



JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT OF THE 34th MEETING OF THE ASEAN DIRECTORS-GENERAL OF CUSTOMS

3 – 5 June 2025

1. The 34th Meeting of the ASEAN Directors-General of Customs (DGs) was held on 3 - 5 June 2025 in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam. The Meeting was chaired by Mr. Azizil Hakim Brahim, Acting Controller of Customs, Royal Customs and Excise Department, Brunei Darussalam and attended by 10 ASEAN Member States (AMS) and the ASEAN Secretariat.
2. We express concern over the recent introduction of unilateral tariffs by the U.S. This has caused uncertainty and will bring significant challenges to businesses, especially micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), as well as to global trade dynamics. The unprecedented imposition of tariffs by the U.S. will disrupt regional and global trade and investment flows, as well as supply chains, affecting businesses worldwide and hindering economic progress in ASEAN. We reaffirm our support for a predictable, transparent, free, fair, inclusive, sustainable, and rules-based multilateral trading system with the World Trade Organization (WTO) at its core, and we acknowledge the critical role that the WTO has played in fostering global economic growth. ASEAN will remain steadfast in deepening our regional economic integration, leveraging on opportunities amidst global challenges. We will continue to work together more closely, with greater unity and solidarity and remain committed to ASEAN's rule-based trade. This collective effort will enable ASEAN to cope with and overcome the global trade crisis, minimise the impact on our people, and continue to grow sustainably.
3. We note the progress of the implementation of the Strategic Plan of Customs Development (SPCD) 2021-2025 and urge relevant sectoral bodies to complete the implementation of the remaining activities as soon as possible. Should the activities not be completed, they will be carried over to the next SPCD 2026-2030 with clear justifications. We endorse the SPCDs 2026-2030, which will guide the work of the customs sectoral bodies over the next five (5) years. The SPCD 2026-2030 aims to further simplify and modernise customs procedures in the region while still facilitating trade, taking into account emerging issues, to enhance intra-ASEAN trade.
4. We note the implementation of the ASEAN Authorised Economic Operators Mutual Recognition Arrangement (AAMRA) by six (6) AMS, namely Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and the Philippines. We encourage the remaining AMS to accelerate their internal processes to implement the AAMRA by the end of 2025. Following the full implementation of the AAMRA, we further encourage AMS to initiate the discussion on the expansion of AEO MRAs to dialogue partners to expedite customs clearance, reduce inspections, and enhance trade facilitation, which would support ASEAN's businesses to penetrate better dialogue partners' markets, and as a result, increase Plus-one Free Trade Agreements (FTA) utilisations.

5. We note that since the launch of the ASEAN Customs Transit System (ACTS) in November 2020, there have been 645 ACTS movements. From June 2024 to May 2025, 354 movements were recorded, marking an 82.47 % increase from the same period last year. We encourage AMS to actively address implementation issues and conduct more outreach programmes to attract more traders to the ACTS to increase movements in the region. We also encourage Myanmar to expedite her domestic process and intensify outreach efforts to engage potential traders, raise awareness about ACTS, and facilitate trader registration to initiate ACTS movements at the latest by December 2025. We also urge the remaining AMS to ensure the timely establishment of their Authorised Transit Trader (ATT) schemes in 2025. We request relevant sectoral bodies to accelerate the discussion on the inclusion of other modes of transport, such as railway, airway, and sea routes, into the ACTS to facilitate trade in transit, reduce transit time, and lower logistics costs in the region, with a possibility of pathfinder programmes among ready AMS, where possible. We also look forward to the discussion with neighbouring non-ASEAN countries on the possibility of connecting them with the ACTS in the future. We also note the progress of the Study on a comprehensive ACTS supported by the EU-SCOPE Trade Project and look forward to the completion of the Study as soon as possible.

6. We note the progress of the development of the ASEAN Guidelines of the Exchange of Information on E-Commerce Data between Customs and E-Commerce Operators. The Guidelines will provide practical guidance for establishing cooperative frameworks and data exchange mechanisms, enabling customs to access advanced information for enhanced risk management and strengthened regulatory compliance.

7. We endorse the ASEAN Customs Valuation Information Exchange Guideline. The Guideline will provide recommendations on the mechanism for exchanging customs valuation information on an inquiry or case-by-case basis, enabling AMS to obtain specific information related to importations when the truth or accuracy of the declared value is in doubt and/or when fraud is detected. The Guideline also facilitates the exchange of views to promote a common understanding among customs administrations. We encourage AMS to implement the Guideline to enhance transparency, improve customs valuation practices, and strengthen regional cooperation.

