

## **ANKARA DECLARATION OF THE ACD MINISTERS**

We, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and other Heads of Delegation of the Member States of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD), namely the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Kingdom of Bahrain, the People's Republic of Bangladesh, the Kingdom of Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, the Kingdom of Cambodia, the People's Republic of China, the Republic of India, the Republic of Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Republic of Korea, the State of Kuwait, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mongolia, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Nepal, the Sultanate of Oman, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the State of Palestine, the Republic of the Philippines, the State of Qatar, the Russian Federation, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Republic of Singapore, the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, the Republic of Tajikistan, the Kingdom of Thailand, the Republic of Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, the Republic of Uzbekistan, and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam;

**HAVING GATHERED** virtually at Ankara for the 17<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) on 21 January 2021, under the theme "The New Normal and Safe and Healthy Tourism";

**ACKNOWLEDGING** that at a time in which the world is profoundly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, our determination to strengthen and deepen our co-operation to address the multitude of challenges generated by this global crisis is more essential than ever;

**REAFFIRMING** our strong faith in multilateralism, in particular the United Nations system and committed to active participation, effective coordination and cooperation with all relevant regional and international organizations to maximize the realization of our common interests;

**REALIZING** the importance of enhancing our cooperation and coordination to curb the devastating impact of the pandemic on communities and economies and facilitate a strong and resilient

economic recovery as well as sustainable, balanced and inclusive growth in the post-pandemic era;

**REAFFIRMING** the commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as the blueprint for building back better after the pandemic;

**STRESSING** the principles of informal dialogue, inclusiveness and complementarity, including shared interests with commitment to cooperate with one another, which constitute the basis of the “Spirit of ACD” which marks its 19<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year;

**RECOGNIZING** the significance of the implementation of the ACD Vision for Asia Cooperation 2030 giving priority to its six pillars of cooperation, [i.e. (1) interrelation of food, water and energy security (2) connectivity; (3) science, technology, and innovation; (4) education and human resource development; (5) culture and tourism; and (6) promoting approaches to inclusive and sustainable development] to promote the Asian cooperation in order to build resilient and dynamic societies across the region; through broader participation and contribution of public and private sectors, academia, research centers, businesses, media and civil society;

**RECALLING** the importance of stepping up mutual efforts to overcome climate change challenges;

**RECOGNIZING** the importance of the ACD “Blueprint 2017-2021” which lays down a firm foundation for the ACD Blueprint 2021-2030;

**ACKNOWLEDGING** also the long-term economic and social impact of COVID-19 pandemic in the midst of the new normal in all sectors, taking into account the recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and other relevant international organizations and initiatives;

**EMPHASIZING** the potential contribution of the tourism and travel sectors, which are among the hardest-hit by the pandemic, to the economic recovery efforts; **TAKING ALSO INTO ACCOUNT** their

role in the protection of historical, cultural and natural heritage, in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Agenda and in enhanced understanding and better relations among citizens;

**NOTING** also that many economies are either dependent on tourism revenues or strongly benefit from tourism flows;

**UNDERLINING** the importance of safe tourism practices both for the consumers, businesses, in particular micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and the governments under pandemic conditions;

**NOTING** the discussions held during the “ACD Tourism Dialogue: Mitigating COVID-19 Impacts Towards Sustainable and Inclusive Tourism” virtual Conference organized by the Republic of Indonesia on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2020 and the Green Ecological Grain Storage Technology Training Workshop for ACD Countries organized by the People’s Republic of China from 17<sup>th</sup> November to 30<sup>th</sup> December 2020;

**ACKNOWLEDGING** the positive contribution of organizing global-scale events in 2021, including EXPO Dubai 2020, and the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020 to stimulate economic activity across sectors, in particular the tourism and travel sectors, amongst others;

**REAFFIRMING** our commitment to strengthening the multilateral trading system with the WTO at its core, including through the WTO reform, as well as through strong, sustainable and resilient supply chains and distribution networks;

**BEING AWARE** of the business vulnerability of the micro, small and medium sized enterprises (MSMEs) and **AFFIRMING** our pledge to continuously support MSMEs also during pandemic conditions;

**CONSCIOUS** of the importance of broader participation and contribution of public and private sectors, international organizations, academia, research centers, businesses, media and civil society in support of the governmental efforts to achieve goals and objectives under the six pillars of ACD cooperation;

**WELCOMING**, in this context, the first meeting of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry of ACD member states at the initiative of the ACD Chairmanship on 20 January 2021, and **TAKING NOTE** of the outcome of their deliberations;

**NOTING** further with satisfaction the initiative from the ACD University Network (ACD-UN) to promote post COVID-19 safe and healthy tourism as well as human resource development for the New Normal by establishing day to day practice to be adapted to the new normal, while highlighting the importance of encouraging ACD-UN to work closely with the respective Ministries of Education to encourage at least one university in each Member State to become a member of the ACD-UN in order to establish and prepare for Post-Covid era;

**REFERRING** to the increasing importance of science, technology, innovation, digitalization, education, public health, trade, transit, transport interconnectivity as engines of sustainable growth, inclusive community development and resilience in the recovery and aftermath;

**NOTING** further with concern that the crisis has also highlighted the risk of increasing digital divide and increasing inequality.

