



MEDIA RELEASE

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NEW TOURISM ORGANISATION MARKS START OF A NEW ERA

In today's world, the profits of the ever-expanding tourism industry are seen to be taken by the large global corporate organizations, while small businesses and local communities are perceived to miss out on the industry's many benefits.

Tourism brings a range of positive outcomes at all levels of the economy, from jobs and foreign earnings to improved local communities through broadened facilities and cultural exchange.

The formation of the South-east Asian Tourism Organisation (SEATO) will ensure that people in all countries in South-East Asia are able to take advantage of the benefits of the industry.

"SEATO is committed to bringing the full range of tourism benefits to the villages and kampongs of South-east Asia by linking international expertise into development programs aimed at regional and local tourism growth," Mr Robert Johnston, SEATO Secretariat Director said.

The organisation was formed to serve as a conduit for information between Government and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) funding tourism development programs using professional tourism Volunteer Consultants (VCs) to bring the best available industry expertise to a range of development projects in the region.

"SEATO will be involved in local development projects in countries throughout South-east Asia and the Pacific and is guiding a range of programs to completion to enhancing the lives of people at all levels of society," Mr Johnston said.

In 2009, a group of tourism professionals, under the auspices of the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) and National Tourist Offices throughout South-east Asia recognised the need to broaden tourism impacts to maximise their effect at the local and community levels to provide improved living conditions and lifestyles for a broader spectrum of people. They were the catalyst for forming SEATO.

For further information contact Mr Robert Johnston, SEATO Secretariat Director on Robert.johnston@seato.org

