



**THE 49th ASEAN ECONOMIC MINISTERS' (AEM) MEETING
7 September 2017, Pasay City, Philippines**

JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT

1. The 49th Meeting of the ASEAN Economic Ministers (AEM) was held on 7 September 2017 in Pasay City, Philippines. It was chaired by H.E Ramon M. Lopez, Secretary of Trade and Industry of the Philippines. The 49th AEM was preceded by a preparatory meeting of the Senior Economic Officials (SEOM). The AEM also held joint meetings with the 31st ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) Council and the 20th ASEAN Investment Area (AIA) Council.

2. The Ministers exchanged views on global and regional developments as well as the progress made in implementing the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Blueprint 2025 including ASEAN's external economic relations. The Ministers reaffirmed ASEAN's commitment to open regionalism and the AEC 2025 agenda, notwithstanding the uncertainties surrounding global economic recovery, the rising trends of protectionism, and global policy uncertainties.

Economic Performance

3. The Ministers were encouraged by the projection that ASEAN would maintain a robust GDP growth rate of 4.8% in 2017, the same rate for 2016, with positive trends observed across all ASEAN Member States. The Ministers noted that domestic demand will remain as the main economic growth driver for the region supported by growing private consumption and investment, the latter supported by public spending, particularly on infrastructure projects, and fiscal stimulus. Improved external environments will also lend support to growth in the region.

4. The Ministers noted that ASEAN's total merchandise trade remained resilient at US\$2.22 trillion in 2016, of which 23.1% was intra-ASEAN. Among ASEAN's Dialogue Partners, China, the EU and the US ranked as the region's top three (3) trading partners. The Ministers also noted that ASEAN's total services trade stood at US\$643.4 billion, of which 16.6% was intra ASEAN. The Ministers further noted that inflows of foreign direct investment (FDI) to ASEAN reached US\$96.72 billion in 2016, of which 24.8% was intra-ASEAN. The top three (3) sources of FDI inflows to the region are the EU, Japan, and the US. The services sector remained to be the largest recipient of FDI inflows to ASEAN, which amounted to US\$77.08 billion or 79.7% of total inflows in 2016.

5. The Ministers also expressed concerns over several downside risks, including the policy adjustments taking place in major economies and their global spillovers.

Growth prospects may also be curbed by tighter global financial conditions, sharp capital flow reversals, and adverse balance sheet implications of volatile currency movements. Nonetheless, the Ministers remained confident that the strong macroeconomic fundamentals of ASEAN Member States would enable the region to withstand the challenges in the global economic environment. In addition, to deepen regional integration and with a view to further support the narrowing of development gap, the Ministers agreed to set the goal of further boosting the growth of ASEAN intra-regional trade and ASEAN intra-regional investment over the coming decade.

ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Blueprint 2025

6. The Ministers welcomed ongoing efforts to implement the AEC 2025 Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework that was endorsed in 2016, including the development of databases to support compliance and outcomes monitoring at the ASEAN Secretariat. The Framework covers compliance monitoring; outcomes monitoring; impact evaluation; and verification, reporting, and review. The Ministers also welcomed the adoption and online publication of the AEC 2025 Consolidated Strategic Action Plan (CSAP) in February 2017, which is a single public reference document comprising key action lines, drawn from the sectoral work plans. The Ministers underscored the importance of the CSAP in improving information outreach and instilling stakeholder confidence, thus, the need for this to be updated periodically. The Ministers welcomed the inaugural publication of the ASEAN Economic Integration Brief, which will provide the public with regular updates on progress in the implementation of the AEC Blueprint 2025.

7. The Ministers noted the adoption of the ASEAN Work Plan on Good Regulatory Practice (2016-2025) and the Strategic Action Plan 2016-2025 for ASEAN Taxation Cooperation – the latter by the ASEAN Finance Ministers in April 2017.

