

**Ninth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Science and Technology  
17-18 September 2001, Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei darussalam**

**JOINT PRESS STATEMENT**

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1. The 9<sup>th</sup> Formal ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Science and Technology (AMMST) was held in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam on 17-18 September 2001. The Meeting was chaired by The Honourable Dato Seri Paduka Dr. Hj. Ahmad bin Hj. Jumat, Acting Minister of Development of Brunei Darussalam, and attended by Science and Technology Ministers and Senior Officials from the ten ASEAN Member Countries. The Deputy Secretary General of ASEAN and staff of the ASEAN Secretariat were also in attendance. The Meeting reviewed the progress of science and technology cooperation in ASEAN and set directions for future activities.
2. The Ministers reaffirmed their resolve to harness science and technology for meeting many challenges that the region faces as it enters the new millennium. They adopted the Implementation Framework for 2001-2004 of the ASEAN Plan of Action on Science and Technology as a road map for the development of regional programmes and projects over the medium-term leading to the realization of ASEAN's long-term vision of technological competitiveness. The Action Plan prescribes the strategic thrusts and actions that will foster intensified regional cooperation on science and technology development over the next 20 years. The programmes specified in the Action Plan are characterized by a strong thematic focus, interdisciplinary scope and cross-sectoral reach. The Action Plan also seeks to give impetus to collaboration between the public and private sectors in promoting research and technology development.
3. For the short- to medium-term, 2001 to 2004, the Implementation Framework focuses on the "ASEAN-help-ASEAN" concept, a framework adopted by the ASEAN Committee on Science and Technology (COST) to develop and implement projects aimed at enabling the newer ASEAN Member Countries to move up the learning curve and become economically competitive through the acquisition of technical skills and technological prowess. The concept essentially leverages on the national experiences and resources of the older, more developed ASEAN Member Countries to promote human resource development and institutional strengthening in the newer ones, and thus accelerate their integration into the mainstream of ASEAN cooperation in science and technology.
4. Some initiatives under this concept have already been launched. These include short training courses in food safety techniques and practices offered by Singapore to Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam, and training and technology transfer in drying technology for Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar. Similarly Thailand has offered training in food biotechnology to the same 4 countries. Indonesia will be conducting two training courses in November 2001, one in IT applications in hydrology, and another on technology management. Local costs for participants from ASEAN Member Countries will be borne by Indonesia, but for the participants from the newer Member Countries, additional

support in the form of air travel will be given. At the Meeting, Malaysia also announced its offer of a training course in Risk Analysis and Food Safety to all ASEAN Member Countries, with participants from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam receiving local support.

5. Although the initiatives are done on a small scale at this time, the Ministers noted their potential for fast-track implementation and called upon the Member Countries to consider launching more such programmes. The Ministers also agreed to integrate the regional cooperation programmes more deeply into their national S&T development plans in order to ensure greater national funding commitment to the regional programmes.

6. The Ministers also endorsed the mid-term review report on the progress of implementation of science and technology programmes under the Hanoi Plan of Action. The Hanoi Plan of Action (HPA) is the first in a series of action plans that would be implemented by ASEAN to realize the goals of ASEAN Vision 2020. Implementation of the HPA has now reached the halfway point of its six year time frame from 1999 to 2004. The Ministers noted the difficulties that had been encountered and recommended actions to address these problems. These actions included further focusing of the S&T programmes in the HPA, launching of a new programme on promotion of public awareness of science and technology, and improving the institutional, managerial and coordination mechanisms at the national and regional level.

7. The Ministers reviewed the status of the ASEAN Science Fund, particularly the progress of its augmentation which they approved in their Meeting in Malaysia last year. The Fund is another mechanism of ASEAN science and technology cooperation, whereby the Member Countries contribute annually to a common fund which can be used to support projects on policy development and information dissemination, or provide seed money for technology development projects of the ASEAN COST. The Ministers were pleased to note that the targets were largely being met.

8. The Ministers also addressed the low level of awareness of science and technology in the region and called for intensified efforts to publicise the achievements of science and technology cooperation in the region. Thus the Ministers supported the development of a programme to promote people-to-people contacts among ASEAN scientists and technologists as part of an "ASEAN-know-ASEAN" framework that would parallel its "ASEAN-help-ASEAN" programme. They also called for an outreach programme to raise the level of S&T awareness of the media, government and business leaders, schools and the general public. In this regard, they commended the launching of the book "ASEAN from Space", published by the Sub-Committee on Space Technology and Applications (SCOSA), which shows the ASEAN Member Countries through satellite images. The Member Countries shared the costs of publication of the book.

9. The Ministerial Meeting coincided with the opening of the 6<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Science and Technology Week (ASTW). The ASTW was inaugurated by The Honourable Pehin Orang Kaya Laila Setia Bakti Diraja Dato Laila Utama Awang Haji Isa bin Pehin Datu Perdana Menteri Dato Laila Utama Awang Haji Ibrahim, Special Adviser to His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam in The Prime Minister's Office cum The Minister of Home Affairs. The 6<sup>th</sup> ASTW features the ASEAN Science Congress and 9 technical conferences in the areas of cooperation under ASEAN COST. The highlight of the ASEAN Science Congress was the public lecture on "100 years of Nobel Prize and It's Impact on Human Welfare

through Science and Technology” by Professor Janne Carlsson, President of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, Administrator of Nobel Prizes in Physics and Chemistry. A Biotechnology Forum discussing vital issues on genetically modified organisms (GMOs) was also held. There were also technical exhibits mounted by the ASEAN Member Countries, the Sub-Committees of ASEAN COST, some Dialogue Partners of ASEAN and the private sector. The activities of the 6<sup>th</sup> ASTW revolve around the theme “Science and Technology: Enhancing the Quality of Life”.

10. The Ministers also led the ceremonies honouring the recipients of two prizes granted by ASEAN COST every three years in recognition of outstanding achievements of scientists and technologists in ASEAN. These are the Outstanding Scientist Award and the Young Scientist Award. Dr. Lourdes J. Cruz of the Philippines and Prof. Dr. Looi Lai Meng of Malaysia shared the Outstanding Scientist Award. Dr. Cruz was cited for her work on biochemical characterization of conotoxin and other neuropeptides from Conus venoms and her research on anti-tuberculosis compounds from marine organisms. Prof. Dr. Looi Lao Meng is an expert on diagnostic histopathology. Associate Prof. Dr. Ahmad Fauzi bin Ismail of Malaysia won the Young Scientist Award for his work on production of novel oriented-skinned hollow fiber membranes. The Meritorious Service Awards were also given to seven recipients from the ASEAN member countries.

11. The next Meeting of the ASEAN Science and Technology Ministers will be held in Myanmar in 2002.