



**JOINT STATEMENT
TWENTY SECOND
BRUNEI DARUSSALAM–INDONESIA–MALAYSIA–PHILIPPINES
EAST ASEAN GROWTH AREA MINISTERIAL MEETING
(22ND BIMP-EAGA MM)
26 NOVEMBER 2018
KUALA BELAIT, BRUNEI DARUSSALAM**

1. We, the Ministers of Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines gather in Kuala Belait, Brunei Darussalam on 26 November 2018 for the 22nd BIMP-EAGA Ministerial Meeting. H.E. Dato Seri Setia Dr. Amin Liew Abdullah, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Minister of Finance and Economy II and H.E. Dato Seri Setia Erywan Pehin Yusof, Minister of Foreign Affairs II, Brunei Darussalam co-chaired the meeting.
2. We are encouraged by BIMP-EAGA's steadfast economic growth despite global conditions. The combined real GDP of BIMP-EAGA grew at 5.7% reaching US\$287.3 billion in 2017. BIMP-EAGA recorded improvement in trade balance which rose to 39.2% at US\$ 54.7 billion. In terms of GDP at current prices, the EAGA trade in goods is at US\$102.7 billion. The total EAGA exports is at US\$79 billion. Tourist arrivals increased to 88.2 million with a growth rate of 6.7%. Realized and approved investments reached US\$13.92 billion in FDI and US\$6.98 billion in domestic investments.
3. We take note of the progress of BIMP-EAGA cooperation, especially achievements under the BIMP-EAGA Vision 2025 (BEV 2025) and discussed ways to implement it more effectively. Recognizing that the 22nd Ministerial Meeting precedes the Summit in June 2019 and the 25th anniversary of BIMP-EAGA, we considered concrete actions towards realizing a resilient, inclusive, sustainable, and economically competitive subregion. We urge all the BIMP-EAGA stakeholders to accelerate project implementation focusing on results to improve the lives of our people. We reinforce the importance of a results-based monitoring and evaluation system to assess effectiveness of BIMP-EAGA development at macro, sector and project levels.
4. We are pleased that a number of key milestones and deliverables have been achieved across the various sectors of cooperation. Physical connectivity has been further boosted by completion of three Priority Infrastructure Projects (PIPs): the Tanjung Selor to Sabah Border Road, the Balai Karangan Entikong Road, and Phase I of the new Makassar Port. We look forward to the completion of the Manado-Bitung Link Road and the Entikong International Freight Terminal in December 2018. We urge the officials to expedite the implementation of the PIPs and to expand the pipeline of priority projects under the BEV 2025 to optimize subregional economic integration.

5. We are pleased with the commencement of a number of air connections that will boost arrivals in major tourism destinations. The routes are Pontianak–Kuching by WingsAir in January 2018, Bandar Seri Begawan – Kuching by Royal Brunei Airlines in December 2018, and Kota Kinabalu – Bandar Seri Begawan by Airasia in January 2019.
6. We note that the movement of non-convention ships in BIMP-EAGA plays a vital role in fostering traditional trade and providing livelihood to local traders. We recognize maritime safety is crucial to promote sustainable operations of non-convention ships in the subregion. Thus, we welcome the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on The Improvement of Safety Standards and Inspection for Non-Convention Ships within ASEAN Member States as well as the adoption of the Guidelines for Safety Standards for Non-Convention Ships on 9 November 2018 which serves as reference to facilitate and promote cross-border maritime trade in our subregion.
7. We note challenges in the operation of the Davao/General Santos-Bitung RoRo Sea Linkage, thus we support the revival of the Indonesia and Philippines inter-governmental agency task force to address implementation bottlenecks.
8. We appreciate the progress made in the private-sector led BIMP-EAGA Submarine and Terrestrial (BEST) Cable System project. We support the idea of utilizing existing cable systems to connect Tarakan, Indonesia to Tawau, Malaysia to complete the BIMP-EAGA cable system loop. We commend efforts of the ICT CEO Forum to form strategic partnerships with the aim of developing technology that promotes livelihood opportunities in rural communities of the subregion.
9. We look forward to the findings of the Sabah–Palawan Power Interconnection study by Asian Development Bank (ADB) since the proposed interconnection is one of the 16 priority projects of the ASEAN Power Grid. We support the deployment of renewable energy in the subregion and welcome the signing of MOUs by four electric cooperatives in the Philippines with counterparts in BIMP-EAGA to promote biomass and solar power. We appreciate the signing of the MOU to develop a Mindanao Oil refinery and petrochemical complex between RJC Construction Sdn, Bhd, Malaysia and Capital D Holdings Development Corporation, Philippines.
10. We remain fully committed to economic corridor development as our spatial approach to realize inclusive and sustainable development in BIMP-EAGA. We appreciate the conduct of the economic corridor training which featured field visits in the West Borneo Economic Corridor. The training helped our government officials better understand on-the-ground issues and design approaches to enhance corridor development in the subregion. We also appreciate ADB's knowledge support on expanding cross-border trade and investment between North Kalimantan, Indonesia and Sabah, Malaysia, which identified investment projects to strengthen area-based cooperation.