8. The Ministers also welcomed the progress in the implementation of the other sectoral work plans under their purview, namely the AEC 2025 Strategic Action Plan for Trade in Goods; ASEAN Standards and Conformance Strategic Plan 2016-2025; Strategic Action Plan for Services 2016-2025; 2016-2025 Investment Work Programme; ASEAN Competition Action Plan 2016-2025; ASEAN Strategic Action Plan for Consumer Protection 2016-2025; ASEAN IPR Action Plan 2016-2025; ASEAN Strategic Action Plan for SME Development 2016-2025; ASEAN Community Statistical System (ACSS) Strategic Plan 2016-2025; and the ASEAN Work Plan for Enhancing the Global Value Chain (GVC) Agenda 2016-2025.

Priority Deliverables for the Philippine Chairmanship of ASEAN

9. The Ministers welcomed the overall thematic priority of “Inclusive, Innovation-led Growth” under the AEC for the Philippines during its Chairmanship of ASEAN in 2017. The Ministers noted that this thematic priority would provide focus and importance to the role of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) as an integral component of the region’s ecosystem, and that three strategic measures namely: increasing trade and investment, integrating MSMEs into the global value chains, and developing an innovation-driven economy, were identified to achieve this goal.

10. To this end, the Ministers welcomed the progress in the implementation of the Philippines' Economic Priority Deliverables, in particular:

a) The Ministers welcomed the implementation of Country Visits as a technical verification tool for compliance monitoring under the AEC 2025 M&E Framework. The Ministers noted that following the pilot Country Visit to Lao PDR last year, the first full-scale Country Visit will be conducted in the Philippines in October 2017, which would also highlight and communicate best practices in support of the implementation of the AEC Blueprint 2025.

b) The Ministers also commended the launch of the Maiden Voyage of the ASEAN Roll-on Roll-off (RORO) (Davao–General Santos–Bitung route) by Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte and Indonesian President Joko Widodo on 30 April 2017 in Davao City, Philippines. This is a major milestone to enhance the connectivity of archipelagic ASEAN, facilitate trade and tourism, and provide greater impetus to the implementation of multimodal transport in the region.

c) The Ministers noted the progress achieved in the RCEP negotiations following 19 rounds of negotiations, and commended the collective efforts by the 16 RCEP Participating Countries (RPCs) to work towards a swift conclusion of the RCEP negotiations, as mandated by Leaders. The Ministers, in particular, welcomed the finalisation of the paper on “RCEP Key Elements for Significant Outcomes by End of 2017,” which clearly outlines the negotiating areas viewed as realistically achievable by end of the year. The Ministers remained positive towards the substantial conclusion of the RCEP negotiations to be reported to the Leaders by November 2017. The Ministers reiterated the immense potential of the RCEP in creating a modern, comprehensive, high-quality and mutually beneficial agreement that would boost the region's competitiveness and productivity, generate employment, and create new market opportunities.

d) The Ministers lauded the progress made in the ASEAN Inclusive Business (IB) initiative that was subsumed under the Strategic Action Plan for SME Development (SAPSMED) 2016-2025 of the ASEAN Coordinating Committee on Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (ACCMSME). The Ministers endorsed the ASEAN Inclusive Business Framework, which stipulates the scope, objectives, guiding principles, implementation, and institutional framework on IB. The Ministers also noted the successful conduct of the first ASEAN Inclusive Business Summit and the ASEAN Inclusive Business Awards during the ASEAN Business Awards Gala held on 06 September 2017 in Manila, Philippines. The foregoing events formally introduced and built the case for introducing IB in ASEAN through exemplary models, instrumental government interventions, and regional support initiatives.

e) The Ministers welcomed efforts to promote the mainstreaming of Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) in the AEC pillar, including the hosting of the first ASEAN Women's Business Conference and Related Meetings, as well as the Forum on Women's Economic Empowerment: the Next Driver of ASEAN's Success, by Australia and the Philippines, held on 28 August to 01 September 2017 in Manila, Philippines. The Ministers noted the outcome documents from these events, which include the Manila Statement on Mainstreaming WEE in ASEAN containing the six-point Action Agenda, and the Co-Chairs' Statement on Women's Economic Empowerment: the Next Driver of ASEAN's Success. The Ministers agreed to submit

the Action Agenda on Mainstreaming WEE in ASEAN to the Leaders for adoption in November 2017. Further, the Ministers tasked the ACCMSME to strengthen their collaboration with the ASEAN Women Entrepreneurs' Network (AWEN) in advancing the WEE agenda in the areas of trade, leadership, and entrepreneurship.

f) The Ministers welcomed the development of the ASEAN Declaration on Innovation by ASEAN Science and Technology Ministers for Leaders' adoption in November 2017. The Declaration signifies ASEAN's commitment towards strengthening the impact of science, technology, and innovation towards people's empowerment, inclusive growth, and strengthening of the ASEAN Community.

