

Joint Press Statement
The Fifth ASEAN Heads of Statistical Offices Meeting
(AHSOM 5)
12-13 January 2004, Luangphabang, Lao PDR

Introduction

1. We, the ASEAN Heads of Statistical Offices, convened our fifth meeting in Luangphabang, Lao PDR, to exchange views on recent developments in official statistics, review progress of our regional cooperation in promoting harmonization, development of statistics, as well as capacity building, and to formulate an action plan on statistics to be incorporated in the coming Vientiane Action Plan (VAP), which is the overall action plan of ASEAN.
2. Dr. Samaychanh Boupma, Director General of National Statistical Centre of Lao PDR and Mr. Bounthavy Sisouphanthong, former Director General of National Statistical Centre and Permanent Secretary to the Committee for Planning and Cooperation of Lao PDR presided over our meeting.

Progress of ASEAN Cooperation in Statistics

ASEAN Statistical Indicators

3. We agreed on the strategy and an overall work plan for compiling indicators in support of ASEAN initiatives and to implement it starting in 2004. Acknowledging the importance of having development benchmarks to measure implementation of the ASEAN action plan, we agreed to carry out the necessary formal consultation process as soon as possible to facilitate their compilation by 2005.

Harmonization of Statistics

4. We have strengthened the foundation for further promoting the quality, reliability, and comparability of statistics through the establishment and activities of task force on harmonization of statistical classifications (TFSC). We further agreed to establish the necessary mechanism to address issues related to statistics on poverty and international trade in services.

Statistical Capacity Building

5. We discussed and finalized the list of training needs for the ASEAN region to be used as a reference in addressing statistical capacity building needs. We also identified the modalities available in the region and in the international organizations and agreed to fully implement these modalities to enhance regional cooperation in capacity building and human resource development.

Adoption of International Good Practices

6. We agreed on concrete measures to enhance self assessment of the implementation of good practices and the fundamental principles of official statistics.

Vientiane Action Plan (VAP)

7. We agreed to draft an action plan based on the current Framework of Cooperation in Statistics. We further discussed detailed milestones on the development and cooperation on official statistics. The draft will be completed in time for the 10th ASEAN Summit to be held in 2004.

The Hosting of the ASEAN Heads of Statistical Offices Meeting (AHSOM)

8. We thanked the Administrator of the National Statistics Office of the Philippines for the proposal to host the sixth meeting in early 2005.
9. We thanked the Government of Lao PDR, especially the National Statistical Centre, for the excellent arrangements made for the meeting and for the warm hospitality accorded to us during AHSOM 5.
