



ASEAN LEADERS' DECLARATION ON ENHANCING SUPPLY CHAIN CONNECTIVITY

WE, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), namely Brunei Darussalam, the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Republic of Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the Republic of the Philippines, the Republic of Singapore, the Kingdom of Thailand, and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, gathered in Vientiane, Lao PDR on the occasion of the 44th and 45th ASEAN Summits on 9 October 2024;

RECOGNISING ASEAN's continued efforts to enhance regional connectivity, including through the implementation of the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint 2025 and the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025, as well as the Ha Noi Plan of Action on Strengthening ASEAN Economic Cooperation and Supply Chain Connectivity in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic;

ACKNOWLEDGING that ASEAN consists of Member States with diverse economic and geographical circumstances, each with its own unique set of challenges and opportunities, and united through our commitment towards building a seamlessly and comprehensively connected ASEAN Community, enhancing ASEAN's competitiveness as a region, and narrowing the development gap within ASEAN and between ASEAN and the rest of the world;

FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGING the role of cross-border trade and investment, both within and outside the ASEAN region, in fostering ASEAN's continued growth and prosperity, while supporting the development of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the region, as well as the livelihoods of our peoples;

COGNISANT of the evolving and interconnected nature of global value chains (GVCs) and supply chains in international trade, production and investment, which are vulnerable to global challenges including geo-political and geo-economic challenges, climate change, humanitarian crisis, epidemics, pandemics, natural disasters, and other market disruptions, while simultaneously being transformed by fast-paced technological advancements and adapting to shifting priorities;

EMPHASISING the need to enhance innovation and competitiveness in supply chains to optimise costs and unlock the value of business in the region;

EMPHASISING ALSO the importance of building a resilient supply chain capable of handling shocks especially during crisis situation, mitigating their impacts, and swiftly recovering from disruptions to minimise adverse effects on the region's economy;

REAFFIRMING concerted efforts among ASEAN Member States in improving food supply chain logistics, to ensure adequate, affordable and nutritious food for all, especially the most vulnerable population in ASEAN and support them from the disruptions in the food supply chain, for Rapid Actions to Food Security and Nutrition in Response to Crises, in line with the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Strengthening Food Security and Nutrition in Response to Crises.

UNDERSCORING the value of sustainability and circularity in the supply chain to combat global issues such as climate change, pandemics, and resource depletion, while ensuring long-term economic resilience through sustainable and inclusive growth, in line with the Framework for Circular Economy for the ASEAN Economic Community, the ASEAN Strategy for Carbon Neutrality, and other relevant sustainability-related initiatives of ASEAN;

FURTHER RECOGNISING the significance of enhancing supply chain connectivity as a vital component of ASEAN's collective efforts to strengthen the ASEAN Community, seize opportunities, address current and emerging challenges, and ensure peace, security, prosperity and stability in the region, in line with Lao PDR's ASEAN Chairmanship theme "ASEAN: Enhancing Connectivity and Resilience";

DO HEREBY AGREE TO:

1. **REAFFIRM** our commitment to enhancing the innovation, competitiveness and resiliency of supply chains in the region by, among others, reducing costs and increasing efficiency of cross-border trade and investment among ASEAN Member States including the use of advanced technologies; developing and implementing disaster-preparedness strategies for supply chains; promoting the diversification of supply chains; fostering the development of vital industries capable to withstand and mitigate shocks; and optimising the use of economic corridors between ASEAN Member States. In this regard, we look forward to the operationalisation of the Framework on ASEAN Supply Chain Efficiency and Resilience and its implementation plan under the MPAC 2025.
2. **INTENSIFY** efforts to elevate ASEAN's position in the GVC through an enabling policy environment supported by trade and transport facilitation measures, strengthened regulatory framework practice and coherence, liberalisation of services trade, maintaining an open and conducive investment climate, upholding robust consumer welfare, fostering fair and competitive markets through the promotion of competition and consumer protection policies and effective enforcement of competition laws and regulations in ASEAN, effectively protecting intellectual property

rights (IPR), enhanced statistical and analytical capabilities, and addressing legal gaps and strengthening capacities among ASEAN Member States both in forward and reverse end of supply chain, especially in MSMEs.

3. **HEIGHTEN** efforts to expedite the pace of negotiating and upgrading ASEAN's internal and external Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) while effectively implementing current FTAs including the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement to extend and deepen ASEAN's reach to the global markets, enabling ASEAN businesses to strengthen existing and establish new supply chain linkages, and reaffirming the objective of becoming a global ASEAN, as outlined in the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint 2025, which seeks to further strengthen economic cooperation with external partners to reinforce the region's strategy towards further integrating the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) into the global economy while ensuring ASEAN's resiliency and responsive to the evolving global economic landscape.

4. **FACILITATE** the movement of essential goods and related services within and across borders, and continue addressing non-tariff barriers and refrain from imposing new and trade restrictive non-tariff measures, which create unnecessary obstacles to trade on essential goods unless necessary and in conformity with their rights and obligations under the WTO Agreements, including by promoting investments in supply chain infrastructure such as seaports, dry ports, highways, inland waterways transport, railways, and airports to storage facilities and distribution centres, improving linkages from producers and suppliers to consumers, widening accessibility to the regional and global supply chain, and strengthening resiliency against supply chain disruptions for ease of doing business at the border.

5. **PROMOTE** the adoption of sustainability and circular elements in regional supply chains towards accelerating the transition to a circular economy in ASEAN by improving its efficiency, promoting low-carbon manufacturing and distribution activities, facilitating trade and investment in green and circular products, encouraging the use of low carbon transportation in the logistics industry, promoting R&D for sustainable innovation, and fostering collaboration among governments, businesses, and stakeholders, and strengthening capacity among ASEAN member states to leverage decarbonizing, and accelerate the deployment of clean energy technologies.

6. **DRIVE** the adoption, application and integration of advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, blockchain, digitalisation and the Internet of Things to enhance supply chain efficiency and resilience in the region, including by developing and implementing an enabling regulatory environment, pursuing capacity building and technical assistance that promotes technology transfer to businesses and narrows digital gap in ASEAN, and fostering partnerships to accelerate the adoption and implementation across industries and facilitate cross-sectoral collaboration among stakeholders.

7. **STRENGTHEN** the engagement and collaboration among stakeholders in different aspects of the supply chain across various industries, in a Whole-of-Community approach, to ensure ASEAN's supply chain connectivity-related initiatives produce meaningful and tangible results to our businesses and peoples.

8. **ENHANCE** the capability and resilience of ASEAN's supply chain and logistics services providers, and provide capacity building and related support to the development of MSMEs in the region towards enabling them to participate in the global supply chain, including through building linkages with international and regional firms, fostering their ability to supply and innovate, making digital tools and platforms accessible to bridge information gaps.

9. **CONTINUE** to develop and implement initiatives aimed at enhancing supply chain connectivity, considering new and emerging issues and opportunities, particularly under the forthcoming ASEAN Community Vision 2045 and its attendant documents, particularly the ASEAN Economic Community Strategic Plan and the ASEAN Connectivity Strategic Plan, and promoting synergy with other multilateral and sub-regional efforts, including, but not limited to, the WTO, APEC, Mekong cooperation, BIMP-EAGA and IMT-GT.

ADOPTED on the Ninth Day of October in the Year Two Thousand and Twenty-Four, in a single original copy in the English Language.

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