Trade in Goods

11. The Ministers welcomed the significant progress made by ASEAN Member States on tariff liberalisation and on-going effort to bring down further the remaining tariff barriers in ASEAN in line with the AEC Blueprint 2025. To date, under the ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (ATIGA), import duties on 99.2% of tariffs of Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand (ASEAN 6) have been eliminated, while the corresponding figure for Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam (CLMV) stood at 90.9%. Overall, 96.01% of all tariffs in ASEAN have been eliminated.

12. The Ministers noted the on-going work on the transposition of the ATIGA Tariff Reduction Schedules (TRSs) (Annex 2 of the ATIGA) and the ATIGA ITA list (Annex 4 of the ATIGA) from AHTN 2012 into AHTN 2017 as well as the transposition of the ATIGA Product Specific Rules (PSRs) (Annex 3) from HS 2012 into HS 2017. The Ministers encouraged ASEAN Member States to redouble efforts and work towards the full implementation of the transposed ATIGA TRSs, ITA products, and PSRs in HS 2017 before 1 January 2018.

13. The Ministers welcomed the progress made on the discussion on the outstanding key areas under the ASEAN-wide Self-certification. The Ministers urged ASEAN Member States to accelerate the necessary work for the implementation of the ASEAN-wide Self-Certification Scheme by 2018, as this initiative will benefit business in reducing the cost and time of doing business in the region.

Trade Facilitation

14. The Ministers adopted the ASEAN Seamless Trade Facilitation Indicators (ASTFI), which were designed to measure and monitor the extent to which trade facilitation measures are implemented in the region through various ASEAN agreements, such as the ATIGA, The ASEAN Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Goods in Transit (AFAFGIT) and the various sectoral work plans relevant to trade facilitation.

15. The Ministers underscored the importance of intensifying efforts to facilitate the movement of goods and services within the AEC. The Ministers adopted the AEC 2025 Trade Facilitation Strategic Action Plan (ATF-SAP) and agreed to submit this to the AEC Council for endorsement. The Ministers expressed confidence that the ATF-SAP, together with the ASTFI, would be vital in implementing the earlier decision made by

the AEM on reducing trade transaction cost in the region by 10% in 2020, and thereafter endorsed the target of doubling intra-ASEAN trade by 2025. The Ministers also welcomed renewed efforts of the ASEAN Trade Facilitation Joint Consultative Committee (ATF-JCC) in engaging key stakeholders to explore how to further facilitate trade with a view to realising a single market and production base in the region.

ASEAN Trade Repository (ATR)

16. The Ministers underscored the need to intensify regional efforts to address non-tariff measures (NTMs) using the ATR as an important platform to achieve this. The Ministers noted that since the launching of the ATR in November 2015, all ASEAN Member States have established their National Trade Repositories (NTRs). The Ministers therefore urged ASEAN Member States to redouble efforts to link the information between their respective NTRs and ATR. The ATR serves as an interface to link ASEAN Member States' NTRs to provide a one-stop online database containing all ASEAN trade-related information, including the ASEAN NTM database, in enhancing transparency and improving information access to businesses.

ASEAN Solutions for Investments, Services and Trade (ASSIST)

17. The Ministers reiterated the importance of the ASSIST, an internet-based and business-friendly facility for receiving and responding to complaints submitted by ASEAN enterprises in handling the trade barrier issues or any issue arising from the implementation of ASEAN economic agreements, and urged ASEAN Member States to raise greater awareness of this existing platform to the private sector in order to enhance the utilisation rate of ASSIST among ASEAN enterprises.

