

**JOINT COMMUNIQUE
OF THE 35TH ASEAN MINISTERIAL MEETING
Bandar Seri Begawan, 29-30 July 2002**

Responding to Challenges: Securing A Better Future

1. We, the Foreign Ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), met in Bandar Seri Begawan to

members would be carried out as scheduled. We would exert every effort to go beyond AFTA and the ASEAN Investment Area (AIA) by deepening market liberalization in trade, services and investment.

6. We recognised the strategic value of intensifying our dialogue processes within ASEAN as well as developing linkages with friends and partners in promoting cooperation, broader understanding and addressing areas of common concern. Through our own Summits and Ministerial Meetings, Post Ministerial Conferences (PMC), ASEAN Dialogue Relations, ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the ASEAN + 3 process and other relevant international fora, we can maintain our coherence and cohesiveness and ensure that ASEAN continues to play a pivotal role, and to remain open and outward-looking.

7. In order to provide for better prospects and greater confidence for our people, friends and partners, we are determined to take urgent concrete measures in addressing the immediate and long-term concerns affecting the region.

Combatting Terrorism

8. We recognised that terrorism is a global threat and that the disturbing acts of terrorism and transnational crimes, which continue to threaten world peace and stability, must be tackled by the international community. Towards this end, we called for the need to undertake concerted efforts and concrete initiatives at all levels.

9. We acknowledged that following the 2001 ASEAN Declaration on Joint Action to Counter Terrorism adopted during the 7th ASEAN Summit in November 2001 in Brunei Darussalam, ASEAN at all levels had undertaken practical measures and further enhanced its role and contribution in the fight against terrorism. We noted the increased cooperation and activities among the frontline agencies in ASEAN. We welcomed the adoption of the Work Programme on Terrorism by the Second Annual Senior Officials' Meeting on Transnational Crime and endorsed by the Special ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Terrorism in Kuala Lumpur in May 2002. We believed that the Work Programme would further enhance information / intelligence exchanges particularly on terrorists and their organisations, movement, financial support as well as strengthen our legal infrastructure and law enforcement capabilities. We would also work towards developing our regional training and capacity-building programmes. We are also determined to enhance counter-terrorism cooperation in line with specific circumstances in our respective countries.

10. We welcomed the signing of the Agreement on Information Exchange and Establishment of Communication Procedures between the Republic of Indonesia, Malaysia and the Republic of the Philippines in Putrajaya, Malaysia on 7 May

2002 as a significant building block in the international campaign against terrorism. We also welcomed Cambodia's accession to the Agreement on 30 July 2002.

11. We have also broadened our cooperation and involvement with the international community through the United Nations, our Dialogue Partners, the ASEAN Regional Forum and the ASEAN + 3 process. We affirmed that at the international level the United Nations should play a major role. In this regard, we fully supported the implementation of the Security Council Resolution 1373 and noted that all ASEAN countries have submitted their reports in compliance with the Resolution. We looked forward to further efforts by the international community to provide technical assistance and other support to ASEAN Member Countries in need of such in implementing Security Council Resolution 1373.

12. We believed that all these efforts would bolster ASEAN's capability and capacity to contribute to the fight against terrorism at the regional as well as at the international levels.

Economic Challenges and New Opportunities

13. Globalisation has intertwined the economic fates of many countries. The 11 September attacks came at a difficult time for most of our ASEAN economies, recovering from the 1997-1998 financial crisis and heavily dependent on exports. However, we welcomed the projection of ASEAN's economic growth of 3.5-4% this year.

14. Much needs to be done in ensuring sustainable economic recovery in the region. Tackling the remaining challenges from the financial crisis is our priority. While noting the progress achieved in these areas, we pledged our continued commitment to work together and individually in financial and corporate sector restructuring.

15. We will respond to the challenges posed by the economic diversity of our expanded ASEAN with greater coherence and cohesiveness through the development of RIA. The Roadmap would bring together our various initiatives to deepen economic cooperation, to accelerate integration and to bridge the development gap in ASEAN.

16. The RIA would also ensure that our economies remain competitive and dynamic through strengthening AFTA, accelerating the ASEAN Investment Area (AIA) and fostering industrial linkages through the ASEAN Industrial Cooperation (AICO). ASEAN would further work towards facilitating, enhancing cooperation and progressively liberalising trade in services and tourism. Through the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI), we would increase the development levels of our members by focusing on capacity-building and human resources

development in areas such as energy, telecommunications, and transportation especially within the Mekong Basin and our other sub-regional growth areas.