**HIGHLIGHTING** the need to further invest in high-speed broadband infrastructure, bridge digital divides and develop the skills needed to operate in a digital environment across all segments of society; diffuse digital technologies and know-how to all, while respecting intellectual property rights and in line with domestic laws and regulations;

**RECOGNIZING** further the increasing importance of connectivity in the face of COVID-19 pandemic and its pivotal role in smooth transportation of vital goods and believing that the utmost welfare and development can be achieved through concerted efforts and commitment by Member States;

**RECALLING** the importance of water, energy and food nexus for economic viability and sustainable development;

**EMPHASIZING** also that the timely development and equitable supply of an efficacious and safe vaccine against COVID-19 as global public goods for all is vital for humanity;

**WELCOMING** the establishment of the World Health Organization (WHO) Geographically Dispersed Office for Preparedness for Humanitarian and Health Emergencies in Istanbul, Turkey, as an additional instrument in responding to COVID-19 pandemic;

**RECOGNIZING** the declaration of 27 December 2020 as the "International Day of Epidemic Preparedness" by the United Nations General Assembly; declaration of the year 2021 as the "International Year of Health and Care Workers" (YHCW) by the 73<sup>rd</sup> World Health Assembly of 9-14 November 2020 and the "International Year of Creative Economy for Sustainable Development" by 74<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly on 17-30 September 2019, and

**WELCOMING HIGHLY** the acceptance of the Republic of Turkey to extend its Chairmanship until September 2021; the offer of the State of Qatar to host the 3<sup>rd</sup> ACD Summit in 2021; **EXPRESSING APPRECIATION** to the State of Kuwait for its continuous support to the ACD Secretariat; and **EXPRESSING FURTHER APPRECIATION** to the Secretary General and the Secretariat for their continuing duties;

**DO HEREBY DECLARE:**

1. to uphold the core values of the ACD in carrying out the six pillars of cooperation to mitigate adverse effects of the pandemic and to coordinate our recovery efforts;
2. to enhance regional cooperation in our region with a goal to safeguard the peoples' wellbeing and safety;
3. to share information and exchange of best practices to support the recovery of the tourism and travel sectors with comprehensive measures such as safety and hygiene protocols in line with the UNWTO guidelines and return to normalcy in the Member States

given the natural beauty, deep history and cultural diversity of the Asian continent as one of the main cradles of global civilization;

4. to encourage all countries in the world to adopt all necessary precautionary measures to restore the travel and tourism operations;
5. to promote and further develop good practices of safe tourism and international certification processes for all related sectors;
6. to explore cooperation among member states for the development and promotion of nature-based tourism when pandemic prevention and control policies permit with the possibility of more person-to-person physical distancing and individual tourism like mountaineering, trekking and so on;
7. to share and disseminate best practices and guidelines on immigrations and international travel policies, including safe travel corridor, bilaterally as well as within the competent international organizations such as the WHO, UNWTO and ICAO;
8. to enhance cooperation and mutual support among all member states so as to consider synergizing national tourism development strategies across the whole region;
9. to enhance cooperation for testing, tracing, screening and treatment of the COVID-19 patients including putting in place the synchronized and effective systems for tests of international travellers at the source, transit and destination countries in order to reduce the health risk of the virus and develop confidence and relief for the travelers;
10. to work constructively with other WTO Members in the lead up to the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference to be hosted by Kazakhstan with a view to achieving tangible results;
11. to call upon Member States to increase their investments in and to mobilize their resources to areas and sectors such as agriculture, science, technology, tourism, industry, innovation, education, public health, creative economy, infrastructure and poverty

alleviation and ensure broader participation of public and private sectors, academia, research entities, businesses and civil society in their activities to generate a sustainable recovery from COVID-19;

12. to focus on full buoyancy of tourism activities to prioritize in training human resources as per new demands in the market, to work out new ways to attract visitors and lengthen their stay as well as increase per capita expenditure of tourists considering the post-COVID-19 phase requiring concerted actions for employment retention and mobility of economy;
13. to continue the practice of selection of ACD Tourism Capital with a view to promoting and publicizing tourism attractions of ACD countries;
14. to support the organization of the ACD Business Forum, hopefully to be held in 2021, so that capacity building, technical and economic cooperation, particularly at the level of MSMEs, could be materialized;
15. to encourage the implementation of sustainable water management and sustainable energy production as well as agriculture practices and reduce food loss and waste in Asia, with a view to promoting clean energy and energy efficiency and ensuring food security;
16. to enhance cooperation and collaboration for mitigation and adaptation of the adverse impacts of climate change and natural disasters;
17. to encourage the sharing of best practices, knowledge, skills and experiences in combating, preventing and mitigating infectious diseases, in particular the COVID-19, including through a possible meeting of Health Ministries;
18. to enhance cooperation in the development and fair distribution of safe, effective and affordable vaccines, drugs and medical equipment and ensure their easy accessibility in affordable rates in

our efforts to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic and to prepare for possible future pandemics;

19. to refrain from promulgating and applying any unilateral economic, financial or trade measures not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations;
20. to encourage Member States to play leading role through their prime-movers and co-prime movers in organizing and hosting activities under the six pillars of ACD cooperation;
21. to task the Senior Officials to finalize the Guiding Principles for the Functioning of the ACD Secretariat;
22. to task the Senior Officials to prepare the Blueprint 2021-2030 for the adoption at the ACD Ministerial Meeting to be held in September on the sidelines of the UNGA or for the approval by leaders at the next ACD Summit in Qatar;
23. to task the Senior Officials also to initiate discussions on the ACD's General Rules of Procedure;
24. to task Senior Officials and the Secretariat to support preparations for the ACD Meeting with other Secretaries General of regional organizations/fora in Asia to be hosted by the Kingdom of Bahrain as the first interphase between ACD and potential development partners;
25. to support preparations for the Third ACD Summit to be hosted by the State of Qatar, tentatively in the second half of 2021;

We **EXPRESS** appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Turkey for hosting the 17<sup>th</sup> ACD Ministerial Meeting virtually.

Adopted at Ankara, on 21 January 2021