ASEAN Single Window (ASW)

18. The Ministers noted that the ASW had reached a new milestone in its development, notably the establishment of the Project Management Office (PMO) in the ASEAN Secretariat to manage the day-to-day operation of the ASW. Currently, five (5) ASEAN Member States namely: Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam are in the pilot phase of exchanging electronic ATIGA Certificate of Origin Form D (e-Form D). Besides the e-Form D, ASEAN Member States are also considering the electronic exchange of additional cross-border trade documents through the ASW, such as the Electronic Phytosanitary (e-Phyto) Certificate in December 2017 and the ASEAN Customs Declaration Document (e-ACDD) in 2018. The Ministers welcomed the endorsement of the amended ATIGA Operational Certification Procedures (OCP) and the entry into force of the Protocol on Legal Framework (PLF) to Implement ASEAN Single Window on 1 August 2017. The Ministers noted that this would lead to the start of the live e-Form D implementation. The Ministers highlighted the importance of promoting the utilisation of the ASW to expedite cargo clearance process, while reducing the cost and time of doing business in ASEAN.

ASEAN Customs Integration

19. The Ministers welcomed the significant progress in the endorsement of the ASEAN Harmonised Tariff Nomenclature (AHTN) 2017 and its implementation towards a simplified uniformed classification of goods.

20. The Ministers welcomed the successful completion of the parallel run of the ASEAN Customs Transit System (ACTS) pilot project among three ASEAN Member States, namely Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand. Progress has also been made in ad-referendum signing of Protocol 2 (Designation of Frontier Posts) and ratification of Protocol 7 (Customs Transit System) under the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Goods in Transit (AFAFGIT). These instruments in combination with other relevant Protocols under AFAFGIT will provide a solid legal foundation for the operationalisation of the ACTS in ASEAN. The ACTS pilot, which is planned to be rolled-out to the other ASEAN Member States is expected to provide an integrated, simplified and harmonised transport and customs environment to facilitate free flow of goods in transit amongst ASEAN Member States. The Ministers also expressed their appreciation to EU-ARISE for technical and funding assistance for the implementation of ACTS pilot project.

21. The Ministers also welcomed the endorsed “Terms of Reference (TOR) on the Engagement of Private Sector in ASEAN Customs Meetings,” which provides clear guidelines to the private sector and addresses the increasing number of request for consultations; and the Strategic Action Plans for Customs Integration Key Performance Indicators to guide ASEAN Member States in the implementation of ASEAN Customs Broad Direction for 2016-2025. The TOR is available on the ASEAN website.

Standards and Conformance

22. The Ministers welcomed the establishment of a Task Force for the development of the legal instrument for the implementation of the ASEAN Food Safety Regulatory Framework (TF-AFSRF), which consists of relevant focal points from trade, agriculture and health, to develop instrument for implementation of the AFSRF, which was adopted collectively by the AEM, ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture and Forestry (AMAF) and ASEAN Health Ministers Meeting (AHMM) in 2016.

23. The Ministers looked forward to the signing of the ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) on Bio-equivalence (BE) Study Reports of Generic Medicinal Products by all ASEAN Member States by end of September 2017. The Ministers were pleased with the finalisation of the ASEAN Sectoral MRA for Inspection and Certification System on Food Hygiene for Prepared Foodstuff Products, which will facilitate the movement of prepared foodstuff products within ASEAN region. The Minister urged ASEAN Member States to intensify efforts toward finalisation of the ASEAN MRAs on Type Approval of Automotive Products and on Building and Construction Materials.

24. The Ministers noted the progress made in finalising the ASEAN Agreement on Regulatory Framework for Traditional Medicines and the ASEAN Agreement on Regulatory Framework for Health Supplements, and agreed on the importance of expediting the conclusion of negotiations for these two (2) Agreements in order to implement the harmonised technical requirements on traditional medicines and health supplements in the region.

Investment

25. The Ministers welcomed the on-going efforts to complete the remaining built-in agenda items in the ASEAN Comprehensive Investment Agreement (ACIA). The Ministers also welcomed the near completion of the signing of the Second Protocol to Amend the ACIA, and the progress on the signing of the Third Protocol to Amend the ACIA. These developments complement the continuing efforts of ASEAN Member States to implement reforms and progressively reduce and eliminate investment restrictions, and to achieve a free and open investment regime.

