

Joint Communique of the 38th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting Vientiane, 26 July 2005

THEME: TOWARDS THE HARMONY, DYNAMISM AND INTEGRATION OF ASEAN

INTRODUCTION

1. We, the Foreign Ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), met formally on 26 July 2005 in Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), for the first time since the Vientiane Action Programme (VAP), the successor to the Ha Noi Plan of Action (HPA); the ASEAN Security Community (ASC) Plan of Action; and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Plan of Action were adopted at the 10th ASEAN Summit in November 2004 in Vientiane. It was also the first time that Lao PDR hosted our regular annual meeting where we reviewed regional and international political, security, and economic developments, and intra and extra-ASEAN cooperation, including cooperation with our Dialogue Partners as well as wide-ranging issues as we move towards the establishment of an ASEAN Community in 2020 as envisioned in the Declaration of ASEAN Concord II (Bali Concord II) adopted in October 2003 in Bali, Indonesia.

2. The 38th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting was chaired by His Excellency Mr. Somsavat Lengsavad, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Lao PDR.

3. The Honourable Sir Rabbie Namiliu, Foreign Minister of Papua New Guinea, and His Excellency Mr. Jose Ramos-Horta, Senior Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Timor Leste, attended the Opening and Closing ceremonies of the 38th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting as a Special Observer in ASEAN and a Guest of the Chairman of the 38th ASEAN Standing Committee respectively.

4. His Excellency Mr. Bounnhang Vorachith, Prime Minister of the Lao PDR, graced the meeting with a Keynote Address. His Excellency Mr. Bounnhang Vorachith stated that a key factor leading to the success of ASEAN in the last decades is the harmonious combination of national interests and regional ones. This is the right recognition of the reality that although ASEAN Member Countries are very diverse, they share common interest in peace, stability and prosperity for each country and for the region as a whole. This is the true meaning of the "unity in diversity" of ASEAN and that we should continue our efforts to maintain such a harmonious combination in the process of building our ASEAN Community. Anything contrary to that could affect the basic foundation for the further development of ASEAN. The harmonious combination of national interests and community interests would be much visible by the extent of the ASEAN integration into the process of building the ASEAN Community. While realizing the importance of the ASEAN integration, especially in the economic field in the context of globalization and economic interdependence, ASEAN has adopted the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI), the VAP and other plans of action which are currently being implemented and yielded some preliminary results. One of our immediate priorities is to expeditiously narrow the economic development gap within ASEAN and between ASEAN and other regions. He further stated that with the continuously high oil price, there is a need for ASEAN to pay more attention to the cooperation on energy as previously agreed by the Leaders at the 10th ASEAN Summit. This aims to mitigate the adverse impact on the economy of ASEAN as a whole as well as on the vulnerable economy of ASEAN new member countries, in particular. He noted that one of the energy sectors that can be a benefit to the region on a regular basis is a joint investment in building hydropower dams which would not only supply cheaper energy to the region than the oil based energy but would also enhance closer relations of intra-ASEAN economic development as well as help narrow the economic disparities within ASEAN.

THE ASEAN COMMUNITY

5. We were pleased with the adoption by our Leaders of the VAP, the ASC Plan of Action and the ASCC Plan of Action; the signing of the ASEAN Framework Agreement for the Integration of Priority Sectors; and the progress made in the implementation of programmes and projects building up to the realisation of the ASEAN Community comprising the three pillars of the ASC, AEC, and ASCC as enshrined in the Bali Concord II.

6. We agreed to work towards the establishment of an ASEAN Charter, which will reaffirm the objectives, goals and principles of the ASEAN Community and beyond. In this regard, we agreed on a draft text of the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on the Establishment of an ASEAN Charter, including the establishment of the Eminent Persons Group (EPG), which will be recommended for approval and signature by our Leaders at the 11th ASEAN Summit on 12 December 2005 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Vientiane Action Programme (VAP)

7. We expressed our satisfaction with the progress made in the implementation of the VAP, which includes, among others, the signing of the Agreement on the Establishment of an ASEAN Development Fund (ADF) that will, to a great extent, further boost the resource mobilisation efforts to support the financing of the implementation of the VAP and subsequent plans of action to realise the ASEAN Community.

8. We reiterated our commitment to make greater efforts to narrow the development gap among ASEAN Member Countries. In this connection, we called on our Dialogue Partners and friends, as well as regional and international organisations to support us in our efforts to effectively implement the VAP in a timely manner.

Narrowing the Development Gap (NDG) and Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IA)

9. We emphasised the immediate need to bridge the development gap among ASEAN Member Countries, which is crucial for the acceleration of the integration of ASEAN. In the long run, the NDG and IAI will serve as building blocks for the establishment of an ASEAN Community. We noted and highly appreciated the participation of donor countries and institutions that have contributed positively to the implementation of the IAI programme. In the light of the above, we agreed to work even harder to assist the less developed Member Countries and less developed regions in ASEAN to ensure that the integration of ASEAN is carried out in a smooth and unified manner and that the benefits of integration are reasonably shared among the Member Countries. In this connection, we called on our Dialogue Partners and friends, as well as regional and international organisations to support us in our efforts to effectively implement the IAI Work Plan.

