THE AEM-USTR CONSULTATIONS
27 August 2020, Video Conference Meeting

JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT

1. The Economic Ministers from all ASEAN Member States (AMS) and the United States Trade Representative (“the Ministers”) virtually met on 27 August 2020. The Consultations were co-chaired by H.E. Tran Tuan Anh, Minister of Trade and Industry, Viet Nam and H.E. Robert E. Lighthizer, United States Trade Representative, United States of America (U.S.).

2. The Ministers noted that two-way merchandise trade between ASEAN and the United States experienced increasing growth of 12 per cent in 2019. As recorded by ASEAN’s preliminary statistics, two-way merchandise trade between ASEAN-U.S. reached USD 294.6 billion, while Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows from the United States to ASEAN amounted to USD 24.5 billion in 2019. These placed the United States as ASEAN’s second largest trading partner and largest external source of FDI among ASEAN’s 10 Dialogue Partners in 2019. The Ministers also welcomed the increased foreign investment into the United States from ASEAN.

3. The Ministers noted the progress made in the implementation of the 2019-2020 ASEAN-U.S. Trade and Investment Framework Arrangement (TIFA) and E3 Work Plan and welcomed activities planned to be conducted under the 2020-2021 ASEAN-U.S. TIFA, which focuses on the areas of Digital Trade, Transparency and Good Regulatory Practices, Trade and Environment Dialogue, U.S.-ASEAN Trade Workshops, ASEAN Single Window (ASW), Trade Facilitation, MSME Development and Agricultural Biotechnology Regulatory Cooperation. The Ministers welcomed the proposal for a U.S.-ASEAN Dialogue on Trade and Labour as a follow-up to the ASEAN High-Level Dialogue on Labour and Environment Issues in FTAs the previous year.

4. The ASEAN Ministers expressed appreciation for the U.S. technical assistance conducted under the Inclusive Growth in ASEAN through innovation, Trade, and E-Commerce” (IGNITE) program. During the past year, IGNITE has supported the continued expansion of the ASW, the automation of the ASEAN-wide Self-certification of Origin Scheme, standards activities in medical devices, traditional medicines and electric vehicles, e-commerce through the development of the Digital Integration Framework Action Plan and the ASEAN Digital Integration Index, the special Committee of the Whole (COW) on the Fourth Industrial Revolution, and the development of a Universal Service Obligation (USO) 2.0 implementation plan. The Ministers further expressed support for the U.S.-ASEAN Smart Cities Partnership to support water, transportation, cybersecurity, and health development for cities across ASEAN.
5. The Ministers expressed deep concern over the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, which has affected the lives and livelihood of peoples and economies around the world. The Ministers reaffirmed the importance of working together to realize a free, fair, transparent, non-discriminatory, predictable, and stable trade and investment environment to strengthen resiliency and sustainability of global supply chains. The Ministers agreed to work together, including in addressing non-tariff measures that are inconsistent with WTO rules, to facilitate the continued flow of essential goods, such as food, commodities, medicines, medical supplies, and services necessary to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Ministers also agreed to pursue facilitative measures that will expedite economic recovery from this crisis.

6. The Ministers expressed their appreciation to the US-ASEAN Business Council (USABC) for its support and encouraged continued private sector feedback in promoting stronger business and trade ties between the US and ASEAN business communities. The Ministers welcomed the US-ASEAN Business Council E-Commerce Report and noted the proposed initiatives highlighted in the report to help the ASEAN Member States (AMS) to further develop their e-commerce ecosystem as well as to enable seamless cross-border e-commerce activities.

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LIST OF MINISTERS

1. **H.E. Dato Dr. Amin Liew Abdullah**, Minister at the Prime Minister’s Office and Minister of Finance and Economy II, Brunei Darussalam;

2. **H.E. Pan Sorasak**, Minister of Commerce, Cambodia;

3. **H.E. Agus Suparmanto**, Minister of Trade, Indonesia;

4. **H.E. Mrs. Khemmani Pholsena**, Minister of Industry and Commerce, Lao PDR;

5. **H.E. Datuk Lim Ban Hong**, Deputy Minister of International Trade & Industry, Malaysia (representing H.E. Dato’ Seri Mohamed Azmin Ali, Senior Minister and Minister of International Trade and Industry, Malaysia);

6. **Mr. Aung Naing Oo**, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations, Myanmar (representing H.E. Thaung Tun, Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations, 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. Dr. Sansern Samalapa**, Vice Minister for Commerce, Thailand (representing H.E. Jurin Laksanawisit, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Commerce, Thailand);

10. **H.E. Robert E. Lighthizer**, United States Trade Representative, United States of America;

11. **H.E. Tran Tuan Anh**, Minister of Industry and Trade, Viet Nam; and

12. **H.E. Dato Lim Jock Hoi**, Secretary-General of ASEAN.