26. The Ministers welcomed the substantial progress made towards the completion of the "Focused and Strategic (FAST) Action Agenda on Investment", the Philippine priority deliverable under its Chairmanship of ASEAN that is action-oriented and supportive of the ACIA's goals and pillars, covering investment protection, liberalisation, promotion and facilitation.

Trade in Services

27. The Ministers welcomed the progress made in completing the Tenth Package of ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services (AFAS), which is the final AFAS package towards free flow of services in the region, and encouraged the signing of the Protocol to Implement the Tenth Package of Commitments under the AFAS by the 24th AEM Retreat in 2018. Stressing the importance of achieving deeper integration in the area of trade in services, the Ministers also welcomed the progress made in the negotiations for the ASEAN Trade in Services Agreement (ATISA), and look forward to its substantial conclusion by end of 2017.

28. Following the entry into force of the ASEAN Agreement on Movement of Natural Persons (MNP), the Ministers noted the commencement of the review of the commitments under the agreement to improve facilitation of movement of ASEAN people engaging in trade in goods and services as well as investment in the region.

29. The Ministers also welcomed the launch of the ASEAN Services Report, which provides a general assessment of how trade in services has evolved in ASEAN and how ASEAN Member States, collectively and individually, have made efforts to improve the competitiveness and attractiveness of their economy and the services sectors.

ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework

30. Following the endorsement of the ASEAN Qualification Reference Framework (AQRF) Governance and Structure document last year, the Ministers were pleased to note the progress in the implementation of the AQRF by the AQRF Committee Meeting towards the objective to consider at least two referencing reports by 2018.

Competition Policy

31. The key strategic goal of establishing effective competition regimes under the ASEAN Competition Action Plan 2025 is being operationalised. The Ministers

endorsed the ASEAN Self-Assessment Toolkit on Competition Enforcement and Advocacy, and welcomed the pilot testing of the Toolkit by three (3) ASEAN Member States, namely Lao PDR, Myanmar and Singapore. The Toolkit, which allows ASEAN Member States to review the scope, strength, developments and progress, as well as gaps in national competition regimes, represents one of the initiatives to strengthen the competition environment in ASEAN. The Ministers also endorsed the ASEAN Regional Capacity Building Roadmap for Competition (2017-2020), which outlines five (5) key capacity building areas in which the measures are designed to target the specific needs of different ASEAN competition agencies and government officials.

32. The Ministers welcomed the publication of the Handbook on E-Commerce and Competition in ASEAN in August 2017, as spearheaded by Singapore, which aims to build awareness and foster greater understanding of the competition and regulatory challenges arising from e-commerce. The Ministers also welcomed the convening of the 7th ASEAN Competition Conference in Selangor, Malaysia, in March 2017, which highlighted key competition issues including the relevance of competition laws to MSMEs and in addressing emerging internet businesses.

33. The Ministers commended the ASEAN Experts Group on Competition (AEGC) for its inaugural publication of the 2016 AEGC Report in April 2017.

Consumer Protection

34. The Ministers endorsed the ASEAN High-Level Principles on Consumer Protection (AHLPCP). The Ministers encouraged AMS to base consumer protection policy and planning on the Principles that will better foster a common ASEAN protection framework. The Ministers also welcomed the Guidance Document on the ASEAN Voluntary Peer Review of Consumer Protection Policy and Law, which sets out the process and procedures forming the basis for the forthcoming ASEAN peer reviews on consumer policy and laws in 2018.

35. The Ministers agreed that more effort is needed to empower consumers including through greater cooperation with consumer associations. To this end, the Ministers welcomed the first joint consultations of the ASEAN Committee on Consumer Protection with national consumer organisations in May 2017 and the agreement towards establishing the ASEAN Network of Consumer Associations.

Intellectual Property

36. The Ministers welcomed Brunei Darussalam's accession to the Madrid Protocol in October 2016. The Ministers were also pleased to note that Thailand has submitted its instrument of accession to the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), and will become a party to the Protocol on 7 November 2017. The Ministers also noted that the remaining ASEAN Member States are on track to accede to the Protocol by end of 2017.

37. The Ministers were pleased with the launch of the revamped ASEAN IP Portal and highlighted that the various databases and tools such as ASEAN TMview and

ASEAN Designview had made it possible for IP data in the region to become more accessible to interested stakeholders.