ASEAN SECURITY COMMUNITY (ASC)

10. We were gratified with the significant progress made in the implementation of the ASC Plan of Action, especially those activities that are contained in the VAP. The implementation of the ASC Plan of Action will lead to a peaceful, just, democratic, harmonious and stable ASEAN that is conducive to the sustainable social and economic development in the region as well as strengthen ASEAN's relations with its Dialogue Partners. We therefore called for the continued effective implementation of the programmes and activities under the ASC Plan of Action so as to realise the ASC in a timely manner. The Meeting welcomed the agreement, in principle, to convene the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM) and a senior defence officials meeting would be convened to prepare for it.

11. We recalled the decision by ASEAN Leaders, through the adoption of the ASC Plan of Action and the VAP, to strengthen our efforts in promoting human rights in ASEAN. We also recalled decision at the 26th AMM to consider the establishment of an appropriate mechanism on human rights. We noted the work carried out by the non-governmental Working Group for an ASEAN Human Rights

Mechanism, including the meeting between the open-ended ASEAN SOM troika and the Working Group at the sideline of the 38th AMM.

Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC)

12. We reaffirmed the importance of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia as an instrument of peace, security and cooperation in inter-state relations and were gratified that a growing number of countries outside ASEAN have either acceded or expressed their interest to accede to the TAC. In this context, we welcomed the accessions of the ROK and the Russian Federation during the 10th ASEAN Summit in Vientiane. We also welcomed the accession of New Zealand and Mongolia to the TAC on 29 July 2005. We also welcomed Australia's intention to accede to the TAC and looked forward to its accession to the TAC in Kuala Lumpur in December 2005. We appreciated Timor Leste for its interest to accede to the TAC. To ensure a lasting peace, stability and sustained development of ASEAN, we reiterated our call to other countries to accede to the TAC so as to create a favourable environment conducive for development in the region that will not only be beneficial to ASEAN but all its partners and friends as well.

South China Sea

13. We reaffirmed the importance of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DoC) signed by ASEAN and China in Phnom Penh in 2002 as an important step towards a regional code of conduct in the South China Sea and has contributed to the peace and stability in the region. We welcomed China's view underscoring that a regional code of conduct in the South China Sea is essential, as conveyed during the 11th ASEAN China Senior Officials Consultations in Shanghai, China, in April 2005.

14. In this connection, we endorsed the establishment of the ASEAN-China Joint Working Group to study and recommend measures to translate the provisions of the DoC into concrete cooperative activities. We looked forward to the 1st Meeting of the Working Group on the implementation of DoC to be held in Manila in August 2005, as a concrete step towards the full implementation of the DoC.

15. We encouraged all parties concerned to continue to exercise of self-restraint and to continue to undertake confidence-building measures that would contribute to the maintenance of peace and stability in the region. In this connection, we took note of the cooperative activities already forged by some concerned parties, which yielded positive results through negotiation and dialogue, in the spirit of mutually beneficial cooperation. We also reaffirmed our commitment to resolve the dispute in the South China Sea through peaceful means in accordance with international conventions including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Transnational Crimes

16. We commended the work of the ASEAN Ministers Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC) and emphasised the important role of the AMMTC in regional initiatives to combat transnational crimes identified under the Work Programme to implement the ASEAN Plan of Action to Combat Transnational Crime. We also commended the important contributions made by the ASEAN Member Countries to combating transnational crimes as well as the cooperation between ASEAN and the Dialogue Partners in this area through various training programmes and workshops. We looked forward to the convening of the 5th AMMTC on 27-30 November 2005, in Ha Noi, Viet Nam. We welcomed the endorsement of the ASEAN Plus Three Concept Plan to implement cooperation in combating terrorism and transnational crime and the efforts of the ASEAN Plus Three countries to develop work programmes to implement cooperation in the specific areas identified.

17. We recalled the adoption by our Leaders of the ASEAN Declaration Against Trafficking in Persons, Particularly Women and Children on 29 November 2004 in Vientiane, Lao PDR. We expressed our commitment to implement the declaration and stressed the importance of developing measures in raising awareness and other capacity building-related activities.

18. We welcomed the Joint Communiqué of the 25th ASEAN Chiefs of Police Conference held on 16-20 May 2005 in Bali, Indonesia.

Counter-Terrorism

19. We expressed outrage at the series of terrorist attacks in the United Kingdom and Egypt that resulted in the loss of innocent lives. We strongly condemn such acts of terror and extend our sympathies to the victims and their families. Such acts of terror will only steel the resolve of the international community to cooperate and defeat the scourge of terrorism.

