



## **THE NINTH CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN THE ASEAN ECONOMIC MINISTERS AND THE MINISTERS OF PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA, JAPAN, AND REPUBLIC OF KOREA (AEM PLUS 3)**

**24 August 2006, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia**

### **Joint Media Statement**

1. The ASEAN Economic Ministers and Ministers from the People's Republic of China, Japan and the Republic of Korea held their Ninth Consultations in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 24 August 2006. The consultations was co-chaired by H.E. Dato' Seri Rafidah Aziz, Minister of International Trade and Industry, Malaysia; H.E. Mr. Yi Xiaozhun, Deputy Minister of Commerce, People's Republic of China; H.E. Mr. Toshihiro Nikai, Minister of Economic, Trade and Industry, Japan; and H.E. Mr. Kim Hyun-Chong, Minister for Trade of the Republic of Korea.

2. The Ministers exchanged views on the global economic situation and recent economic developments in ASEAN and the Northeast Asian countries. They expressed satisfaction with progress in economic integration in the region, and particularly noted that trade volume among ASEAN, China, Japan, and Korea expanded by 16 percent from US\$ 273.1 billion in 2004 to US\$ 317.0 billion in 2005. They reiterated the importance of continuing regional economic integration as a means to promote trade and investment flows.

### **ECONOMIC COOPERATION PROJECTS**

3. The Ministers noted the progress of the implementation of economic cooperation projects. These projects cover a wide range of areas, including information technology (IT), small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), standards and quality conformance, environment, and logistics management.

4. They approved the following new cooperation projects:

- (i) ICT Cooperation towards Co-Prosperity in East Asia (2007-2011), proposed by Korea;
- (ii) ASEAN Plus Three Website for Customs Information Exchange, proposed by Korea;

- (iii) ASEAN Plus Three Logistics Cooperation for Future Trade Facilitation, proposed by Japan;
- (iv) ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation for Internationally Comparable Statistics, proposed by Japan; and
- (v) Agricultural Technology and Management Training Program for ASEAN Countries, proposed by China.

## **ENHANCING REGIONAL COOPERATION**

5. The Ministers welcomed the implementation of the various short-term and medium- and long-term measures recommended by the EASG, particularly economic-related measures such as the East Asia Forum (EAF), the East Asia Business Council (EABC), and the Network of East Asian Think-tanks (NEAT) by China, Thailand and Japan, respectively.

6. The Ministers had extensive discussions on measures to move forward ASEAN Plus Three economic cooperation. The Ministers of ASEAN, China, and Korea took note of Japan's proposal to establish an Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA). They requested Japan to discuss this proposal further with the ASEAN Secretariat. The Ministers also took note of the proposal of Japan for a Track II study on a possible Comprehensive Economic Partnership in East Asia (CEPEA) comprising ASEAN, Australia, China, India, Japan, Korea, and New Zealand.

## **FEASIBILITY OF EAST ASIA FREE TRADE AREA (EAFTA)**

7. The Ministers were briefed by the Chairman of the Joint Expert Group for Feasibility Study on East Asia Free Trade Area (EAFTA) on the outcomes of their study and thanked them for the study. The ASEAN Ministers reiterated the need to expeditiously conclude ASEAN Plus One Free Trade Areas (FTAs) and Comprehensive Economic Partnership (CEP) as the foundation for deeper regional integration. At the same time, the Ministers tasked the Senior Officials to study further the recommendations of the Joint Expert Group.

## **EAST ASIA BUSINESS COUNCIL (EABC)**

8. The Ministers had a productive discussion with the East Asia Business Council (EABC) at the occasion of the consultations. The Ministers looked forward to the fruitful outcomes of the East Asia Business and Investment Summit which will be held in December 2006.

## **ENERGY SECURITY COOPERATION**

9. The Ministers took note of Japan's initiatives on cooperation on energy efficiency and conservation.

## **WORLD TRADE ORGANISATION (WTO)**

10. The Ministers exchanged views on the recent developments at the World Trade Organisation (WTO), particularly the outcomes of the General Council Meeting on 27-28 July 2006 in Geneva. They reiterated their commitment to work together to ensure successful conclusion of the Doha Development Agenda (DDA). They agreed to resume the process in the coming months with the necessary resolve.

## **REGIONAL INTEGRATION INITIATIVES**

### ***Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)***

11. The Ministers welcomed the successful meeting of APEC Ministers Responsible for Trade, held in Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam on 1-2 June 2006. They look forward to the successful organisation of the forthcoming APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting scheduled to be held in Ha Noi, Viet Nam on 18-19 November 2006.

### ***Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM)***

12. The Ministers took note of the latest developments in ASEM. They looked forward to a successful 6<sup>th</sup> ASEM Summit scheduled to be held in Helsinki, Finland, on 10-11 September 2006.

## **PREPARATIONS FOR THE ASEAN+3, ASEAN+1, AND EAST ASIA SUMMITS**

13. The Ministers noted the preparations being undertaken by the Philippines for the ASEAN Plus Three, ASEAN Plus One, and East Asia Summits, which will be held in Cebu in December 2006.

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## LIST OF MINISTERS

1. **H.E. Dato' Seri Rafidah Aziz**, Minister of International Trade and Industry, Malaysia, Chairperson
2. **H.E Mr. Yi Xiao Zhun**, Vice Minister of Commerce, People's Republic of China, Co-Chairperson
3. **H.E. Mr. Toshihiro Nikai**, Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, Japan, Co-Chairperson
4. **H.E. Mr. Kim Hyun Chong**, Minister for Trade, Republic of Korea, Co-Chairperson
5. **Mr. Lim Jock Hoi**, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Brunei Darussalam
6. **H.E. Dr. Cham Prasidh**, Senior Minister and Minister of Commerce, Cambodia
7. **H.E. Dr. Mari Elka Pangestu**, Minister of Trade, Indonesia
8. **H.E. Dr. Nam Viyaketh**, Minister of Industry and Commerce, Lao PDR
9. **H.E. U Soe Tha**, Minister for National Planning and Economic Development, Myanmar
10. **H.E. Mr. Elmer C. Hernandez**, Undersecretary, Department of Trade and Industry, the Philippines
11. **H.E. Mr. Lim Hng Kiang**, Minister for Trade and Industry, Singapore
12. **H.E. Dr. Uttama Savanayana**, Vice Minister for Commerce, Ministry of Commerce, Thailand
13. **H.E. Mr. Truong Dinh Tuyen**, Minister of Trade, Viet Nam
14. **H.E. Mr. Ong Keng Yong**, Secretary-General of ASEAN

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