38. The Ministers welcomed the availability of the ASEAN PatentScope (<http://ipsearch.aseanip.org/>), a regional online platform for dissemination of patent dossier information, and noted its potential to support intra-ASEAN research and technological development in the region.

39. The Ministers welcomed the increasing usage of the ASEAN Patent Examination Cooperation (ASPEC), and commended the participating ASEAN IP Offices for their efforts to sustain the viability of the platform through the timely processing of ASPEC requests.

40. The Ministers welcomed the Publication of the ASEAN Common Guidelines for the Substantive Examination of Trademarks and underscored the beneficial use of the reference material to guide and focus the trademark examination practices of the ASEAN IP Offices.

41. The Ministers were pleased that the ASEAN Committee on Science and Technology Sub-Committee on Science and Technology Infrastructure and Resources Development (COST-SCIRD), and the ASEAN Working Group on Intellectual Property Cooperation (AWGIPC) had agreed in principle on the feasibility of future collaboration on cross-cutting areas such as technology development and IP commercialisation.

Electronic Commerce (E-Commerce)

42. The Ministers welcomed the establishment of ASEAN Coordinating Committee on Electronic Commerce (ACCEC), which will promote, coordinate and enhance efforts by various ASEAN sectoral bodies to promote the growth of electronic commerce (e-commerce) in ASEAN.

43. The Ministers adopted the ASEAN Work Programme on Electronic Commerce (AWPEC) 2017-2025, which aims to facilitate cross-border e-commerce in ASEAN, covering multi-sectoral initiatives in the areas of (i) infrastructure; (ii) education & technology competency; (iii) consumer protection; (iv) modernising the legal framework; (v) security of electronic transactions; (vi) payment systems; (vii) trade facilitation; (viii) competition; (ix) logistics; and (x) e-commerce framework. The AWPEC 2017-2025 also contains multi-sectoral measures to facilitate cross-border e-commerce in the region, including the development of an ASEAN Agreement on E-Commerce in 2018.

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)

44. The year 2017 has been a milestone year for MSMEs. Under the 2017 ASEAN Chairmanship theme of “Inclusive, Innovation-led Growth” and recognising ASEAN MSMEs as drivers of inclusive growth, the Ministers were pleased to note that various initiatives were created, namely on inclusive business and women and youth entrepreneurship. The initiatives aim, to enhance the ecosystem for MSME

development and improve policy platforms to encourage MSMEs to internationalise and take advantage of opportunities created through the ASEAN Economic Community. Complementing these initiatives is a study report for policy makers on facilitating equity crowd funding to increase access to finance for MSMEs. Several capacity building projects aimed at enhancing MSMEs' export capacity were organised including the promotion of e-Commerce adoption among MSMEs to encourage their participation in the emerging digital economy.

45. On the policy and regulatory front, the Ministers endorsed a set of ASEAN regional principles for good business registration practices, as a follow up to the 2016 adoption of the ASEAN Work Programme on Starting a Business to encourage more MSMEs to formalise and register their businesses. The Ministers were also pleased to note the publication of a policy handbook on the strengthening of women's entrepreneurship in ASEAN, which was produced in collaboration with Canada and the OECD through the Canada-OECD Project on ASEAN SMEs (COPAS).

46. The Ministers expressed their appreciation to the ASEAN MSME Advisory Board (AMAB) for its input and suggestions on critical strategic issues affecting MSME development and specifically on the opportunities and challenges presented by the emerging digital economy. The Ministers urge all relevant ASEAN bodies to appropriately address the recommendations of the AMAB.

ASEAN Community Statistical System (ACSS)

47. The Ministers noted the progress and effort made by the ACSS Committee in further strengthening the regional statistical cooperation and activities among the ASEAN Member States to ensure the provision of relevant, timely and comparable statistics, including the ongoing harmonisation of key statistical areas of merchandise trade, trade in services, and foreign direct investment.

