sihanouk International Seaport Visa is provided upon request.

- *Update by China PRC*

51. Yunnan, PRC, counted 2.85 million international tourists in 2009, a constant increase since 1999. Likewise, the number of domestic tourist arrivals to Yunnan has continually increased since 1999, to stand at 120 million in 2009.
52. Yunnan mentioned their plan to build a transportation network, integrating water, air, and land, on which six-party agreement has been signed. There will be a caravan of more than 2,000 tourists from Thailand to Xishuangbanna, Yunnan Province to join an enterprise event recently. Various bilingual, English-Chinese, guidebooks on tourism routes have been developed, as well as 50,000 brochures to promote GMS -tourism. Also, there will be the launch of an inaugural issue of Yunnan-Mekong bilingual magazine in January 2011. Yunnan currently has 20 high-end tourist vessels. An increased number of Northern Thai tourists visit Yunnan Province. Yunnan reported that they have 20 border checkpoints of which 13 are at national level and 7 at provincial level.
53. Guangxi reported that international tourist arrivals for January-October 2010 totaled 2.1 million and that their 2010 target is for 2.35 million international tourist arrivals.
54. Guangxi reported that they have 13 border checkpoints and 12 border ports. Guangxi are conducting 4 programs, among which are China-Vietnam construction zone along the border, establishment of international tourism zone along China-Vietnam border. Guangxi look forward to Vietnam's approval of these programs.
55. Representative from Guilin Institute of Tourism (GLIT) gave a brief introduction on the background of the institute. Then, she presented 2 main activities: Guangxi-ASEAN Tourism talents training program and GMS Tourism Talents Training Base. The first activity established in 2008, with support of GXTA and CNTA. For the past 2 years, 5 tourism talent trainings had been organized, i.e. training courses for Vietnam's outbound tour guides, Lao's tourism leaders training. Currently the 6<sup>th</sup> training course is ongoing, joined by 17 Cambodia's high level tourism officers.
- *Update by Lao PDR*
56. Lao PDR reported that international tourist arrivals for January-September 2010 totalled 1.7 million (not including the Savannakhet border crossing), a 23% increase over the same period in the previous year. The 2010 target is for 2.1 million international tourist arrivals.
- *Update by Myanmar*
57. The tourist arrivals of 2010 (January to October) was (649,412). The growth rate was 3.6% compared to the arrivals 626,577 of the same period of 2009. Therefore, the tourist arrivals to Myanmar have been gradually increasing from time to time as Myanmar's situation becomes peaceful and stable. With significant efforts to increase Myanmar visibility at international level and to develop hotel and tourism industry, Myanmar expects to receive approximately 800,000 total tourist arrivals, including border tourism by the end of 2010.
58. Myanmar updated the meeting on border checkpoints. 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 enter by air from Yangon which is the main entry point of Myanmar. There are 6 border checkpoints along Myanmar-China border, among which Muse is main gateway and most accessible to enter and exit for travelers from Myanmar and Yunnan, PRC. There are 4 border checkpoints between Myanmar and Thailand, among which Tachileik, Myawaddy and Kawthaung checkpoints are accessible for tourists from Thailand to Myanmar.

59. Myanmar reported on the progress of GMS Workshop on Development of Community-Based Tourism. The workshop is scheduled to be held in Chiang Mai, Thailand, during January 22-29, 2011. The workshop targets 30 participants who are officials and managers from both public and private sector of Myanmar tourism industry. Myanmar is currently waiting for an invitation letter from the Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Thailand for further process. Myanmar thanked the Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Thailand for their kind coordination and support and Mekong Tourism Coordinating Office for tremendous coordination.
60. Myanmar also informed the meeting that the Government of Myanmar has officially changed the name of the Country and National Flag since October 2010. The new name of the country is “The Republic of the Union of Myanmar” and asked everyone to use the country’s new name and National Flag for any related publications, printings, ceremonies, meetings, booth decorations, presentations, etc.

- *Update by Thailand*

61. Thailand reported that, until October 2010, the number of international tourist arrivals totaled 12.5 million, and by the end of 2010, it is expected that the number will reach 15.5 million, a 16% increase from 2009. At present Thailand has 35 border checkpoints, including 6 international airports, 6 with Myanmar, 6 with Cambodia and 17 with Lao PDR.
62. Thailand reported that the proposal on Promoting Responsible Heritage Tourism for the GMS Project was approved by UNESCO. However, in order to get UNESCO support, Thailand needs to get endorsement letters from the other GMS countries. Until now, only Myanmar has submitted the endorsement letter. So, she urged other countries to submit the letter as soon as possible. Thailand will send a sample of endorsement letter to other countries for their information. Thailand also gave update on GMS Workshop on Community-based Tourism in Thailand. Finally, she reported on a familiarization trip under the theme of Tourism Connectivity Development among Neighboring Countries under GMS Cooperation. Thailand will continue support to the Southern Economic Corridor Workshop for Lao PDR, Vietnam in Hue in 2011.

- *Update by Vietnam*

63. Vietnam reported that there are currently 41 international checkpoints, divided into 19 road border checkpoints, 1 railway with China, 15 seaports, 6 airports.
64. Vietnam reported that they received 4.2 million international tourist arrivals, 39% higher than the same period in 2009. Highest growth markets were Cambodia 97.2%, China 90.3%,

Thailand 41.1%, Korea 36.2%, Australia 32.4%, Malaysia 28.4%, Taiwan 25.8%, Japan 22.2%. Also, he forecasted that tourist arrivals throughout 2010 would count 5 million. He also gave a projection of 2015 and 2020 international tourist arrivals, which is expected at 8 million and 12 million respectively.

**Agenda item 10: Preparation of ATF2011 GMS NTOs meeting on 16 January 2011 & GMS Tourism Ministers meeting on 18 January 2011 based on agenda prepared by Cambodia the hosting country**

65. Cambodia presented the draft agenda of GMS NTOs and Ministers' Meeting. Copies of both agendas are in Appendix 10.

66. Vietnam proposed that the agenda item 2 in the Ministers' Meeting shall be changed to report of NTOs'.

**Agenda item 11: Date and venue of the next meeting**

67. Lao PDR informed the meeting that the next TWG-27 will be held in 2011, in Pakse, Champasak, and is scheduled as followed: TWG-27 meeting on 25 May, STDP meeting on 26 May, followed by 2-day event of Mekong Tourism Forum during 27-28 May.

**Closing Session**

68. Chairman thanked all participants for taking part at the Meeting and informed of the place for dinner and program for the evening.