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## **AirAsia Joins Hands with UNDP to Unveil 4 Sustainable Development Initiatives Supporting Community, Economic, Social and Environmental Development**



**20 December 2017** – AirAsia and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) declaring cooperation for sustainable development and launching 4 pilot initiatives in support of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Under the collaboration, AirAsia and UNDP are engaging in four initiatives including; SDGs awareness creation, Eastern Sarus Crane conservation, Friendly Design universal accessibility, and sustainable tourism development called Journey D.

The SDGs awareness creation initiative seeks to utilize a variety of media to promote widespread understanding of the UNDP’s Sustainable Development Goals and includes a range of smaller projects such as AirAsia’s SDGs airplane livery.

The Eastern Sarus Crane conservation initiative sees AirAsia contributing to conservation of the Eastern Sarus Crane in Buriram province, in support of an initiative started by Zoological Park Organization and the Faculty of Forestry of Kasetsart University.

The Friendly Design initiative trains AirAsia staff to be better equipped to serve passengers with special needs and pushes for improved mobility systems for such passengers in airports.



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The Journey D initiative meanwhile is AirAsia's initiative to sustainably develop community tourism and involve development trainings in terms of community management for the community's tourism working group, helping them to develop their local products and enhancing the English language capabilities of their residents so that they can better welcome visitors. The initiative was piloted in the four communities of Koh Klang in Krabi, Kok Muang in Buriram, Pha Mhee in Chiang Rai and Phrom Lok in Nakhon Si Thammarat.

Mr. Tassapon Bijleveld, CEO of Thai AirAsia, said AirAsia has always been aware that conducting business in a sustainable manner is necessary in the modern business landscape. In joining with the UNDP, AirAsia is looking to truly benefit communities while ensuring sustainability on a global scale. Through the four initiatives, the two organizations will drive economic, social and environmental developments.

He added AirAsia has already been engaging in such social initiatives for some time now, training its staff to serve passengers with special needs through the Friendly Design project and providing knowledge for sustainable development of community-based tourism through its Journey D initiative.

Ms. Deirdre Boyd, UNDP Resident Representative in Thailand, said UNDP is excited to be partnering with Thai AirAsia to promote the Sustainable Development Goals through sustainable tourism and environmental and biodiversity conservation. This is an excellent example of how the private sector can and should play their part in achieving the SDGs, and how we together can develop innovative approaches to sustainable development. This is just the beginning. We look forward to exploring more opportunities, both in Thailand and in the Asia Pacific region.

Today (20 December, 2017), AirAsia and the UNDP joined hands for sustainable social responsibility, having Mr. Tassapon Bijleveld and Ms. Deirdre Boyd signed a Memorandum of Understanding at the Stock Exchange of Thailand following a seminar on four initiatives resulting from the cooperation led by representatives Mr. Martin Hart-Hansen, Deputy Resident Representative of UNDP Thailand, speaking about the effort to promote the Sustainable Development Goals; Dr. Boripat Siri-aroonrat, Director of the Bureau of Conservation Research and Education at Zoological Park Organization Thailand, speaking about the Eastern Sarus Crane conservation initiative; Mr. Vorayut Kijkool, Deputy President of the Friendly Design ambassadors network, speaking about Friendly Design's universal access campaign; and Mr. Santisuk Klongchaiya, Director of Commercial at Thai AirAsia, who spoke of the Journey D sustainable community-based tourism initiative.

#### **Photo Caption (Photo 1)**

(Left) Mr. Tassapon Bijleveld, CEO of Thai AirAsia, and (Right) Ms. Deirdre Boyd, UNDP Resident Representative in Thailand, sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to kick off cooperation for sustainable development, witnessed by Mrs. Kesara Manthusree, President of the Stock Exchange of Thailand, at the Stock Exchange of Thailand.



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### **Media inquiries**

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