



**THE THIRTIETH AEM – METI CONSULTATION
21 September 2024, Vientiane, Lao PDR**

JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT

1. The Thirtieth ASEAN Economic Ministers – Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (AEM-METI) Consultation was held on 21 September 2024 in Vientiane, Lao PDR. The Consultation was co-chaired by H.E. Malaithong KOMMASITH, Minister of Industry and Commerce of Lao PDR, and H.E. Yoshida Nobuhiro, Parliamentary Vice Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, Japan. The Meeting also welcomed the participation of H.E. Filipus Nino Pereira, Minister of Commerce, and Industry, Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste as an observer.
2. The Meeting noted that, according to ASEAN's preliminary Statistics, total two-way trade between ASEAN and Japan reached USD 239.4 billion in 2023. Meanwhile, total foreign direct investment (FDI) flows from Japan into ASEAN were valued at USD 14.5 billion in 2023. The Meeting also noted that Japan was ASEAN's fourth largest trading partner and fifth largest source of FDI among ASEAN Dialogue Partners in 2023.
3. The Meeting exchanged views on regional and global economic challenges that could likely impact supply chain resiliency in the region, such as climate change, inflationary pressures and heightened geopolitical tensions, among others. The Meeting reaffirmed their commitment to further enhance economic integration and cooperation, particularly in the areas of digital transformation and sustainability, to navigate these challenges and strengthen the supply chain resiliency. The Meeting acknowledged the importance of facilitating the flow of data and strengthening consumer and business trust in digital transactions. This includes through recognizing consumer rights and cooperation on consumer protection.
4. The Meeting welcomed the progress report of the Future Design and Action Plan (FDAP) of Innovative and Sustainable ASEAN-Japan Economic Co-Creation 2023-2033. The Meeting endorsed the updated FDAP. The Meeting welcomed the initiatives undertaken under the Plan thus far, including ASEAN Japan Circular Economy Initiative (AJCEI) and the Generation Z & Young Business Summit and ASEAN-Japan Co-Creation Initiative for the Next-Generation Automotive Industry.
5. The Meeting also welcomed the METI's priority of co-creation in digital economy, which is composed of three pillars (policy coordination; co-creating projects; and capacity building), particularly, contribution to the ASEAN Digital Economic Framework Agreement (DEFA) negotiations and new budgetary supports, including the Global South Future-Oriented Co-Creation Projects. The Meeting also noted with appreciation Japan's new proposal of "ASEAN-Japan AI Innovation Co-Creation

Roadmap” for fostering AI innovation across ASEAN and Japan. The Meeting expected discussions of digital cooperation to be deepened in the ASEAN-Japan Economic Co-Creation Forum to be held in Tokyo, in December 2024.

6. The Meeting welcomed the support from ERIA in developing the *Master Plan for the Next-Generation Automotive Industry* which is targeted to be finalised by 2025. The Meeting acknowledged that a just energy transition and carbon emission reduction in transport sector should allow various pathways and noted that the Master Plan will help ensure that ASEAN’s automotive industry remains a competitive and future-ready central production hub for sustainable vehicles powered by clean energy-related technology.

7. The Meeting welcomed the initiatives undertaken by the AEM-METI Economic and Industrial Cooperation Committee (AMEICC) across various sectors for the development and implementation of the ASEAN-Japan Economic Co-Creation Vision including through supporting ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ABAC) to establish a roadmap for digital trade to accelerate and expand digital trade at the regional level including through deploying a digital trade platform as well as providing capacity building to accelerate digitalization and decarbonization of supply chain through GX/DX training. The Meeting acknowledged AMEICC’s support in enhancing digital skills and technology of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in ASEAN to enhance MSMEs’ participation in the digital economy. The Meeting also noted the amendment of the Terms of Reference of the AMEICC Automobile Working Group which will enable it to help the region realize the “Co-Creation” of the next-generation automotive industry.

8. The Meeting welcomed the initiatives and activities under the ERIA Digital Innovation and Sustainable Economy Centre (E-DISC) that have contributed to deepening cooperation and dialogue among industry, government and the academe in the region on new innovations. The Meeting acknowledged the launch of the Asia Zero Emission Centre to support regional energy transition.