17. We endorsed the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) Work Plan together with programmes and projects focusing on four-priority areas namely human resource development, infrastructure, information communication technology and regional economic integration. The Work Plan would serve as a roadmap to implement the Hanoi Declaration on Narrowing the Development Gap for Closer ASEAN Integration. We welcomed the convening of the IAI Development Cooperation Forum (IDCF) in Jakarta on 15-16 August 2002. We also welcomed the initiative of the six older ASEAN Members to launch joint IAI projects to help narrow the development gap within ASEAN. This would be a significant step in demonstrating ASEAN's commitment in helping its new members in the integration efforts under the IAI.

18. We recognised the increasing global competition for investment and markets and in this regard, we welcomed efforts initiated by our Economic Ministers for an ASEAN Competitiveness Study to be realised. We believed this would complement our AIA initiative to further promote ASEAN as a competitive investment destination.

19. We would continue to work together for our peoples and businesses to better equip them for communication and competition in the new economy. In this context, we have committed to accelerate the implementation of the e-ASEAN Framework Agreement and looked forward to the establishment of an ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ABAC). We would also help businesses by promoting freer movement of goods and people through the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Goods in Transit and through the ASEAN Tourism Agreement to be signed by our Leaders at the 8th ASEAN Summit in Phnom Penh in November 2002.

20. Mindful that this is a difficult time for the multilateral trading system, we were thus encouraged that a consensus was reached at the WTO Ministerial Meeting in Doha, which underscored the importance of development in the trade agenda. We will work closely with our economic partners in negotiations at the WTO towards achieving greater market access for products and services of developing economies, including that of ASEAN. We reiterated our call for the early accession of Cambodia, Laos and Viet Nam into the WTO, taking into account their different stages of development and the basic principles of special and differential treatment.

21. In emphasising the importance of establishing linkages with our other partners, we pledged to work together to implement the decision of our Leaders and the Chinese Premier at the last Summit to formalise the Framework Agreement on ASEAN-China Economic Cooperation, including the establishment of the ASEAN-China Free Trade Area within 10 years with special and differential

treatment and flexibility to the new members. We looked forward to the signing of the Framework Agreement at the forthcoming ASEAN-China Summit. We also considered the idea of having a feasibility study on establishing an East Asia Free Trade Area (EAFTA).

22. We resolved to further strengthen the ASEAN + 3 cooperation. In this context, we noted the need to strengthen the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta and Malaysia's offer to host the ASEAN + 3 Secretariat in Kuala Lumpur.

23. We commended the work on the closer economic partnership with the CER countries and in this regard, welcomed a Ministerial Declaration to be signed in September this year. We also looked forward to further progress in developing closer economic partnership with Japan. We were encouraged by the recent development of a comprehensive work programme between ASEAN and the US to further strengthen our trade and investment ties. These linkages would ensure that ASEAN continues to practise open regionalism and remain outward-looking and supportive of the multilateral trading system.

24. We welcomed the decision of our Leaders at the 7th ASEAN Summit to consider the idea of convening ASEAN + 1 Summits with other Dialogue Partners starting with ASEAN-India at the forthcoming Summit in Cambodia.

25. We recognised the importance of sub-regional growth areas to the overall development in the region. We welcomed the active involvement of the private sector and the Asian Development Bank in the ASEAN sub-regional growth areas such as the Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines – East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA), Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand – Growth Triangle (IMT-GT), Singapore-Johor-Riau Growth Triangle (SIJORI), ASEAN-Mekong Basin Development Cooperation (AMBDC), East-West Corridor and the Cambodia-Laos-Viet Nam Development Triangle.

26. We commended the work of our Finance and Economic colleagues in these areas and believe our work would offer great opportunities for our peoples and our business sectors.

Functional Cooperation

27. We were pleased with the progress that ASEAN has achieved in promoting functional cooperation. We commended the work produced by our Ministers responsible for Social Welfare Science and Technology, Health, Environment, Labour, Law and Transnational Crimes and expressed full support for the implementation of their recommendations.

28. We reviewed ongoing efforts in ASEAN under the Framework for the ASEAN Plan of Action on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication and the ASEAN Plan of Action on Social Safety Nets. Recognizing that poverty is one of

the central challenges in today's economy and society and reaffirming our commitment to uplift our people from poverty, we noted the Philippines' proposal to establish an ASEAN facility for micro-lending for the poor and requested the relevant ASEAN bodies to consider it.

29. We welcomed the adoption of the ASEAN Declaration on HIV/AIDS and the 2nd Work Plan on HIV/AIDS, by the Leaders at the 7th ASEAN Summit. In this regard, we were pleased with the implementation of the programmes in tackling the HIV/AIDS issues under the Work Plan.