48. The Ministers welcomed the adoption of the Broad Framework for Sustainable Development of ASEAN Statistics (BFSDAS) Revision 2, containing a set of tiered ASEAN Statistical Indicators. The Ministers noted that the Framework is a living document that can be revised to incorporate further requirements from ASEAN regional bodies and the emerging data needs both at the national and regional levels in the future. The Ministers also welcomed the Committee's approval of the TORs of the Working Group on System of National Accounts (WGSNA) and on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (WGSDGI), which aim to monitor statistical activities and address statistical requirements in these two areas.

49. The Ministers welcomed the publication of the final ASEAN Statistical Report on the Millennium Development Goals, the ASEAN Community Progress Monitoring System (ACPMS) Report 2017, and Celebrating ASEAN: 50 years of evolution and progress.

Narrowing the Development Gap

50. The Ministers were pleased to note the progress in the implementation of the CLMV Action Plan 2017-2018, which promotes cross-border trade and investment

within the sub-region as well as provides capacity building for CLMV countries. The Ministers underscored the important role of monitoring and evaluation of projects to ensure that the capacity building and technical assistance rendered to the CLMV countries result in meaningful outputs that are sustainable and contribute towards narrowing of the development gap.

Global Megatrends

51. The Ministers welcomed the release of a publication on *Global Megatrends: Implications for the ASEAN Economic Community*, a joint project between the ASEAN Secretariat and the Singapore Institute of International Affairs, supported by the ASEAN Australia Development Cooperation Program Phase II (AADCP II). The publication aims at increasing awareness of key issues and drivers of global megatrends and their relevance and implications for the AEC.

Public-Private Sector Engagement

52. The Ministers welcomed the active support and participation of the ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ASEAN-BAC) in promoting the growth and development of MSMEs in ASEAN. The Ministers complimented the ASEAN-BAC for its theme for 2017 on “Partnering for Change, Prosperity for All”, as well as on the successful implementation of a number of activities and initiatives on this theme, including the Prosperity for All Summit held on 28-29 April 2017, the establishment of the ASEAN Young Entrepreneurs Association and the successful convening of the 2nd ASEAN Young Entrepreneurs Carnival on 5 September 2017 in Manila, Philippines.

Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA)

53. The Ministers welcomed ERIA’s 5-volume ASEAN@50 publication, which included: (i) ASEAN and Member States: Transformation and Integration (Volume 3); and (ii) ASEAN Economic Community into 2025 and Beyond (Volume 5). The Ministers expressed their appreciation to ERIA and commended them for their contribution not only to developing the ASTFI but also to on-going efforts to address NTMs. The Ministers agreed that ASEAN Member States should continue to work with ERIA in, among others, verifying and regularly updating the ASEAN NTMs in the ERIA-UNCTAD NTM database, examining possible policy options for addressing NTMs, and implementing the ASTFI, including the conduct of the baseline study in 2018.

External Economic Relations

54. The Ministers reaffirmed the importance of integrating ASEAN into the regional and global economy through Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and Comprehensive Economic Partnerships (CEP). The Ministers were pleased with the progress made in improving the existing FTAs with the Dialogue Partners, ensuring that the improvements are trade facilitative and remain relevant to the current global and regional contexts.

55. The Ministers noted the progress of negotiations on the Product Specific Rules under the Future Work Programme for the Protocol to Amend the Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Co-operation between ASEAN and China and Certain Agreement Thereunder. The Ministers also reiterated the importance and urgency of resolving the issue of Iron and Steels and committed to achieve the goal of mutual benefit by all parties.

56. The Ministers also noted the status of negotiation for further liberalisation of Sensitive Track products under the ASEAN-Korea Trade in Goods Agreement, and the status of discussions on the legal instrument to incorporate the outcomes for the outcomes of the negotiations on trade in services, movement of natural persons, and investment under the ASEAN Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement. The Ministers welcomed the Report of Stage One General Review of the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area Agreement. The Ministers also welcomed the conclusion of negotiations for the ASEAN-Hong Kong, China Free Trade Agreement and the ASEAN-Hong Kong, China Investment Agreement and look forward to their signing by the 31st ASEAN Summit in November 2017. The Ministers further welcomed the launch of region-to-region talks on a framework setting out the parameters for a future Free Trade Agreement between ASEAN and the European Union.