20. We reiterated our strong condemnation of all acts of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and emphasised the need to address the root causes of terrorism. We continue to reject any attempt to associate terrorism with any race, region, nationality or ethnic group. In this context, we are fully committed to enhance our cooperative efforts to combat international terrorism at national, regional, and international levels. We looked forward to continuing our determination to enhance coordination and cooperation with the international community in combating international terrorism. We believe this will ensure peace and stability, create an environment conducive to our efforts to attain sustainable development, progress and prosperity in ASEAN. We also reaffirmed that the fight against terrorism should be conducted in accordance with our obligations under international law and in respect of sovereignty, territorial integrity and the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other states.

21. We expressed our appreciation for efforts to enhance capacity to counter- terrorism such as the conclusion of the Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters in November on 29 November 2004 in Kuala Lumpur. We also welcomed the existing network between regional centres, such as the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in Bangkok, the Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT) in Kuala Lumpur and the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation (JCLEC) in Semarang, Indonesia. We looked forward to continuing our cooperation in the training of officials involved in counter-terrorism through SEARCCT, JCLEC and ILEA. We welcomed the outcomes of the workshops on International Legal Cooperation under the Bali Regional Ministerial Meeting on Counter-Terrorism coordinated by Thailand.

22. We recalled the adoption of the ASEAN-Japan Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism in November 2004 in Vientiane, Lao PDR, and looked forward to the implementation of the activities identified in the Joint Declaration. We also looked forward to the signing of the ASEAN-New Zealand, ASEAN-Republic of Korea, and ASEAN-Pakistan Joint Declarations for cooperation to combat international terrorism in the next few days in Vientiane. We encouraged Canada to consider signing the same declaration with ASEAN.

Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ)

23. We reaffirmed that the 1995 Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) is extremely important to both confidence-building in Southeast Asia and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons worldwide. We will continue our efforts to seek ways and means to secure the support of all five Nuclear Weapons States to sign the Protocol to the SEANWFZ. To this end, we expressed our appreciation to China for its readiness to be the first nuclear weapon state to accede to the Protocol to SEANWFZ.

ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)

24. We reaffirmed ASEAN's role as a primary driving force of the ARF process and the ARF as the primary forum in enhancing political and security dialogue and cooperation in the wider Asia-Pacific region as well as the pivot for building peace and security in the region. We agreed to invite Timor Leste to attend the 12th ARF as the 25th participating country in the ARF and believed that Timor Leste's participation in the ARF would contribute to further enhance political and security dialogue and cooperation in the region.

25. We commended the important progress made in the implementation of the ARF activities, which had to a great extent contributed to political and security dialogue and cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. We recognised the need to forge concrete cooperation among the ARF countries in building capacity and capabilities in order to better cope with challenges. We welcomed the ARF's progress towards Preventive Diplomacy (PD) and looked forward to the development of concrete measures in PD.

26. We noted with satisfaction the progress made in the implementation of the agreed ARF activities for the Inter-Sessional year 2004-2005. We agreed to move forward the ARF activities by replacing the Inter-Sessional Support Group on Confidence Building Measures (ISG on CBM) with the ISG on CBM and PD (ISG CBM and PD); to consider developing the concept of the Friends of the ARF Chair; streamline and strengthen working methods of the ARF; and to reactivate the ISM on Disaster Relief. We welcomed Indonesia and the People's Republic of China to co-chair the next ISM on Disaster Relief.

ASEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY (AEC)

27. We welcomed the substantial progress made by the ASEAN Economic Ministers in moving towards the realisation of the AEC through measures that reinforce the implementation of its existing economic initiatives; accelerate regional integration in eleven priority sectors; facilitate movement of business persons, skilled labour and talents; and strengthen the institutional mechanism of ASEAN, including improvement of the existing ASEAN dispute settlement mechanism to ensure the expeditious and legally-binding resolution of any economic disputes.

28. In this regard, we noted with appreciation the signing of the ASEAN Framework Agreement for the Integration of Priority Sectors by ASEAN Leaders and the signing of the ASEAN Sectoral Integration Protocols and the Roadmaps for Integration of the Priority Sectors, as well as the Protocol on Enhanced Dispute Settlement Mechanism (DSM) by ASEAN Economic Ministers during the 10th ASEAN Summit in November 2004 in Vientiane. We recognised that this will facilitate the realisation of the aspirations of ASEAN as a single market and a single production base in which there is free flow of goods, services and skilled labour, and a freer flow of capital along with equitable economic development and reduced poverty and socio-economic disparities within and across ASEAN Member Countries.

29. We were pleased to note that steps have been taken to identify new measures for the second phase of the implementation of the integration of priority sectors to further accelerate ASEAN integration to realise the AEC.

30. We also commended the important progress made by Sectoral Ministers in the area of ASEAN economic cooperation, including energy; information communication technology (ICT); transport; tourism; food, agriculture and forestry; minerals; and finance and banking, which has become essential for regional integration.

Sub-regional Cooperation

31. We welcomed the substantial progress made in the sub-regional frameworks of cooperation under the Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS), Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) programme, and the ASEAN-Mekong Basin Development Cooperation (AMBDC), West-East Corridor, Cambodia, Laos and Viet Nam (CLV) Development Triangle, which makes an important contribution to the process of regional integration. We welcomed the successful outcome of the 2nd GMS Summit held in Kunming on 4-5 June 2005 in China.

