



**THE SPECIAL AEM-METI CONSULTATION
20 May 2025, Videoconference**

JOINT STATEMENT

1. The Special ASEAN Economic Ministers- Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (AEM-METI) Consultation was held on 20 May 2025 virtually. The Consultation was co-chaired by H.E. Tengku Datuk Seri Utama Zafrul Aziz, Minister of Investment, Trade and Industry of Malaysia, and H.E. Muto Yoji, 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 expressed our deepest condolences to the people of Myanmar and Thailand for the tragic loss caused by the devastating earthquake on 28 March 2025. The Meeting extended heartfelt thoughts to the affected communities during this difficult time, and we stand in solidarity with them as they recover and rebuild.
3. The Meeting exchanged views on the recent regional and global economic developments and their implications for trade, investment, and economic integration, and discussed ways to strengthen ASEAN-Japan economic partnership amid the emerging global economic landscape.
4. ASEAN and Japan have a strong economic relationship, with Japan being a significant trading partner of ASEAN. The Meeting also agreed on the importance of deepening trade and investment relations between ASEAN and Japan, and underscored ASEAN and Japan's commitment to the steady implementation and promotion of the ASEAN-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership (AJCEP). The Meeting noted that efforts are ongoing to implement in a transparent manner, promote further utilization and expand the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement, including finalising the procedures on the accession of applicants to this Agreement.
5. Amid growing uncertainty in the global economy, ASEAN and Japan also found a strategic opportunity for us to enhance supply chain resilience, promote digital

transformation, energy transition, innovation, and nurture critical industries. To turn the challenges into opportunity, the Meeting committed to foster a conducive investment and trade environment in the ASEAN and its sub-region as well as globally with a view to realising a global level playing field. In doing so, ASEAN and Japan will explore industry-specific cooperative initiatives such as those in the automotive sector, clean energy, and ethical, responsible development and deployment of artificial intelligence, and the possibility updating the rules and standards, including in existing agreements such as the AJCEP and RCEP to ensure they remain relevant to businesses.

6. The Meeting reaffirmed its support for the rules-based multilateral trading system, with the WTO at its core, which provides a predictable, transparent, free, fair, inclusive, sustainable, non-discriminatory and open rules-based trade and investment environment. On the 30th anniversary of the WTO, the Meeting also reiterated its support to work towards the necessary reform of the WTO to improve all its functions, and committed to delivering meaningful and pragmatic, outcomes at the Fourteenth Ministerial Conference to be convened in 2026 in Cameroon.

7. The Meeting expressed appreciation and continued support from the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA), especially for its analysis of the effect of the recent trade measures. The Meeting shared an understanding on the importance of its role in developing policy recommendations to enhance our economic partnership. The Meeting also welcomed the activities and initiatives undertaken by the AEM-METI Economic and Industrial Cooperation Committee (AMEICC) across various sectors for the development of our partnership and deepening of ASEAN and Japan's economic integration.

8. The Meeting acknowledged the importance of strengthening trust and collaboration to address our common challenges. The Meeting requested our SEOMs to deepen discussions to identify concrete cooperative actions. We will reconvene the 31st AEM-METI Consultation to be held in the Autumn of this year.
