



**THE AEM-USTR CONSULTATIONS  
1 September 2018, Singapore**

**JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT**

1. Consultations between the ten ASEAN Economic Ministers (AEM) and the United States Trade Representative (“the Ministers”) were held on 1 September 2018 in Singapore. The Consultations were co-chaired by H.E. Chan Chun Sing, Minister for Trade and Industry, Singapore and H.E. Jeffrey Gerrish, Deputy United States Trade Representative (USTR) for Asia, Europe, the Middle East and Industrial Competitiveness (representing H.E. Robert Lighthizer, United States Trade Representative).
2. Improving global economic conditions and the strong economic growth of both ASEAN and the United States in 2017 saw total merchandise trade between ASEAN and the U.S. expanding by a robust 10 per cent to USD 233.1 billion. This amount accounted for 9.1 per cent of ASEAN’s total trade, making the United States the third largest trading partner of ASEAN, while ASEAN is the fourth largest trading partner of the United States. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows from the United States to ASEAN amounted to USD 5.4 billion in 2017, putting the United States as ASEAN’s fourth largest external source of FDI.
3. The Ministers welcomed the progress in the implementation of the 2017-2018 ASEAN-U.S. Trade and Investment Framework Arrangement (TIFA) and the Expanded Economic Engagement (E3) Initiatives Work Plan. Particularly, the Ministers were pleased to note the concrete progress in the ASEAN Single Window and Trade Facilitation initiatives under the support of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)’s US-ASEAN Connectivity through Trade and Investment (US-ACTI) programme and urged the development to further enhance trade and investment ties between the United States and ASEAN. The Ministers welcomed the addition of agricultural biotechnology regulatory cooperation to the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 Work Plans. The Ministers also noted the proposed areas of cooperation put forward in 2018 on automotive standards and electronic payment services and have tasked the senior economic officials to monitor the progress of discussions by the relevant sectoral bodies.
4. The Ministers noted the progress in the implementation of the U.S.-ASEAN Connect initiative through the four areas of energy, innovation, policy and business. In particular, the Ministers welcomed the launch of the U.S.-ASEAN Internship programme in June 2018 by the US-ASEAN Connect and the US-ASEAN Business Council (USABC) which provides internship opportunities in US companies based in six ASEAN countries. The Ministers also looked forward to the expansion of the internship programme to

companies based in the US, as well as US companies operating outside the ASEAN region.

5. The Ministers expressed appreciation to the US for its new technical assistance programme for ASEAN, namely the ASEAN-USAID Inclusive Growth in ASEAN through Innovation, Trade, and E-Commerce (IGNITE). The programme will replace the current ACTI programme, which had supported ASEAN in the areas of ASEAN Single Window, Trade Facilitation, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) development, as well as Information and Communication Technology (ICT) development.

6. The Ministers expressed appreciation to the USABC for its work and encouraged continued private sector feedback in promoting stronger business and trade ties between the US and ASEAN business communities.

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## **LIST OF MINISTERS**

1. **Ms. Nor Ashikin Johari**, Acting Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Brunei Darussalam (representing 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. Mrs. Khemmani Pholsena**, Minister of Industry and Commerce, Lao PDR;
5. **H.E. Darell Leiking**, Minister of International Trade and Industry, Malaysia;
6. **H.E. U Soe Win**, Union Minister for Planning and Finance, Myanmar;
7. **H.E. Ramon M. Lopez**, Secretary of Trade and Industry, Philippines;
8. **H.E. Chan Chun Sing**, Minister for Trade and Industry, Singapore;
9. **H.E. Chutima Bunyapraphasara**, Deputy Minister of Commerce, Thailand (representing H.E. Sontirat Sontijirawong, Minister of Commerce, Thailand);
10. **H.E. Jeffrey Gerrish**, Deputy United States Trade Representative for Asia, Europe, the Middle East and Industrial Competitiveness (representing H.E. Robert Lighthizer, United States Trade Representative);
11. **H.E. Tran Tuan Anh**, Minister of Industry and Trade, Viet Nam;
12. **H.E. Dato Lim Jock Hoi**, Secretary-General of ASEAN.