30. We welcomed the adoption of the Work Programme to Implement the ASEAN Plan of Action to Combat Transnational Crimes in Kuala Lumpur, 17 May 2002. We believed that the Work Programme would further strengthen our capacity to combat transnational crimes such as illicit drug trafficking, trafficking in persons, sea piracy, arms smuggling, money laundering, terrorism, international economic crime and cyber crime. We reaffirmed our commitment towards a Drug-Free ASEAN 2015 and expressed satisfaction on the progress in realising the ASEAN Drug Awareness Years 2002-2003. We called on all our partners in the ASEAN-China Cooperative Operations in Respond to Dangerous Drugs (ACCORD) Plan of Action to take immediate and practical measures to combat illegal drugs and narcotics trafficking in accordance with the said Plan of Action.

31. We reiterated the message contained in the Joint Statement of the ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Environment to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, particularly in setting in place targeted, time-bound, practical and implementable actions for achieving specific sustainable development goals.

32. We recalled the decision made by the 26th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting to consider the establishment of an appropriate mechanism on human rights. In this regard, we noted the First and Second Workshops on the ASEAN Regional Mechanism on Human Rights hosted respectively by Indonesia from 5-6 July 2001 and the Philippines from 13-15 June 2002. We also noted the 9th ASEAN-ISIS Colloquium on Human Rights, held from 23-24 February 2002, in Manila. We deemed that these efforts could contribute in enhancing the exchange of views among different sectors in ASEAN towards the realisation of the concept of an ASEAN human rights mechanism. We also acknowledged the importance of continuing dialogue with the Working Group for an ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism.

33. In improving the quality of lives of our peoples, we pledged to continue our efforts in enhancing these initiatives. We believed that these would bring all sectors of +society closer together, especially our women and youth. We stressed the importance of promoting effective outreach programmes through cultural cooperation, science and technology exchanges, and environmental awareness at the national and regional levels.

Political and Security Cooperation

34. We exchanged views on a wide range of political and security issues affecting the region. We noted that the overall security environment in the Southeast Asian region remains stable and peaceful despite the existence of certain challenges. Encouraged by positive developments, we will continue to play an important role in the promotion of peace, stability and economic progress in Southeast Asia and in the wider Asia-Pacific region.

35. We stressed the importance of maintaining the territorial integrity, sovereignty, and unity of states. In this context, we recognised the need to address threats and challenges posed by issues such as separatism and terrorism.

36. We reaffirmed the usefulness of informal open and frank dialogue amongst ASEAN to address issues of common concern to the region. We have strengthened the ASEAN mechanism by having an annual Leaders' Summit, Ministerial Meetings and Retreats to guide, assess and review developments in ASEAN and its relationship with friends and partners. In recognising the need for ASEAN to remain relevant and able to respond and adapt to changes in the regional and international environment, we agreed to meet and consult on urgent issues in a timely manner.

37. We were satisfied that the ARF, as the key forum for political and security dialogue in the Asia-Pacific region, continued to make significant progress in addressing regional security concerns, implementing confidence-building measures and beginning exploratory work on Preventive Diplomacy. Given our resolve for ASEAN to maintain its role as the primary driving force, we will continually strengthen the Forum by considering further initiatives and other means including the Forum's expansion to meet the challenges of the evolving strategic security situation.

38. We reaffirmed that the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) in Southeast Asia serves as the framework governing relations among Southeast Asian states and those outside the region. We welcomed the intention of China, Russia and India to accede to the Treaty and renewed our call to other Dialogue Partners and interested countries, in particular the major powers, to accede. We recalled that the adoption of the Rules of Procedure of the High Council of the Treaty and the Instrument of Accession would facilitate accession of interested parties.

39. We welcomed the on-going consultations between ASEAN and the Nuclear Weapon States (NWS) on the Protocol of Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) Treaty and urged the NWS to sign the Protocol of the Treaty as soon as possible.

40. We reaffirm that the adoption of a code of conduct in the South China Sea would further promote peace and stability in the region and agreed to work

towards a Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea. In this regard, we agreed to work closely with China with a view to adopting the Declaration. All parties concerned are encouraged to continue the exercise of self-restraint and we welcomed their commitment to resolving disputes in the South China Sea by peaceful means in conformity with recognised principles of international law including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) as well as to ensuring the freedom of navigation in the area.

41. We were satisfied with the on-going South China Sea Workshops on Managing Potential Conflict in the South China Sea through dialogue, confidence-building and cooperative measures. We urged the participating authorities as well as the NGOs, foundations or private companies from the South China Sea region as well as outside the region to contribute generously to the continuation of the Workshop's programmes as agreed at the Workshop in August 2001.