57. The Ministers noted ASEAN's continued collaboration with its non-FTA dialogue partners through the development and implementation of the respective Work Programmes. In this regard, the Ministers welcomed the implementation of the US-ASEAN Connect, the 2016-2020 Work Plan to implement the ASEAN Canada Joint Declaration on Trade and Investment, the Post-2015 ASEAN-Russia Trade and Investment Cooperation Work Programme, and the 2017-2018 ASEAN-European Union Trade and Investment Work Programme.

58. The Ministers welcomed Viet Nam's chairmanship of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) this year, with the theme of "Creating New Dynamism, Fostering a Shared Future." The Ministers highlighted the value of leveraging on the complementarities and enhancing the synergies between the work under the APEC and ASEAN. To this end, the Ministers welcomed the adoption of the Guidelines on the ASEAN Secretariat's Participation in the APEC process.

59. The Ministers reiterated support to the multilateral trading system and underscored complementarities with ASEAN economic integration efforts. The Ministers welcomed the entry into force of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (WTO-TFA) on 22 February 2017, and underscored the synergies between the WTO-TFA and the ASEAN Trade Facilitation Framework. The Ministers urged all members to work towards a successful 11th WTO Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires from 11 to 14 December 2017.

Technical Assistance and Capacity-Building

60. ASEAN's integration efforts have been strongly supported through technical assistance and capacity building rendered by dialogue and development partners. This cooperation covers key projects under the trade in goods, services and investment, competition, consumer protection, MSMEs, integration monitoring and

statistics, agriculture and the Initiative for ASEAN Integration. The Ministers expressed appreciation to the assistance provided under the AADCP II, ASEAN Regional Integration Support from the EU (EU-ARISE), the Regional EU-ASEAN Dialogue Instrument (READI), the EU-ASEAN Capacity Building Programme for Monitoring Integration Progress and Statistics (EU-ASEAN COMPASS), the COPAS, the China-ASEAN Cooperation Fund, the AEM-METI Economic Cooperation Committee (AMEICC), the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF), the Korea-ASEAN TASK Programme, the USAID ASEAN Connectivity through Trade and Investment project (US ACTI), and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) projects as implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB).

LIST OF MINISTERS

- (i) **The Hon. Pehin Dato Lim Jock Seng**, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Brunei Darussalam
- (ii) **H.E. Madam Ngoun Sokha**, Secretary of State, Ministry of Economy and Finance, Cambodia (representing H.E. Vongsey Vissoth, Secretary of State, Ministry of Economy and Finance, Cambodia)
- (iii) **Mr Sim Sokheng**, Director-General for International Trade, Ministry of Commerce, Cambodia (representing H.E. Pan Sorasak, Minister of Commerce, Cambodia, and H.E. SOK Chenda Sophea, Minister attached to the Prime Minister, and Secretary-General of Cambodian Investment Board, Council for the Development of Cambodia)
- (iv) **H.E. Enggartiasto Lukita**, Minister of Trade, Indonesia
- (v) **H.E. Mrs. Khemmani Pholsena**, Minister of Industry and Commerce, Lao PDR
- (vi) **H.E. Dato' Sri Mustapa Mohamed**, Minister of International Trade and Industry, Malaysia
- (vii) **H.E. Kyaw Win**, Union Minister of Planning and Finance, Myanmar
- (viii) **H.E. Ramon M. Lopez**, Secretary of Trade and Industry, the Philippines
- (ix) **H.E. Lim Hng Kiang**, Minister for Trade and Industry (Trade), Singapore
- (x) **Mr. Boonyarit Kalayanamit**, Director General, Department of Trade Negotiations, Ministry of Commerce, Thailand (representing H.E. Mrs. Apiradi Tantraporn, Minister of Commerce, Thailand)
- (xi) **H.E. Dr. Bonggot Anuroj**, Senior Executive Investment Advisor, Thailand Board of Investment (representing H.E. Suwit Maesincee, Deputy Minister of Commerce, Thailand)
- (xii) **H.E. Tran Quoc Khanh**, Vice Minister of Industry and Trade, Viet Nam (representing H.E. Tran Tuan Anh, Minister of Industry and Trade, Viet Nam)
- (xiii) **H.E. Le Luong Minh**, Secretary-General of ASEAN