32. We welcomed the ACMECS Ministerial Retreat held in Thailand in November 2004 which has contributed to the advancement of the process of sub-regional cooperation in reducing the development gaps, thus making contributions to the process of regional integration. We looked forward to the convening of the ACMECS Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Cambodia in August 2005 and the Second ACMECS Summit to be held in Thailand in November 2005, which would help enhance the

regional integration process.

33. We noted the progress in the development of the Roadmap for BIMP-EAGA, which serves to increase trade, tourism and investment. We were encouraged by the development in strengthening partnerships with Dialogue Partners. The Northern Territory of Australia has been elevated from observer to “plus One Development Partner”, China has expressed its intention to become an observer and Japan has conducted the first mission to BIMP-EAGA by visiting Malaysia last year. We welcomed Republic of Korea’s announcement to conduct its mission this year.

ASEAN SOCIO-CULTURAL COMMUNITY (ASCC)

34. We were gratified with the adoption of the ASCC Plan of Action by the ASEAN Leaders at the 10th ASEAN Summit. The implementation of the Plan will contribute to the establishment of a caring society, the management of the social impact of economic integration, the enhancement of environmental sustainability and the strengthening of the foundations of regional social cohesion. We therefore called for effective implementation of the programmes and the specific measures under the Plan.

Sectoral Cooperation

Disaster Management

35. We signed on 26 July 2005 the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response, which will provide effective regional mechanisms to mitigate the impacts of natural and human-induced disaster and serve as a joint response to disaster emergencies through concerted national efforts and intensified regional cooperation. We further acknowledged the importance of this agreement to strengthen international efforts towards developing a world-wide early-warning system for natural and human-induced disasters through, among other things, a multimodal approach, and taking into consideration the internationally agreed framework on the strategy for disaster reduction. We urged for the early operationalisation of an ASEAN Standby Arrangements for Disaster Relief and Emergency Response, which would work in tandem with other similar arrangements.

36. We reaffirmed our commitment to intensify our cooperation as well as with other countries in the areas of emergency relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction; and prevention and mitigation, as called for at the Special ASEAN Leaders’ Meeting on the Aftermath of Earthquake and Tsunami in Jakarta in January 2005. We welcomed the results of the Ministerial Meeting on Regional Operation on Tsunami Early Warning Arrangements held in Phuket and the decision to develop a multi-nodal early warning arrangement for the Indian Ocean and the Pacific, and recognised the readiness of the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC) to serve as a focal point working with other centres in the region, such as the ASEAN Earthquake Information Centre (AEIC), ASEAN Specialised Meteorological Centre (ASMC), the ASEAN Disaster Reduction Centre (ADRC), and the Indian Ocean Global Ocean Observing System (IOGOOS).

Environment

37. We welcomed the agreement on the establishment of the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) based in the Republic of the Philippines. The Centre will build on and continue the efforts of the ASEAN Regional Centre for Biodiversity Conservation Project in terms of promoting biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of the region’s rich biological resources.

38. We highly appreciate the close and fruitful cooperation among the Mekong River Commission (MRC) member countries during the past 10 years aimed at promoting sustainable management and development of water and related resources for the countries’ mutual benefit and the people’s well-being in this sub-region.

39. We welcomed the establishment of a Basel Convention Regional Centre for training and

technology transfer for Southeast Asia based in the Republic of Indonesia. The Centre will promote and facilitate cooperation among states at the regional level in the field of training and technology transfer regarding the environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes and other wastes and the minimisation of their generation.

40. We commended the efforts taken by the ASEAN Member Countries to address land and forest fires and the resulting transboundary haze pollution, particularly the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution.

41. We welcomed the ASEAN Declaration on Heritage Parks signed by Ministers of Environment of all ten ASEAN Member Countries on December 2003 which will generate greater collaboration between ASEAN Member Countries in the preservation of their common natural heritage.

42. We welcomed the efforts made by the ASEAN Member Countries in nominating 22 cities to participate in the Regional Environmentally Sustainable Cities Programme, and to implement the Framework for Environmentally Sustainable Cities (ESC) in ASEAN, which was adopted in December 2003.

Health

43. We were encouraged by the progress achieved in strengthening efforts to prevent and control emerging and resurging infectious diseases such as the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Avian Influenza, especially in enhancing regional coordination mechanisms for early warning and surveillance capacity-building and the establishment of an ASEAN Task Force on Highly Pathogenic Influenza (HPIA) in December 2004.

44. We commended the work of the ASEAN Task Force on AIDS in following up the recommendations of the 7th ASEAN Summit Declaration on HIV/AIDS and the implementation of the ASEAN Work Programme and its review. We believe that ASEAN should have a voice in global forums such as the World Health Assembly (WHA) and participate in global decision-making regarding allocation of funds for HIV/AIDS prevention and control.

