



**THIRD ASEAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND IT MINISTERS MEETING**

**THE SINGAPORE DECLARATION  
AN ACTION AGENDA**

**19 SEPTEMBER 2003**

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*The ASEAN Ministers responsible for Telecommunications and Information Technology, gathered at Singapore from 17 – 19 September 2003, for the Third ASEAN Telecommunications and IT Ministers Meeting,*

**embracing** the spirit of equality and partnership with which we work to strengthen the foundations of a prosperous and peaceful community of Southeast Asian nations, to nurture the aspirations of our peoples and to realise equitable and sustainable growth for ASEAN;

**recalling** the ASEAN Vision 2020 articulated by our Leaders of “a concert of Southeast Asian nations, outward looking, living in peace, stability and prosperity, bonded together in partnership in dynamic development and in a community of caring societies”;

**reaffirming** our Leaders’ call for the creation of an ASEAN community with three intertwined pillars namely, political and security cooperation, economic cooperation, and social and cultural cooperation;



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**considering** the need to build a connected, vibrant and secure ASEAN economic community by leveraging on info-communication technologies (ICT) in support of the ASEAN Vision 2020 and ASEAN Economic Community by striving for universal access to telecommunications and information technology (IT) infrastructure and services for our people and by accelerating the opening of our markets to free and fair trade in telecommunications and IT services;

**recognising** the rapidly changing landscape of the global telecommunications and IT industries and our need to harness technological advances in ICT to create digital opportunities for our people and to enhance ASEAN's overall competitiveness;

**recognising also** the cross cutting and inter-sectoral nature of ICT issues and the continuing need for dialogue and consultation at the national level with other relevant agencies and institutions;

**welcoming** the transfer of the e-ASEAN work program to our charge and committing ourselves anew to fulfil the four objectives of the e-ASEAN Framework Agreement, which are to:

- (i) promote cooperation to develop, strengthen and enhance the competitiveness of the ICT sector;
- (ii) reduce the digital divide within individual ASEAN member country and amongst ASEAN member countries;
- (iii) promote cooperation between the public and private sectors; and
- (iv) liberalise trade in ICT products, ICT services and investments.

**acknowledging** the on-going efforts of TELSOM in carrying out our instructions contained in the Manila Declaration 2002.



**HEREBY AGREE TO THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS:**

1. Strengthen the existing ASEAN ICT Unit by 2004 with an end goal of establishing an ASEAN ICT Centre to operationalise and effectively manage the ASEAN ICT work programme.
2. Establish an e-ASEAN Business Council comprising ICT industry representatives by 2004, to provide advice and feedback to TELMIN on ICT industry development, policy and regulatory issues.
3. Establish a dedicated fast-track funding mechanism by 2005 which, for a start, will serve as seed money for counterpart funding and which will be used principally for implementing cooperative projects with partners as well as to fund the management of the ASEAN ICT Centre.
4. Taking into consideration particular national circumstances, accelerate the development and security of the ASEAN Information Infrastructure by ensuring that:
  - (a) all member countries develop and operationalise national Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERTS) by 2005, in line with mutually agreed minimum performance criteria;
  - (b) a common framework for sharing cybersecurity threat and vulnerability assessment information among CERTS is developed by 2004, including development of a system of standard operating procedures (SOPs);



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- (c) capacity-building efforts are undertaken to assist member countries who have yet to establish CERTS or to develop cybersecurity policies, including by leveraging on capacity building activities in fora such as APEC, the APT and APCERT;
  - (d) a “Virtual Forum of ASEAN Cybersecurity” is launched, where CERT contact persons can exchange real-time information on cybersecurity issues; and
  - (e) a virtual forum is created for the discussion of convergence issues, focusing on content and carriage rather than broadcast policies and actively engaging the ASEAN Telecommunications Regulators Council to consider the regulatory aspects.
5. Expedite the implementation of the ASEAN Telecommunications Regulators’ Council’s (ATRC) Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) on conformity assessment for telecommunication equipment by 2005, by indicating dates on which all member countries will commence Phase 1 of the MRA, by intensifying capacity-building activities, such as seminars, personnel exchanges and joint audits, to boost mutual confidence in the competence of conformity assessment bodies across ASEAN.
6. Further develop ASEAN professional ICT skills standards and expand the base of knowledge workers in the region by 2004 by:
- (a) promoting networking of ICT skills competency centres / agencies to explore possible collaboration amongst these centres and agencies; and



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- (b) facilitating the establishment of a regional mechanism for promoting ICT certification programs and the cross-certification of these programs by ICT skills competency centres / agencies.
7. Create, and request the ASEAN Secretariat and eventually, the ASEAN ICT Centre to integrate and manage, the following databases:
- (a) A Database of National Information Infrastructure (NII) profiles of member countries by 2004;
  - (b) A Database of Trade and Investment Policy and Regulatory Practices for existing and potential investors by 2004, building upon existing efforts by the e-ASEAN Working Group (EAWG); and
  - (c) A Digital Divide Database by 2003 to promote further understanding of the dimensions of the ASEAN digital divide, exchange information on Universal Service Obligation (USO) schemes and develop joint studies and projects, which may be in partnerships with dialogue partners and other international organisations.
8. Promote and facilitate e-commerce and trade in telecommunications and IT by producing a Trade and Investment Handbook on the ASEAN Telecommunications and IT sector by 2005, to supplement the “Guide for Foreign Investors: Investing in ASEAN” published by the ASEAN Secretariat.
9. Develop national ICT master plans in each ASEAN country by 2005 to promote the application of ICT in all socio-economic aspects especially in e-government, commerce, education and industry.
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10. Pursue, in 2004, collaborative activities and joint dialogue with China, Japan, Korea and India.
  
11. Collectively submit a High-level Joint Statement at the upcoming World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) to be held in Geneva, Switzerland on 10 December 2003, to reinforce ASEAN's strong emphasis on the development of telecommunications and IT.

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