



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

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**MALAYSIA REAFFIRMS COMMITMENT AT THE 40<sup>TH</sup> ASEAN  
SOCIO-CULTURAL COMMUNITY SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING IN  
MAKATI, THE PHILIPPINES**

**PHILIPPINES, 3 MARCH 2026** – Malaysia continues to champion ASEAN's socio-cultural agenda at the 40<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (SOCA), held today in Makati, the Philippines.

The meeting convened senior officials from across all ASEAN Member States to deliberate on strategic directions and urgent socio-cultural challenges facing the region. The outcomes of these discussions were submitted to the 35th ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Council of Ministers (ASCC) Meeting for formal endorsement.

Leading the Malaysian delegation was YBhg. Dato' Shaharuddin bin Abu Sohoh, Secretary General of the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture (MOTAC). Serving as the SOCA Leader, Dato' Shaharuddin delivered Malaysia's Country Statement, which underscored the nation's key achievements and its steadfast commitment to regional cooperation.

Reflecting on recent milestones, YBhg. Dato' Shaharuddin stated:

"Malaysia's stewardship of ASEAN in 2025 culminated in the ASEAN Community Vision 2045, the strengthening of ASEAN structures, and the successful accession of Timor-Leste. Under the Philippines' leadership, this 40th SOCA meeting serves as a vital continuation of our collective action toward achieving a robust socio-cultural agenda."

Malaysia's participation carries significant weight as **MOTAC currently spearheads 15 sectoral bodies** under the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community pillar. This leadership reinforces Malaysia's role in advancing inclusive, sustainable, and people-centered initiatives that align with the aspirations of **Malaysia MADANI**.

This engagement further reflects Malaysia's commitment to sustainability, compassion, and mutual respect. By aligning with Malaysia's Foreign Policy Framework, the delegation continues to advocate for a proactive, values-driven approach to international decision-making, shaping a regional discourse grounded in innovation and shared prosperity.

The Meeting deliberated four ASCC priorities, namely (i) empowered and resilient families; (ii) inclusive development; (iii) youth and innovation; and (iv) a food-secure and climate-friendly future. These priorities aim to build a people-oriented, people-centred ASEAN that is sustainable and resilient, while empowering ASEAN people by fostering social inclusion, protecting vulnerable groups, and promoting a sense of shared identity and community.

*Issued by:*

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