

**Joint Press Release The 8th Meeting of the ASEAN Ministers for Science and
Technology
Ha Noi, Viet Nam, 12-13 October 1998**

1. The ASEAN Ministers for Science and Technology met in Hanoi on 12-13 October 1998 to discuss regional cooperation in science and technology.
2. The Meeting was attended by the Ministers for Science and Technology or their representatives from Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam, and members of their respective delegations. Representatives of the ASEAN Secretariat were also in attendance.
3. In separate opening statements, the Ministers recognised the new challenges being faced by the science and technology sector as the new millennium approaches. They recognised that the phenomenon of economic globalisation, the rise of the knowledge-based economy and the present economic slowdown in Asia have implications on the direction and priorities of science and technology development in ASEAN. They called for urgent, coordinated action from the science and technology sector to respond to the effects of these developments in the economic arena.
4. The Ministers urged a review of past modalities of S&T cooperation in ASEAN and agreed to adopt in principle the recommendations and guiding methodology proposed by the ASEAN Committee on Science and Technology (COST) to develop innovative systems for programme management and revenue generation and to establish and operate autonomous enterprises with the participation of institutions, industry and Dialogue Partners. The Ministers reiterated their previous call, made at their 7th Meeting in 1995 in Bangkok, of the need to involve the private sector and mobilise their resources for regional cooperative projects in science and technology.
5. As a first step, the Ministers agreed to augment the ASEAN Science Fund, to reach a target of \$1 M contribution from each Member Country, to be paid over a ten-year period commencing next year. The schedule of payment will be determined by each Member Country according to its capacity to pay. However, to ensure that the Fund is used in an optimal way, the Ministers requested a review of the guidelines on usage of the Fund, including the composition and functions of the ASF Advisory Committee, and the maturity date of the Fund. They also asked that clear indicators and milestones that would allow a measurement of the success of the activities supported by the Fund be established.
6. In view of the need to respond to developments both in the technological and economic fronts that carry implications for the future of S&T in ASEAN, and to provide continuous guidance and impetus to the various S&T programmes being implemented by COST, the Ministers agreed on the need for them to meet regularly every three years, with an Informal Meeting in between. Malaysia will host the first Informal Meeting of the S&T Ministers.

7. The Ministers reviewed the implementation of the Medium-Term Programme for ASEAN S&T Development in the three-year period since it was adopted by the 7th Meeting of the S&T Ministers in Bangkok in 1995. They expressed satisfaction at the progress made thus far in human resource development, R&D and technology transfer activities. They noted with appreciation the achievements of the ASEAN Specialised Meteorological Centre (ASMC) especially its able technical support for ASEAN activities in the monitoring of transboundary haze.
8. Noting that a number of projects implemented by COST jointly with Dialogue Partners, with the private sector or under a cost-sharing mechanism among Member Countries had resulted in tangible commercialisable outputs, the Ministers called for an urgent study of the relevant intellectual property rights (IPR) issues and requested COST to coordinate with other ASEAN bodies working on this subject.
9. The Ministers also viewed a demonstration of the website of the ASEAN Science and Technology Network (ASTNET), and expressed hopes that it would fulfill its promise of not only facilitating information exchanges among S&T organisations and institutions in the Member Countries and with the rest of the world, but also serving as an important information resource and link to the business sector. They agreed that it was an important project that needed to be put on a sustainable footing, and directed COST to work out a realistic funding plan for the project.
10. The Ministers were briefed on the progress of the preparations for the Hanoi Plan of Action which will be the road map towards the achievement of the goals of ASEAN enunciated in ASEAN Vision 2020 by the Heads of Governments at the 2nd Informal Summit in Kuala Lumpur last year. The Ministers endorsed the proposed actions to reach the goal of technological competitiveness and competence in strategic and enabling technologies, supporting in particular the implementation of the programme areas on promoting S&T development and information technology infrastructure, human resource development, and networking for promoting environmentally sound technologies.
11. The Ministers attended the opening session of the Fifth ASEAN Science and Technology Week on 12 October 1998 which was presided over by the Prime Minister of Vietnam, H.E. Mr. Phan Van Khai. Special keynote lectures were delivered by two eminent scientists, Prof. Dr. Arthur J. Carty, President of the National Research Council of Canada and Prof. Dr. Dang Vu Minh, Director of the Centre of Natural Sciences and Technology of Vietnam. With the theme "Science and Technology: A Dynamic Force Towards Sustainable Development in ASEAN", the Fifth ASTW features 8 concurrent scientific conferences with more than 400 scientific papers and poster presentations, and more than 60 booths for showcasing achievements in science and technology within the region and elsewhere.
12. The ASEAN S&T Ministers along with representatives from diplomatic missions, government officials, Member Country delegations, scientists and researchers witnessed the conferment of the ASEAN Science and Technology Awards in three categories: the ASEAN Outstanding Scientist and Technologist Award to Dr. Bienvenido Juliano of the Philippines, the ASEAN Young Scientist and Technologist Award to Dr. Sirirug Songvilai of Thailand, and the ASEAN Science and Technology Meritorious Service

Awards to Mr. Lim Lam Keong of Brunei Darussalam, Prof. Samaun Samadikun of Indonesia, Dr. Chong Chok Ngee of Malaysia, Ms. Mercedes Soriano of the Philippines, Mrs. Rosa Tan of Singapore, Prof. Dr. Yongyuth Yuthavong of Thailand, and Dr. Le Dzung of Vietnam.

13. The Ministers agreed that the 9th Meeting will be held in Brunei Darussalam in 2001.