11. We note progress in trade and investment facilitation initiatives to achieve viable cross-border trade and conducive investment environment. We are pleased with the results of the workshop on Time Release Study Implementation which helped identify bottlenecks in supply-chain movement of cargos and developed action plans. We commend the successful outcomes of the 4th IMT-GT and BIMP-EAGA Trade Fair held in Songkhla, Thailand in July 2018 where 100 companies' participated and business partnerships formed. We look forward to the hosting by Brunei Darussalam of the 5th BIMP-EAGA and IMT-GT Trade Fair in 2020. In addition, we acknowledge the conduct of the BIMP-EAGA Trade and Investment Forum held at the side lines of our Ministerial Meeting.
12. We continue to support BIMP-EAGA's aspiration to be the food basket in ASEAN and the rest of the world. A number of private-sector led agriculture projects have contributed to realizing this. Joint ventures in the five priority commodities of BIMP-EAGA such as rice production and marketing between the Philippines and Indonesia, and cattle development in South Sulawesi, Indonesia help improve the living conditions of rural communities. We also task our officials to integrate the subregional value-chain approach in the priority commodities at the project level.
13. We welcome efforts in tourism to further increase arrivals and receipts. The conduct of the workshop on attracting tourists from China in November 2018 in Manado, North Sulawesi, Indonesia reinforces our commitment to enhance people mobility with one of our development partners. To improve awareness of tourism planners in heritage conservation, a UNESCO Orientation Workshop was held in October 2018 in Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines. We also commend the convergence efforts between the tourism and socio-cultural and education clusters in promoting their signature cultural events.
14. We reaffirm our commitment to the BIMP-EAGA Green Cities Initiative. The completion of the Green City Action Plan (GCAP) for Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia is a noteworthy achievement given "green investment projects" identified. We direct our relevant agencies at the national and local levels to provide support in the implementation of the Green Cities Initiative. With the completion of the Compilation of Sustainable Ecotourism, Agriculture and Fisheries Case Studies, we expect that the best practices will be disseminated and adopted by projects in the agriculture and tourism clusters in collaboration with the environment cluster.
15. We are encouraged with the proposed Technical and Vocational Educational Training (TVET) and Higher Education and Institute (HEI) networks which will promote faculty and student exchanges and people mobility in the subregion as a result of the 2nd BIMP-EAGA TVET and HEI Summit held in July-August 2018 in Puerto Princesa, Palawan, Philippines. We look forward to the conduct in December 2018 of the 10th BIMP-EAGA Friendship Games and the BIMP-EAGA Youth Exchange Program in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam, and the 2nd Budayaw Festival to be hosted by Malaysia in Kuching, Sarawak in November 2019.