45. We expressed our appreciation to all our partners for their support in helping ASEAN implement its priority activities and encourage others to join hands with us in our efforts to prevent and control emerging infectious diseases, and in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Poverty

46. We welcomed the initiatives and activities to enhance learning among key stakeholders from the government, civil society and the business community to deal with poverty in a comprehensive and integrated manner, and to share and exchange views on how best to mainstream Millennium Development Goals (MDG) processes into normal development functions of governments, and to establish linkages nationally and regionally for mutual support in achieving poverty reduction initiatives.

Culture and Information

47. We welcomed the results of the other areas of ASEAN functional cooperation, including the adoption of a new tagline for ASEAN – “Ten Nations One Community”-at the Meeting of the ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Information (AMRI) in 2004. A number of activities in the culture and information sectors have been successfully implemented in 2004 to raise ASEAN awareness in as well as outside the Southeast Asia region, such as the 2nd ASEAN Cultural Week held in Viet Nam in August 2004, the biennial ASEAN Quiz held in Brunei Darussalam in September 2004 and the ongoing Media Exchange Programmes with our Dialogue Partners. We also welcomed the Art and Cultural scholarship programme for ASEAN Member Countries sponsored by Indonesia in 2004 and encouraged ASEAN's participation for the next scholarship programme to be held in the second half of 2005. We believe that cultural and information activities have played an essential role in bringing

ASEAN closer to the people, and thereby further solidifying the foundation to build an ASEAN Community that is bonded by mutual respect and a sense of “we-feeling”.

Drugs

48. We welcomed the role of ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters (ASOD) in combating illicit drug trafficking and its increasing cooperation with Dialogue Partners and other regional/international bodies, such as the ASEAN-China Cooperative Operations in Response to Dangerous Drugs (ACCORD), ASEAN-EC Sub-committee on Narcotics, ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organisation Fact Finding Committee (AIFOCOM) and United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime Prevention (UNODC).

49. We welcomed the recommendations of the 4th AIFOCOM, held in Luang Prabang, Lao PDR, 9-13 March 2005, which among others, urged all ASEAN Member Countries to formulate an ASEAN Extradition Treaty based on the Treaty of Mutual Legal Assistance (MLA) on Criminal Matters and existing bilateral agreements, and to call upon all ASEAN national parliaments to consider harmonising laws on drug abuse in ASEAN Member Countries.

50. We believed that a Drug Free ASEAN 2015 should be pursued by prevention, treatment and community-based control of drug abuse, including the promotion of alternative development and elimination of illicit drug trafficking. ASEAN Member Countries will undertake close coordination and integrated cooperation, including with Dialogue Partners such as China, Japan and the Republic of Korea, the European Union (EU), India, Australia, and the US. Furthermore, ASEAN Member Countries will promote common perception among law enforcement agencies in combating illicit drug trafficking as well as developing public awareness, especially among young people, concerning the risk of illicit drug abuse and trafficking.

Labour

51. We noted with satisfaction the progress made in ASEAN to address timely labour issues relating to labour mobility and human resource development, such as labour mobility of skilled manpower, strengthening social security, skills recognition arrangements, and HIV/AIDS in the workplace.

Youth

52. We recognised the importance of youth employment issues in the development process and welcomed entrepreneurial initiatives with our Dialogue Partners and through World Bank and International Labour Organisation collaborations.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

53. We noted with satisfaction the important developments and progress being made in pursuing cooperation with our Dialogue Partners and welcomed steps undertaken by both sides to further advance the mutually beneficial cooperation in various fields.

54. We also took note of the overall progress achieved within the framework of ASEAN Plus Three cooperation. We reaffirmed the importance of the ASEAN Plus Three for the realisation of an East Asian community.

55. We commended the ASEAN Plus Three countries for the overall progress attained in the implementation of the 17 short term-measures of the East Asia Study Group (EASG) adopted by the ASEAN Plus Three Leaders, and encouraged more efforts to implement all the short-term measures by 2007. We noted with appreciation the successful implementation of activities to implement the EASG short-term measures, which includes the forming of the East Asia Business Council; the promotion of networking of cultural heritage of the East Asian countries; the promotion of East Asian studies in the region; the convening of the 2nd East Asia Forum; the 2nd Annual Conference of the Network of East Asian Think-Tanks (NEAT); the collaboration with cultural and educational institutions

to promote a strong sense of an East Asian identity and consciousness; the development of information technology jointly to build telecommunications infrastructure and to provide greater access to the internet; establishing poverty alleviation programmes; and the promotion of language programmes for ASEAN Plus Three countries. We welcomed the annual conference of Dean/Directors of Diplomatic Training Institutions of ASEAN Plus Three Countries.

