



**THE TWENTY-FOURTH AEM-METI CONSULTATIONS
30 August 2018, Singapore**

JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT

1. Economic Ministers from the ten ASEAN Member States and the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), Japan (“the Ministers”) met on 30 August 2018 in Singapore, for the Twenty-Fourth AEM-METI Consultations. The Consultations were co-chaired by H.E. Chan Chun Sing, Minister for Trade and Industry, Singapore and H.E. Hiroshige Seko, Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, Japan.
2. The Ministers noted that total merchandise trade between ASEAN and Japan reached USD 218 billion in 2017, accounting for 8.5 per cent of ASEAN’s total merchandise trade, with Japan maintaining its position as ASEAN’s fourth largest trading partner in 2017. On Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), Japan continues to be ASEAN’s second largest external source of FDI in 2017. Total FDI inflows from Japan amounted to USD 13.2 billion, accounting for 9.6 per cent of total FDI flows to ASEAN.
3. The Ministers welcomed the finalisation of the First Protocol to Amend the ASEAN-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership (AJCEP) Agreement to incorporate the Chapters on Trade in Services, Movement of Natural Persons (MNP), and Investment at the 18th Meeting of the AJCEP Joint Committee (AJCEP-JC) in Dec 2017. Both sides agreed to accelerate the relevant domestic processes with a view to signing of the First Protocol at the sidelines of the 21st ASEAN-Japan Summit to Commemorate the 45th Anniversary of ASEAN-Japan Relations in November 2018. The Ministers were confident that the First Protocol will serve as a catalyst to deepen and broaden trade in services and investment between ASEAN and Japan, and further enhance the ASEAN-Japan strategic partnership.
4. The Ministers reviewed the on-going efforts to improve the implementation of the AJCEP Agreement. The Ministers welcomed the full implementation of the AJCEP Agreement after Indonesia effectively implemented its tariff commitments on 1 March 2018.
5. The Ministers also welcomed the outcomes of the 11th Dialogue between Secretary-General of ASEAN and Federation of Japanese Chambers of Commerce and Industry in ASEAN (FJCCIA) held on 23 July 2018 in Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam, and reiterated the importance of further promoting dialogue mechanism in developing

economic community, amid the recent rapid change of business environments. Sharing the view that all innovative ideas towards upgrading industrial structure and solving social challenges are created at real production sites and customer contact points, the Ministers noted that the Dialogue serves as a useful consultation platform for Japanese businesses operating in the region to provide feedback and input on the implementation of the ASEAN Economic Community. The Ministers urged close follow-up through the relevant sectoral bodies, such as ASEAN Trade Facilitation Joint Consultative Committee (ATF-JCC), ASEAN Consultative Committee on Standards and Quality (ACCSQ) and ASEAN Coordinating Committee on Electronic Commerce (ACCEC), to look into the FJCCIA's proposals, which included ways to enhance public-private sector engagement, on-going trade and investment facilitation measures, as well as emerging issues related to digitalisation and innovation.

6. The Ministers commended the outcomes of the business activities under ASEAN-Japan Innovation Network (AJIN), including launching of ASEAN BAC's Joint Business Council (JBC) Innovation Working Group held on 7th June, a series of business matching for ASEAN-Japan collaborative innovation, and eighteen demonstration projects being conducted for new industry development lead by JETRO, 5 sessions for innovation dialogues and matchings led by JCCI and the IoT study report led by JETRO. The Ministers looked forward to further inputs from the private sector on free and smooth data circulation towards upgrading industries, through AJIN.

7. The Ministers welcomed the progress made in the implementation of the ASEAN-Japan 10-year Strategic Economic Cooperation Roadmap in various areas, including trade facilitation, IPR, micro small and medium enterprises (MSME), infrastructure, energy, innovation and transfer of technology.

8. The Ministers also welcomed the ASEAN-Japan Fourth Industrial Revolution Initiative that would enable ASEAN to develop its capabilities to benefit from the digital economy and the Fourth Industrial Revolution by: i) upgrading of industries (promotion of connected industries, contribution for AI human resource development, and support to nurture new industries); ii) spreading the benefits (support for start-ups in ASEAN Member States, and Japan sharing knowledge on successfully digitalised MSMEs in ASEAN Member States); iii) facilitating introduction/implementation of relevant rules (cooperation with AEC sectoral bodies including support for ASEAN's transition to the negative list under ATISA, cooperation for the development of patent examination manuals especially in the field of emerging technologies, and support for realizing high-quality RCEP). Also, in view of the signing of the ASEAN Agreement on Electronic Commerce targeted for signing in November 2018, the Ministers welcomed Japan's offer to support the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Electronic Commerce under the AMEICC framework and tasked officials to look into the detail of Japan's proposal towards establishment of a dialogue mechanism (e.g. AMEICC Working Group on E-Commerce), once the ASEAN Agreement on Electronic Commerce has been signed.

9. The Ministers congratulated AMEICC on its 20th Anniversary. AMEICC's partnership with ASEAN has been instrumental in promoting ASEAN's economic and industrial expansion through development cooperation and Ministers commended the various activities carried out by AMEICC in facilitating ASEAN economic integration and in enhancing ASEAN's competitiveness, including (i) new industry development, through networking, business matching between ASEAN companies and Japan companies, and jointing pilot projects in ASEAN countries ; (ii) industrial human resources development, through endowed courses at universities, capacity building for infrastructure development and ASEAN-wide inter-company training; (iii) AMEICC's WG activities, in particular, its support and collaboration with the ASEAN Coordinating Committee on MSME (ACCMSME). The Ministers were confident that AMEICC will continue its role and mission as one of the mechanisms for ASEAN-Japan development cooperation and for the promotion of ASEAN-Japan relations.

10. The Ministers reaffirmed support for the rules-based multilateral trading system. The Ministers noted the importance of the WTO reform, which may include improving the following functions: rule-making, monitoring and dispute settlement. The Ministers also noted the importance of ensuring the enforcement of existing international rules.

LIST OF MINISTERS

1. **H.E Dato Erywan Pehin Yusof**, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade II, Brunei Darussalam;
2. **H.E. Pan Sorasak**, Minister of Commerce, Cambodia;
3. **H.E. Enggartiasto Lukita**, Minister of Trade, Indonesia;
4. **H.E. Hiroshige Seko**, Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, Japan;
5. **H.E. Mrs. Khemmani Pholsena**, Minister of Industry and Commerce, Lao PDR;
6. **H.E. Darell Leiking**, Minister of International Trade and Industry, Malaysia;
7. **H.E. U Soe Win**, Union Minister for Planning and Finance, Myanmar;
8. **H.E. Ramon M. Lopez**, Secretary of Trade and Industry, the Philippines;
9. **H.E. Chan Chun Sing**, Minister for Trade and Industry, Singapore;
10. **H.E. Chutima Bunyapraphasara**, Deputy Minister of Commerce, Thailand (representing H.E. Sontirat Sontijirawong, Minister of Commerce, Thailand);
11. **H.E. Tran Tuan Anh**, Minister of Industry and Trade, Viet Nam;
12. **H.E. Dato Lim Jock Hoi**, Secretary-General of ASEAN.