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**PRESS RELEASE
MINISTRY OF TOURISM, ARTS AND CULTURE
(MOTAC)**

**MALAYSIA REAFFIRMS COMMITMENT TO A PEOPLE-EMPOWERED
ASEAN AT THE ASEAN SOCIO-CULTURAL COMMUNITY HIGH-LEVEL
FORUM 2026**

MAKATI, 4 MARCH 2026 – Malaysia reaffirms its steadfast commitment to advancing a resilient, inclusive, and people-centred ASEAN through its participation in the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) High-Level Forum 2026. The event was held under the theme ***“Navigating Our Future, Together: Empowering People for a Resilient and Cohesive ASEAN.”***

The Honourable Mr. Chiew Choon Man, Deputy Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture, represented The Honourable Dato Sri Tiong King Sing, Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture to attend the high-level regional platform alongside ASEAN Ministers, senior officials, development partners, and representatives from the civil society, private sector, academia and youth delegations from across Southeast Asia.

Hosted by the Department of Social Welfare and Development under the Philippines’ ASEAN Chairship, the Forum marked a pivotal milestone as ASEAN transitioned towards the implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2045 (ACV 2045), following the conclusion of the ASCC Blueprint 2025.

The Forum provided a strategic platform to reflect on the achievements, innovations, and lessons learned under the ASCC Blueprint 2025, while identifying forward-looking strategies to bolster the implementation of the ACV 2045. Deliberations addressed critical emerging challenges facing the region including digital transformation, climate pressures, demographic transitions, and inequality whilst underscoring the necessity of empowering individuals, families, and communities as the bedrock of ASEAN’s continued progress.

In his intervention, the Deputy Minister emphasised that ASEAN's strength lies in its people and maintained that empowerment must remain central to the regional development agenda. He highlighted Malaysia's ongoing efforts to enhance social protection mechanisms, expand access to education and cultural participation, and promote innovation and digital inclusion. Furthermore, he stressed the importance of strengthening civic engagement to ensure that development benefits were shared equitably across all segments of society.

The High-Level Forum featured in-depth discussions on empowering ASEAN's population and strengthening cross-pillar and cross-sectoral collaboration. These deliberations reinforced the shared understanding that sustainable, inclusive and people-centred growth can only be realised through closer integration between ASEAN's Political-Security, Economic, and Socio-Cultural pillars. An approach that resonates strongly with the aspirations of Malaysia MADANI.

Anchored in the principles of sustainability, compassion and mutual respect, Malaysia reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to strengthening cross-sectoral partnerships and multi-stakeholder collaboration in advancing human security, regional cohesion and shared prosperity. In doing so, Malaysia continues to champion innovative, inclusive and resilient solutions that safeguard the wellbeing of ASEAN communities.

As ASEAN charts its trajectory towards 2045, Malaysia remains steadfast in working hand in hand with fellow Member States to shape a future defined by unity, solidarity and collective progress. Through its active engagement in regional platforms such as the ASCC High-Level Forum 2026, Malaysia demonstrates its enduring dedication to nurturing a people-centred and forward-looking ASEAN Community that is empowered, adaptive and prepared to navigate the evolving global landscape together.

Issued by:

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