56. We encouraged the implementation of the 9 medium and long-term measures of the EASG. In this regard, we noted with satisfaction the ASEAN Leaders' decision to convene the first East Asia Summit (EAS) on 14 December 2005 in Kuala Lumpur. We reaffirmed our commitment made at the AMM Retreat in Cebu, Philippines on 11 April 2005 to keep the EAS open, outward-looking and inclusive with ASEAN being the driving force. In this context, we welcomed the participation of ASEAN, China, Japan, Republic of Korea, Australia, India, and New Zealand to the first EAS. We commended our Senior Officials for their work on the participation and the modalities of the East Asia Summit which is inclusive and ASEAN-driven.

57. We welcomed the establishment of the Experts Group comprising government officials, scholars and researchers to conduct the feasibility study of the establishment of the East Asia free trade area which will be an integral element of the East Asian community.

58. We noted with satisfaction the broadening and deepening of ASEAN-China cooperation as evidenced by the conclusion of the Plan of Action to Implement ASEAN-China Joint Declaration on Strengthening Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity, the signing of the ASEAN-China Agreement on Trade in Goods, the Agreement on Dispute Settlement, the MOU on Transport Cooperation, the establishment of the ASEAN-China Eminent Persons Group, the organisation of the ASEAN-China Expo in Nanning, the ASEAN-China ICT Week in May 2005 in Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen, the ongoing efforts to conclude agreements on trade in services and investment and the MOU on Cultural Cooperation as well as preparation for a two-year implementation plan for the ASEAN-China Plan of Action. We believed that these cooperative activities will further cement ASEAN-China cooperation in the future.

59. We noted the continued efforts to implement the ASEAN-Japan Plan of Action, including in the areas of trade and investments, customs procedures, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), the environment and ICT. We appreciated Japan's active support for the implementation of IAI projects, especially in the area of human resource development, and its support to sub-regional growth areas.

60. We welcome the growing dialogue partnership between ASEAN and the Republic of Korea in the areas of political and security, trade and economic, social and cultural and development cooperation, in particular people-to-people contact in the field of media, youth, culture and the exchange of government officials. We looked forward to the adoption of the Plan of Action to implement the Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Partnership between ASEAN and the Republic of Korea expected to be adopted by the Leaders of ASEAN and the Republic of Korea in December 2005 in Kuala Lumpur.

61. We expressed our appreciation to India for its support in the implementation of the IAI such as the establishment of the Centre for Entrepreneurship Development in the Lao PDR and its agreement to establish similar centres in Cambodia, Myanmar and Viet Nam to bridge the development gap among ASEAN Member Countries. We commended the successful ASEAN-India Car Rally organised during the 10th ASEAN Summit. We noted the progress made thus far in the negotiations to establish an ASEAN-India FTA, which is part of the implementation of the ASEAN-India Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation signed in Bali in 2003. We looked forward to the early conclusion of these negotiations.

62. We welcomed the conclusion, by ASEAN Leaders and the Leaders of the Republic of Korea, India, Australia and New Zealand, of the Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Cooperation Partnership between the Association of Southeast Asia Nations and the Republic of Korea; the ASEAN-India Partnership for Peace, Progress and Shared Prosperity and the adoption of a Plan of Action to implement the partnership; and the Joint Declaration of the Leaders at the ASEAN-Australia and New Zealand Commemorative Summit, respectively, in November 2004 in Vientiane which will chart the future directions of ASEAN's cooperation with them. We looked forward to their effective

implementation to elevate ASEAN's cooperation to a higher plane.

63. We welcomed the progress on the implementation of the Trans-Regional EU-ASEAN Trade Initiative (TREATI) to enhance economic cooperation and assist ASEAN in its integration, and the establishment of the ASEAN-EU Vision Group, comprising senior officials, towards enhancing ASEAN-EU relations. We also welcomed the commencement of the Joint Feasibility Study on ASEAN-EU Economic Cooperation, including a possible FTA. In this connection, we noted with satisfaction that the 15th ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting adopted in principle the Regional EU-ASEAN Development Initiative (READI) in Jakarta in March 2005 which was subsequently finalised by ASEAN and EC, therefore, providing a new impetus for ASEAN-EU cooperation.

64. We commended the launching of free trade area negotiations with Japan, the Republic of Korea, the ASEAN and Australia and New Zealand Free Trade Area, which will be implemented within ten years.

65. We welcomed the progress the ASEAN-Canada relations, especially with the convening of the ASEAN-Canada Partnership Symposium that was held in February 2005 in Bandar Seri Begawan and the ASEAN-Canada Dialogue in April 2005 in Vancouver. We appreciate Canada's interest to enhance its cooperation with ASEAN in economic areas with the convening of the ASEAN-Canada Trade and Investment Senior Officials Meeting and the ASEAN Business Forum in Toronto in May 2005. We welcomed Canada's commitment to stay engaged with ASEAN by exploring, amongst others, ways in which ASEAN and Canada can promote development cooperation.

66. We looked forward to the inaugural ASEAN-Russia Summit in December 2005 in Kuala Lumpur. We also commended the progress in the negotiations on the ASEAN-Russia Economic and Development Cooperation Agreement and looked forward to its early conclusion.

