



**THE 22<sup>nd</sup> MEETING OF THE ASEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY COUNCIL  
7 MAY 2023, JAKARTA, INDONESIA**

**CHAIR'S MEDIA STATEMENT**

1. The 22<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Council was held on 7 May 2023 in Jakarta, Indonesia to discuss the implementation and progress of initiatives under the AEC Blueprint 2025 as well as future work of the AEC pillar post 2025 considering new and emerging issues. The 22<sup>nd</sup> AEC Council, chaired by Minister Airlangga Hartarto of the Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs of Indonesia also convened a *Special Retreat Session on Sustainability Initiatives* in the lead up to the plenary session.
2. We discussed the current regional economic situation that influenced and shaped ASEAN economic integration. ASEAN's economy had shown a resurgence in growth as it has returned to pre-pandemic levels, with economic growth reaching 5.6% in 2022. ASEAN will maintain its growth above the global average at 4.7% in 2023 and 5.0% in 2024, making ASEAN a bright spot on the dark horizon. This optimism has led Indonesia to direct ASEAN as an epicentrum of growth under its chairmanship this year by safeguarding food and energy security, embracing the development of an electric vehicle ecosystem, and continuously supporting financial stability.
3. We applauded the successful implementation of the 16 Priority Economic Deliverables (PED) under Cambodia's Chairmanship in 2022 and agreed to ensure the completion of the remaining 2022 PEDs this year.
4. We welcomed and expressed our commitment to Indonesia's 16 PEDs for 2023 under its Chairmanship anchored on its overall theme of "ASEAN Matters: Epicentrum of Growth" and which support the three strategic thrusts of: Recovery and Rebuilding, Digital Economy, and Sustainability. These initiatives aim to enhance economic integration and the region's competitiveness in the global market, advance regional connectivity, accelerate inclusive digital economy transformation, and promote sustainable economic growth for a resilient future.

5. We reiterated the importance of the digital economy agenda as the key driver for ASEAN to become a leading digital community and economic bloc. In this regard, we urged the expeditious finalisation of the ASEAN Digital Economic Framework Agreement (DEFA) study and the development of the Framework's core elements. We looked forward to the endorsement of the DEFA study and the launch of the DEFA negotiations at the 23<sup>rd</sup> AEC Council Meeting in September this year.
6. We called on all AEC sectoral bodies to ensure the timely delivery of AEC initiatives, especially the 118 high-priority action lines/activities for 2023 that implement the AEC strategic measures across the five (5) AEC Characteristics. We acknowledged that these action lines/activities are pivotal to boosting intra-regional trade and encouraging regional value chain and investment, developing essential infrastructure for regional economic integration, and ensuring the region's competitiveness given the current global geopolitical and geoeconomic situation. We further called on all AEC sectoral bodies to extend support to each other and strengthen collaboration on action lines/activities requiring joint work, especially on areas and issues of cross-cutting nature.
7. We noted the good progress in the implementation of the AEC Blueprint 2025 and as well as implementation of the follow-up work to the AEC Blueprint 2025 Mid-Term Review recommendations. We urged the AEC sectoral bodies to continue their hard work to ensure the timely completion of ongoing and remaining action lines/activities, and where necessary to accelerate their processes to achieve the AEC Blueprint 2025 targets and goals. We noted that the MTR recommendations can provide valuable support in developing the ASEAN Community's Post-2025 Vision.
8. We exchanged views on sustainability initiatives, especially pertaining to energy transition concerns and the development of a regional electric vehicle ecosystem. Furthermore, we welcomed the implementation of the initial phase of the Circular Economy Implementation Plan that focuses on the high-impact sectors namely, agriculture, energy, and transport; the exploration of ASEAN Blue Economy as the new engine of growth for the region; the release of Version 2 of the ASEAN Sustainable Finance Taxonomy, and the development of the ASEAN Strategy on Carbon Neutrality. We also underscored the importance of appointing National Focal Points to support the development of the ASEAN Strategy on Carbon Neutrality. Moreover, we emphasised the need for a collective ASEAN effort and

strategy to identify synergies and potential cross-sectoral collaborations to support the sustainability agenda in the region.

9. We reaffirmed our commitment to advancing regional sustainability initiatives. We underscored the importance of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, accelerating the energy transition, decarbonising the land transport sector in the region, achieving net-zero emission targets, and improving energy security in each ASEAN Member State and in the region. We agreed to support the development of a regional electric vehicle ecosystem that can support the adoption of electric vehicles, improve the electric vehicle industry in the region, and build ASEAN as a global production hub for the electric vehicle industry to promote sustainable and green economic growth in the region. We also agreed to support the exploration of cooperation and collaboration on the development of the regional electric vehicle ecosystem.
  
10. We welcomed Timor-Leste for their inaugural participation in the 22<sup>nd</sup> AEC Council Meeting and looked forward to their further engagement in senior-level meetings under the AEC. In this regard, we agreed to fully support Timor-Leste's readiness to join ASEAN, including their participation in meetings and activities under the AEC.
  
11. We noted the development of the ASEAN Community's Post-2025 Vision. We reiterated the role of the High-Level Task Force on ASEAN Economic Integration (HLTF-EI) to be the responsible body for providing the AEC's inputs to the Post-2025 Core Elements and Vision to the HLTF-ACV, engaging with AEC stakeholders, and developing the AEC aspects of the attendant documents. We called on all sectoral bodies to commence the process for the preparation of the Post-2025 attendant documents and to provide support to the HLTF-EI and its Working Group for AEC Post-2025. We underlined the need for continued cross-sectoral/pillar engagement and advocated the development of cross-sectoral/pillars mechanisms that will further enhance collaboration and coordination. We encouraged the active participation of stakeholders in the Post-2025 visioning process and looked forward to the commencement of the stakeholder engagements in accordance with the predetermined timeline.