42. As a reflection of the recognition that ASEAN, individually, and collectively, should contribute positively in creating an international regime of peace and stability, we expressed support for the Philippines', Indonesia's and Viet Nam's candidature to become non-permanent members of the UN Security Council for the year 2004 – 2005, 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 respectively.

Regional and International Issues

43. We warmly welcomed the initiative of the Royal Thai Government in inaugurating the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) on 18-19 June 2002, in Thailand, which aimed to provide a non-institutionalising arrangement for dialogue and the exchange of ideas to promote synergy within Asia through consolidating collective strengths. We noted that the ACD, as an evolving, open and informal process, would serve to complement existing regional cooperation and that ASEAN's role and contribution is essential to ACD's incremental and steady progress towards forging Asia-wide cooperation, which would make Asia a strong partner for other regions of the world.

44. We welcomed the Democratic Republic of East Timor as a new member of the international community and were prepared to engage East Timor in the long-term. We had invited East Timor to the 35th AMM and agreed to extend similar invitation for future AMMs. We noted East Timor's intention to become observer to ASEAN and to accede to the TAC. We would continue to consult with East Timor on this matter.

45. We support the continued efforts of the Royal Government of Cambodia to bring the senior leaders of Democratic Kampuchea and those who were most responsible for the crimes and serious violations of Cambodian penal law, international humanitarian law and custom, and international conventions

recognised by the Kingdom of Cambodia to trial in accordance with international standards of justice, fairness and due process of law. We recognised, in this connection, the need of the Royal Government of Cambodia and the United Nations to cooperate together and appeal to the international community, to provide assistance in this regard.

46. We noted the national efforts in dealing with any violation of international human rights and humanitarian law.

47. We welcomed the readiness of Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Republic of Korea (ROK) to resume the inter-Korean dialogue and appreciated the role of other parties in bringing this into effect. We encouraged both Koreas to implement further follow-up measures to enhance inter-Korean reconciliation and cooperation in the spirit of the 15 June 2000 North-South Joint Declaration. We called for further promotion of the peace process on the Korean Peninsula and emphasised the importance of holding the second inter-Korean summit.

48. We considered peace and stability in South Asia as important to the whole region and beyond. We expressed the hope that India and Pakistan would take all necessary steps to defuse tension. We called on both countries to resume immediate dialogue, strengthen their cooperation and resolve their differences through peaceful means to restore and maintain peace and stability.

49. We expressed concern over the latest developments in the Middle East and condemned the recent Israeli air attack in Gaza resulting in the death of innocent civilians. We reaffirmed our support for the Middle East Peace Process and called on Israel and the Palestinian Authority to resume peaceful negotiations towards a comprehensive and full settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. We reiterated the importance of ensuring full implementation of all relevant United Nations resolutions and the pledges and commitments made by both parties at the Madrid Conference and at Sharm El-Sheikh. We welcomed all peace initiatives aimed towards achieving a comprehensive and lasting solution to the Middle East problem.

50. We welcomed the election of the new government in Afghanistan by the Loya Jirga and hoped that the newly-elected government would bring peace and stability in the country. We welcomed the Pledging Conference on the Reconstruction Assistance of Afghanistan held in Tokyo this year and urged members of the international community to continue to provide necessary assistance in all areas for the development of the country.

51. In view of the United States withdrawal from the 1972 ABM Treaty, we welcomed the signing of the Treaty on Strategic Offensive Reductions between the Russian Federation and the United States on 24 May 2002, bearing in mind the importance of this Treaty as a contribution to the maintenance of strategic

balance, world peace and long-term international security. We further called for the nuclear weapons states to continue dialogue to look for new ideas and approaches to address the issue of nuclear disarmament.

Enhancing ASEAN's Relevance

52. We believed that ASEAN faces serious challenges from within and from outside. They encompass the political, social and economic lives of our peoples. ASEAN is responding with a combination of ambitious initiatives and pragmatic programmes addressing the needs of our people and the demands of a globalising world. This requires our institutions to evolve to remain relevant, our member countries to reflect and reorient to remain dynamic and competitive and to develop linkages with each other and other regional and international organisations.

53. We have also strengthened the capacity of ASEAN institutions by implementing our Leaders' decision on the role and functions of the ASEAN Secretariat. We endorsed Singapore's nomination of Mr Ong Keng Yong to succeed Mr. Roldolfo C. Severino, Jr. as the next Secretary-General of ASEAN and agreed to recommend his appointment to the Heads of State / Government of ASEAN.

54. We believed that ASEAN continues to provide the necessary and relevant framework for cooperation and dialogue among nations and peoples. We are therefore resolved to work closely together to meet the challenges to regional peace, stability and sustained growth in the ASEAN region with renewed vigour to build a strong foundation for a secure and prosperous ASEAN.