9. The Meeting noted the importance of intellectual property (IP) cooperation through the framework of ASEAN-Japan Heads of IP Offices Meeting and the annual ASEAN-JPO Action Plan, establishing user-friendly, prompt and accurate patent examinations in particular. The Meeting also noted that further IP cooperation on patent examination practice which can utilise, among others, research by ERIA enhances development of business environments in emerging technologies such as AI and IoT so that innovations can be properly protected and utilized, which is crucial to realize the innovation ecosystem in ASEAN-Japan.

10. The Meeting affirmed the need to enhance cooperation to promote energy transitions through various and practical pathways towards net-zero emissions/carbon neutrality. In this regard, the Meeting acknowledged the progress of the implementation of the Joint Vision Statement and its Implementation Plan adopted at Commemorative Summit in Tokyo on December 2023 including the collaboration with Japan’s initiatives such as the Asia Zero Emission Community (AZEC) platform as well the Asia Energy Transition Initiative (AETI) which includes support for energy transition roadmap, enhancing finance, and human resources development noting that the

initiatives can contribute to pragmatic energy transition and to ensure energy security by leveraging Japan's experiences.

11. The Meeting noted the ongoing efforts to ensure the smooth implementation of the ASEAN-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership (AJCEP) Agreement, including the progress of the revision of AJCEP Implementing Regulation (IR) to implement e-form AJ, and transposition of the AJCEP Product Specific Rules (PSRs) and Tariff Reduction Schedules (TRS) from HS 2017 to HS 2022.

12. The Meeting acknowledged the successful conclusion of the Thirteenth World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference (MC13) held on 26 February – 2 March 2024 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. The Meeting noted the outcomes of the MC13 including WTO Members' resolve to preserve and strengthen the ability of a rules-based multilateral trading system, with the WTO at its core, to provide meaningful impetus to respond to current trade challenges, take advantage of available opportunities, and ensure the WTO's proper functioning. The Meeting reaffirmed its commitments to work towards necessary reform of the WTO to improve all its functions, including having a fully and well-functioning dispute settlement system accessible to all WTO members by 2024, building on the progress already made. The Meeting, in particular, welcomed the Ministerial Decision on the Accession of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste to the WTO Agreement. The Meeting acknowledged that Timor-Leste's accession to the WTO is an important stepping stone for Timor-Leste's accession to ASEAN. The Meeting was also pleased to note specific outcomes of the WTO MC13 that reiterated the centrality of the development dimension in the work of the WTO. The Meeting recognised the role that plurilateral discussions and negotiations may play in advancing issues of interest and call for the early incorporation of the Investment Facilitation for Development Agreement into the WTO legal framework. The Meeting noted the achievement of the "stabilized text" on the Agreement on the Joint Statement Initiative on Electronic Commerce.

13. The Meeting noted the progress in the implementation of the Roadmap for Timor-Leste's Full Membership in ASEAN adopted at the 42nd ASEAN Summit. Encouraged by Timor-Leste's commitment, the Meeting reaffirmed its support to continue providing capacity building and technical assistance to facilitate Timor-Leste's integration into the mainstream of ASEAN-Japan economic relations. The Meeting also encouraged the Timor-Leste government to intensify efforts towards its accession to ASEAN.

14. The Meeting acknowledged the continued support from the ASEAN and Japanese business communities, including their active participation in events related to the commemorative summit marking the 50th anniversary of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation in 2023 and in the] Dialogue among the Federation of Japanese Chambers of Commerce and Industry in ASEAN (FJCCIA), Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), and ASEAN-Japan Business Council (AJBC) to promote more robust economic and trade relations between ASEAN and Japan. [ASEAN: The Meeting commended the active participation of Japan businesses in realizing the ASEAN-Japan Economic Co-Creation Vision and looked forward to the upcoming initiatives to amplify the voices of the private sector in deepening collaboration between ASEAN and Japan, particularly in the four pillars of action including: i). achieving sustainability that strikes a balance between diversity and inclusiveness; ii).

promoting open innovation across borders; ii). strengthening cyber and physical connectivity, and iv). building an ecosystem for co-creating vigorous human capital.
