

## **International Seminar on Trade and Tourism Statistics**

BPS-Statistics Indonesia, 7-10 October 2013

***Organized jointly by UN, APEC, and ASEAN Secretariat and hosted by BPS-Statistics Indonesia***

***With support from AANZFTA-ECWP and APEC TATF***

### **Opening Remarks by Director Subash Bose Pillai, MID, AECD, ASEAN Secretariat**

**Respected guests from the international organizations including the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), World Trade Organization (WTO), United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), and the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD),**

**Distinguished Experts from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Statistics New Zealand, United States Bureau of Economic Analysis, participants from the Central Banks, National Statistical Offices, and relevant line ministries of the People's Republic of China (China), Republic of China (Chinese Taipei), India, Japan, Hong Kong, Maldives, Mexico and of the ASEAN Member States.**

I wish all of you a pleasant morning and welcome to Wonderful Indonesia.

On behalf of the Deputy Secretary-General for ASEAN Economic Community, Dr. Lim Hong Hin, I welcome all present to the International Seminar on Trade and Tourism Statistics, jointly-organized by the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement – Economic Cooperation Work Programme (AANZFTA-ECWP) and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation -Technical Assistance Training Facility (APEC-TATF), funded by US Agency for International Development (USAID). Let me express my deep appreciation for the support thus far and continuing support and cooperation to the enhancement and harmonization of the regional statistics, in particular, the Trade and Tourism statistics. I am pleased to note that for this seminar, we are fortunate to have a number of Experts from the international organizations as well as regional Experts who will share with us their knowledge, experiences and best practices in the compilation of Travel services and Tourism statistics including the measurement of the broader context of trade in the Global Value Chains. Your participation, support and cooperation are heartwarming as it indicates your eagerness to help ASEAN pursue the vision of the ASEAN Community Statistical System to produce comparable, relevant and timely statistics by 2015.

Trade in services with its continually increasing share to the ASEAN GDP has become a facilitator of trade in goods and investments and an input to value chains. Within the trade in services categories, travel, transport, and other business services constitute the largest sectors in the ASEAN Member States. The travel sector accounts for the largest share, particularly in exports.

Tourism is one of the priority sectors for ASEAN integration, ASEAN tourist arrivals has reached more than 81 million in 2011, with Intra-ASEAN accounting for a little less than fifty percent of the source market for the region.

Acknowledging the importance of tourism as an economic engine and development tool, the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2011-2015 was endorsed by the ASEAN Tourism Ministers at their 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting as the successor of the Roadmap for Integration of Tourism Sector which was completed in 2010. The strategic

plan aims to realize its vision by 2015 whereby ASEAN will provide an increasing number of visitors to the region with authentic and diverse products, enhanced connectivity, safe and secure environment, better quality of services, while ensuring an improved quality of life and opportunities for residents through responsible and sustainable tourism development by working effectively with a wide range of stakeholders. The outcomes of these efforts are expected to contribute to the overall goals of the ASEAN Community by 2015 through the promotion of growth, integration, and competitiveness of the tourism sector.

However, in spite of its growing importance, there seems to be a little understanding of the sector beyond the fact that it is large and growing. Tourism covers a diverse and expanded number of sectors and sub-sectors, which are regulated by different government agencies and ministries, where some sectors may be regulated, unregulated or may not require regulation at all.

Although the official statistics in both travel services and tourism are improving, the level of details and the richness of the data collected still lags far behind than what is available, with its counterpart, trade in goods. One reason for such a situation I see, and perhaps the most important of all, is the lack of coordinated system on the collection and classification of substantial information on the services sector.

During the last workshop we held last year, we learned of the challenges faced by the trade negotiators in formulating policies and closing deals in the absence of pertinent data on trade in services. It is for these reasons that the development of reliable and comprehensive SITS becomes crucial. The systematic collection and classification of statistics, with timely release, will provide our policymakers the opportunity to better analyse of the impact of regional integration on trade in services and to chart the way forward.

Noting the importance of services as a whole, please allow me a few moments to delve on the development of services liberalisation in ASEAN. In 1995, ASEAN Member States signed the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services (AFAS), mandating progressive negotiations on the liberalization of trade in services in recognition of strengthening intra-ASEAN economic cooperation.

The subsequent decision at the 11<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit in December 2005 to accelerate the liberalization of trade in services by 2015, re-affirmed the importance for ASEAN to further integrate its services sector and deepen its economic integration process.

In November 2007, the Heads of States/Governments of ASEAN adopted the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint which aims to transform ASEAN into a single market and production base, a highly competitive economic region, a region of equitable economic development that is fully integrated into the global economy.

The inclusion of services in global trade liberalization has created opportunities and challenges for the ASEAN economies and businesses. To this date, ASEAN continues to work towards achieving the free flow of services, to take advantage of the many opportunities it can offer.

In achieving this goal, cooperation between stakeholders from the business communities, governments academe, civil society, including you, the statisticians and compilers of statistics of international trade in services, will play a vital role in our endeavor to ensure the way forward for ASEAN's integration in services.

Without accurate data, it will be difficult for the policy makers to vision out the way forward for ASEAN in this sector including ASEAN's engagement with her Free Trade Agreement Partners.

As for this Seminar, it is my ardent hope that the participants will make full use of the opportunity to learn as much as possible and take home the knowledge learnt here and contribute towards a multiplier effect by imparting what you have learnt to your colleagues back home; but more importantly, in initiating change in the way you operate and to incorporate all the good things you have learnt here so that it will translate to tangible benefits.

I salute the organizers of this regional activity for the big endeavor of bringing together this bunch of Experts to facilitate learning and sharing of statistics, moreover to gain knowledge on the cultural, social, and economic sectors of the national societies and on building strong international ties among each other.

I would like to thank the USAID through the APEC TATF, and the AANZFTA –ECWP for their commitment to support the ASEAN Framework of Cooperation in Statistics in the enhancement of ASEAN statistics through the various means of strengthening the statistical capacity of the ASEAN Member States since 2009.

With this, I wish you all a very fruitful Seminar and an enjoyable stay in Jakarta.

Thank you.