67. We welcomed the growing trade relationship, economic and development cooperation, political and security cooperation, and cooperation in other areas involving transnational crime, transnational issues, and communicable and emerging diseases between ASEAN and the US. We looked forward to the development of a strategic partnership between ASEAN and the US to further enhance this relationship in all aspects.

68. We further expressed our appreciation to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for its continued support to ASEAN's integration through its ASEAN-UNDP Partnership Facility 2004-2006. We look forward to continuing our partnership and cooperation with the UNDP in supporting ASEAN's integration.

69. We looked forward to the 2nd ASEAN-UN Summit in September 2005 in New York. We believe that the Summit will help elevate ASEAN's relations with the United Nations to a new level.

DEVELOPMENTS IN MYANMAR

70. We have been informed by our colleague, Foreign Minister U Nyan Win of Myanmar that the Government of Myanmar had decided to relinquish its turn to be the Chair of ASEAN in 2006 because it would want to focus its attention on the ongoing national reconciliation and democratisation process. Our colleague from Myanmar has explained to us that 2006 will be a critical year and that the Government of Myanmar wants to give its full attention to the process. We would like to express our complete understanding of the decision by the Government of Myanmar. We also express our sincere appreciation to the Government of Myanmar for not allowing its national preoccupation to affect ASEAN's solidarity and cohesiveness. The Government of Myanmar has shown its commitment to the well-being of ASEAN and its goal of advancing the interest of all Member Countries. We agreed that once Myanmar is ready to take its turn to be the ASEAN Chair, it can do so.

REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

71. We exchanged views on recent regional and international political and security developments, particularly those that affect regional peace, security and stability. Despite the recent terrorist attacks in United Kingdom and Egypt, we were of the view that the overall global security situation remained relatively stable and was marked by a number of positive developments including greater interactions and exchanges between and among countries. We were also of the view that the stable relationship among the major powers is crucial to the region and called upon them to continue to make their contributions to strengthen peace, stability, cooperation and development in the region, and in the world as a whole.

• Iraq

72. We underscored that the developments in Iraq remain a cause of great concern. We sincerely hoped for a solution in the foreseeable future that would lead to a durable peace, security, stability and national harmony so that the Iraqi people can truly be the master of their own destiny and country. We welcomed the International Conference on Iraq that was held in Brussels on 22 June 2005.

• Middle East

73. We welcomed the positive developments currently taking place in the Middle East and emphasised the need to carry out the implementation of the Roadmap and the relevant UNSC resolutions. We looked forward to the realisation of the vision of two states -Israel and Palestine- living side by side in peace within secure and recognised borders. We also welcomed the Iraqi and Palestinian elections held this year.

• Korean Peninsula

74. We welcomed the recent resumption of the Six-Party Talks and hoped that concerned parties could find solutions acceptable to all sides, towards a nuclear weapon-free Korean Peninsula, on the basis of the principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and equality which will contribute to the maintenance of peace, security and stability in the wider Asia Pacific Region. ASEAN reaffirmed its support to the process and reiterated the potential role of the ARF, as the primary forum for dialogue on peace and security issues in the region, in contributing to the momentum of finding a resolution to the Korean Peninsula issue.

75. We also welcomed the recent resumption of the inter-Korean dialogue. In this regard, we expressed the hope that the dialogue will continue in accordance with the spirit and letter of the 15 June North-South Declaration. We believe that the thawing of inter-Korean relations will be a major step forward in achieving peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula.

Asian-African Summit 2005 and the Commemoration of the Golden Jubilee of Asian-African Conference 1955

76. We noted with satisfaction the outcomes of the Asian-African Summit held in conjunction with the Commemoration of the Golden Jubilee of the Asian-African Conference (1955-2005) on 21-23 April 2005 in Bandung and Jakarta, Indonesia which revitalised the Bandung spirit of the Asian-African Conference of 1955.

77. We support the commitment of Asian-African countries in working toward the realisation of the New Asian-African Strategic Partnership (NAASP) by implementing concrete actions for the benefit and prosperity of our peoples. We also underlined the prominent and leading role of regional/sub-regional organisations in increasing synergy and cooperation in support of the NAASP. In this regard, we agreed to give a mandate to the ASEAN Secretariat to work with other regional/sub-regional organisations in Asia and Africa on issues of interest to ASEAN in supporting the NAASP.

South Summit

78. We welcomed the outcomes of the Second South Summit held in Doha, Qatar, on 12-16 June 2005 in addressing the challenges confronting the South such as poverty, debt burden, trade protectionism, declining Official Development Assistance (ODA), international migration, weak productive and trade capacities, poor infrastructures and volatile commodity export prices and financial flows.

Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD)

79. We welcomed the substantial progress being recorded under the framework of the ACD initiated by Thailand as a forum to harness the combined strength of Asian countries with an aim to increase the capabilities and competitiveness of Asian countries by maximising on cultural diversity and abundant resources. We are encouraged by the successful outcomes of the 4th ACD Ministerial Meeting in Islamabad, Pakistan, and welcomed the Islamabad Declaration. We also noted with satisfaction the progress achieved in various areas, for example, the Asian Bond Market Development, Energy Security, and Agriculture.