16. We reaffirm our commitment to strengthen the institutional capacity of the BIMP-EAGA Facilitation Centre given its critical role in subregional development. We recognize that a more effective and sustainable institutional arrangement is required to address the growing coordination needs of BIMP-EAGA.
17. We note private sector initiatives in the areas of transport, ICT, agriculture, energy, and cross-border trade and investment. Active engagement of the private sector such as BIMP-EAGA Business Council (BEBC) and industry players in their respective Clusters have generated strategic partnerships and cross-border projects. For more inclusive private sector participation, we encourage the BEBC to broaden their membership base and to involve industry players and stakeholders within their respective sectors.
18. We are pleased with the growing interest between and among local governments at the state and provincial levels in forging partnership arrangements that can help accelerate integration of the subregion's economies and help nurture a stronger sense of community within BIMP-EAGA.
19. We recognize ADB for being our committed regional development advisor. We are gratified that during difficult and challenging times, ADB makes a significant contribution to communities in our subregion. We thank ADB for the generous pledge of US\$1 billion for the reconstruction of Sulawesi, Indonesia and US\$400 million for the rehabilitation of Marawi City, Philippines. ADB provides support to a wide range of technical assistance, projects, and knowledge support in transport, power, tourism, environment, trade facilitation, economic corridors, border area development, and green cities. We also thank ADB for support in implementing BEV 2025, enhancing capacities of BIMP-EAGA government officials, and for deepening linkages with ASEAN. We request ADB to continue and expand its support for BIMP-EAGA cooperation.
20. We recognised BIMP-EAGA's strategic role as a building block to ASEAN integration and community building. We looked forward to greater synergy between ASEAN and BIMP-EAGA initiatives through the implementation of concrete projects that support the participation of MSMEs in the digital economy, and regional integration agenda, including the ASEAN Sustainable Urbanisation Strategy under the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity. We encourage the participation of development partners in implementing these cooperation projects.
21. We are pleased with the outcomes of the first BIMP-EAGA and China Ministerial Meeting, which solidified our partnership arrangements. We look forward to the continued support and collaboration with China in connectivity; agriculture, fishery processing and food industry; tourism and socio-cultural exchanges; trade and investment; digital economy; poverty alleviation and inclusive development; human resource development; environment; and power and energy. We task our officials to develop the Plan of Action for the BIMP-EAGA and China Cooperation.

22. We are gratified with the outcome of the 5th BIMP-EAGA and Northern Territory (NT) of Australia Senior Officials Meeting and the implementation progress of activities in the Plan of Action of the BIMP-EAGA and NT Cooperation 2016 – 2020. We are encouraged that the NT has actively participated in BIMP-EAGA activities including the BIMP-EAGA TVET and HEI Summit and the BIMP-EAGA Friendship Games. We look forward to more collaborative activities between BIMP-EAGA and NT in cruise tourism; sharing of best practices on sustainable eco-tourism in UNESCO world heritage sites; information sharing and technical discussions on the ASEAN qualifications framework; and research collaboration on tropical health, oil and gas, and maritime science.
23. We express our gratitude to the Government of the Brunei Darussalam for the warm hospitality and the excellent meeting arrangements.

List of Signing Ministers

1. H.E. Dato Seri Setia Dr. Amin Liew Abdullah, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Minister of Finance and Economy II
2. H.E. Dato Seri Setia Erywan Pehin Yusof, Minister of Foreign Affairs II
3. Honourable Bobby Hamzar Rafinus, Senior Adviser to Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs, Indonesia
4. H.E Dato' Seri Mohamed Azmin Ali, Minister of Economic Affairs, Malaysia
5. H.E Secretary Datu Hj Abul Khayr D. Alonto, Chairman, Mindanao Development Authority, Republic of the Philippines

List of State Ministers / Provincial Governors

1. Hon. Datuk Snowdan Lawan, Assistant Minister of Youth and Sports, Sarawak, Malaysia
2. Hon. Mr. Kenny Chua, Assistant Minister of Finance, Sabah, Malaysia
3. Hon. Dato' Sri Hj. Amir Hj. Hussein, Chairman of Labuan Corporation