

**Joint Press Statement The Third Meeting of the ASEAN Heads of Statistical
Offices (AHSOM)
24-25 September 2001, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia**

Introduction

1. We, the ASEAN Head of Statistical Offices, convened our Third meeting in Kuala Lumpur to exchange views on recent developments in statistics and discuss progress of our regional statistical cooperation initiatives, including the ASEAN Framework of Cooperation in Statistics and its Plan of Action.
2. Dato' Shaari Abdul Rahman, Chief Statistician of Malaysia, presided over our meeting.

Recent Developments in Statistics

3. We discussed the emerging developments and trends towards greater globalisation and increasing interdependence of our member economies and the challenges these trends would pose for ASEAN Statistical Offices/Administrations in the production of high quality official statistics. To address these challenges, we agreed to enhance our capabilities of statistical collection and dissemination, to conform to the international statistical standards, and to improve the provision of statistical information at the regional level.
4. To facilitate regional efforts in the improvement of ASEAN competitiveness and enhancement of industrial cooperation, we agreed to set up a working group to support ASEAN initiatives in developing comparable industrial and commerce statistics in the region.

The ASEAN Framework of Cooperation in Statistics

5. To guide our future statistical cooperation activities, we were finalizing the ASEAN Framework of Cooperation in Statistics which sets the directions of our cooperation towards greater harmonization, strengthened capacities and higher quality of official statistics. In particular, we recognized the needs to support ASEAN bodies' regional planning and policy-making through the provision of comparable and timely statistics. In this connection, we agreed to harmonise the definition, classification, concept and measurement of these statistics to promote the production of comparable regional statistical indicators, to the extent possible.
6. We also agreed to put greater efforts into improving the quality of official statistics through the observance of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission.

The Plan of Action on Statistics

7. To implement the ASEAN Framework of Cooperation in Statistics, we agreed on a plan of action which identifies activities aimed at providing adequate data support for ASEAN initiatives, planning and policy making; promoting harmonization of these data, adopting international best practices and strengthening our capacity in the production of required statistics through regional training programs.
8. We shall meet once a year to review the progress of the implementation of the ASEAN Framework of Cooperation in Statistics and also to exchange views among ourselves as well as with international statistical agencies like the UNSD, ADB, SIAP and ESCAP on recent developments and emerging issues in statistics.