Forum for East Asia and Latin America Cooperation (FEALAC)

80. We reiterated our continued support to forge links and cooperation between Asia and Latin America in areas of mutual interest including in the political and security, social and culture and economic fields. We recognised the need to enhance cooperation under FEALAC.

Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM)

81. We congratulated Viet Nam for successfully hosting the 5th ASEM Summit in October 2004 in Ha Noi. We welcomed the participation of Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar in the recent expansion of ASEM.

82. We also welcomed the convening of the ASEM Interfaith Dialogue in Bali, 21-22 July 2005, as an important effort to promote greater understanding amongst cultures and faiths.

Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)

83. We commended APEC for exerting its utmost efforts to cooperate, promote and liberalise trade and investment in the Asia-Pacific region. We took note of the progress achieved thus far by APEC member economies towards the Bogor Goals and look forward to the roadmap being developed to guide members to reach the goals by 2010 for industrialised economies and by 2020 for developing economies. We expressed appreciation to the member economies for accommodating the participation of non-APEC ASEAN Member Countries in APEC activities.

Asia-Middle East Dialogue (AMED)

84. We welcomed the convening of the inaugural Asia-Middle East Dialogue (AMED) in Singapore on 20-22 June 2005. We noted that the sizeable representation of 40 delegations from Asia and the Middle East reflected the deep interest of both regions in strengthening ties. We recognised that AMED was an important first step towards deeper inter-regional engagement to foster mutual understanding and cooperation.

World Trade Organisation (WTO)

85. We welcomed the agreement by WTO members to hold the Ministerial Meeting in Hong Kong in the end of 2005 and reiterated our support to work constructively with other members of the WTO to ensure the successful outcomes of the Ministerial Meeting that is consistent with the goals of the Doha Declaration while, at the same time, we stressed the need for all WTO members to show flexibility and

that development-related issues should be the focus of multilateral trade negotiations.

86. We expressed our support for the early accession of Lao PDR and Viet Nam into the WTO.

Millennium Development Goals (MDG)

87. We recalled that the MDG adopted in 2000 set clear targets for countries to fulfil in close cooperation with the international community. We noted the slow progress made in the implementation of the MDG and of the upcoming review of the MDG in September 2005. We called on all the concerned parties to fulfil commitments adopted by the recent major international conferences and to enhance the effectiveness of aid through better coordination and harmonisation among the aid-providing countries.

88. We welcomed the convening of the Regional Ministerial Meeting on MDGs in Asia and the Pacific: the Way Forward 2015 to be held in Jakarta, on 3-5 August 2005.

United Nations (UN)

89. We attached importance to effective leadership of the United Nations to address the needs and aspirations of all people, particularly those in the developing world. We welcomed that the Asian-African Ministerial Meeting in Jakarta in April 2005 that generally felt that it would be the turn of the Asian region to occupy the post of United Nations Secretary-General (UNSG) which will become vacant upon the expiry of the term of the current UNSG at the end of 2006. In this regard, we reaffirmed our strong support for the ASEAN candidate from Thailand, Dr. Surakiart Sathirathai, for this important post.

90. We also supported Viet Nam's candidature for the presidency of the 33rd UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

UN Reform

91. Given its current state of affairs, we recognised the need to reform the United Nations and we agreed that the reforms of the United Nations should be comprehensive in nature and attach greater importance to the reforms of the development-related UN agencies.

Cooperation with Regional Organisations

92. We noted our cooperative relations with the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the Asian-African Sub-Regional Organisations Conference (AASROC) to promote secretariat-to-secretariat level cooperation. We recalled the outcomes of the ASEAN-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and ASEAN-Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) Foreign Ministers Meetings in September 2004 in New York where several areas were identified for cooperation between ASEAN, and the GCC and the ECO. We noted that ASEAN is working with the GCC to develop modalities to implement the above identified areas and that the ASEAN Secretariat would be signing a Memorandum of Understanding for cooperation with the ECO Secretariat.

93. We welcomed the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the ASEAN Secretariat and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Secretariat to promote cooperation between the two regional organisations in mutually beneficial areas.

INSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

94. We commended the work of the ASEAN Senior Officials and the ASEAN Directors-General to streamline and rationalise ASEAN meetings and encouraged them to do even better in the years to come. We expressed our appreciation to the ASEAN Secretariat for its important contribution to the

process of ASEAN integration and cooperation. We welcomed the establishment of the Jakarta ASEAN Contact Group to facilitate the coordination among Member Countries on ASEAN cooperation.

39th AMM

95. We elected Malaysia as the Chair of the 39th ASEAN Standing Committee and the Philippines as the Vice-Chair. We looked forward to the 39th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, the ASEAN+3 Foreign Ministers' Meeting, the Post-Ministerial Conferences and the 13th ASEAN Regional Forum to be held on 24-28 July 2006 in Malaysia.