8. We commend the completion of the 2nd Joint Customs Control (JCC) Operation, conducted virtually from 1 October to 11 December 2024. The operation strengthens cooperation and commitments among AMS and the Republic of Korea (ROK) in tackling illicit narcotics in the region. We encourage AMS to continue supporting future JCC operations and to collaborate with more dialogue partners, to combat illegal trade to protect society.

9. We agree to strengthen our cooperation to uphold the integrity of the global supply chain and prevent illicit trade activities, which could involve rerouting shipments of goods through third countries or altering the origin of goods. We additionally note the actions that have already been taken by some AMS to impose strict measures, e.g., only authorising trade-related ministries to issue non-preferential certificates of origin for shipments to the US to ensure their true origins.

10. We endorse the ASEAN Integrity Risk Mapping, which would serve as a reference to support ASEAN Customs administrations in identifying areas that are vulnerable to integrity issues, as well as how to mitigate any wrong conduct against the Customs integrity principles. We also endorse the Method to Measure Soft and Hard Competencies of the Customs Officers, which will be a reference for the enhancement of competencies and professional capacity of AMS customs officers.

11. We commend the continued efforts to facilitate the exchange of best practices through various intra-ASEAN technical assistance programmes in key customs-related areas,

including post-clearance audit, development of K-9 units, integrity, customs control on duty-free shops, and the establishment of customs laboratory. These initiatives demonstrate a strong spirit of regional solidarity and contribute significantly to capacity building and institutional strengthening across the ASEAN region.

12. We commend both the live exchange of the ASEAN Customs Declaration Document (ACDD) by all AMS and the successful transition of e-Form D transmission via the common header and welcome the Philippines for joining Indonesia and Thailand in exchanging the electronic Phytosanitary (e-Phyto) certificates. We also commend the completion of the Study on the New Generation of the ASEAN Single Window (ASW), which has been designated as one of the 2024 Priority Economic Deliverables under Lao PDR's Chairmanship. The study provides policy, technical, and legal recommendations to enhance interoperability between the ASW and the digital platforms of Dialogue Partners, paving the way for cross-border paperless trade cooperation. We also encourage relevant sectoral bodies to intensify discussions with dialogue partners to facilitate the exchange of electronic trade administration documents as soon as possible.

13. We welcome the conclusion of the negotiations of the ATIGA Upgrade and the ASEAN-China Free Trade Area (ACFTA) 3.0 Upgrade, which include Chapters on Customs Procedures and Trade Facilitation (CPTF). We look forward to the signing of the Second Protocol to Amend the ATIGA at the sidelines of the 47th ASEAN Summit in October 2025 and the signing of the ACFTA Upgrade Protocol at the 28th ASEAN-China Summit later in 2025. The two upgraded CPTF Chapters in those Agreements, which build on the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) as a baseline, incorporate forward-looking and value-added elements that align with the evolution of global current trade facilitation and customs initiatives. These enhancements will further promote the utilisation of digital initiatives, foster the seamless movement of goods, enhance transparency and predictability in Customs, streamline customs clearance, and reduce trade transactional costs, among others. We also note on the progress of the negotiations of the CPTF Chapters under the ASEAN – Canada Free Trade Area (ACAFTA) and the ASEAN – India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA) Review and encourage all AMS to strive further to substantially conclude those negotiations in 2025, announce their outcomes to the public in 2026, and in turn, bring real benefits to the private sector.

14. We express our appreciation for Australia, China, Japan, ROK, and the World Customs Organization (WCO) for their unwavering support and continued cooperation through the sharing of best practices and technical assistance for AMS Customs administrations. We underscore the positive outcomes from the successful cooperation with the ROK in conducting the Operation Pacific Shield I in 2024, focusing on tackling illicit drugs, which aimed at enhancing multilateral security cooperation and trade enforcement. Furthermore, we also highlight the importance of capacity building support provided by Japan, as well as the cooperation to exchange of intelligence information between ASEAN and Japan, which is crucial in strengthening Customs enforcement cooperation for ensuring better control of goods crossing the regional borders. We also appreciate Australia's support for improving the capacity of ASEAN Customs officials. We note China's interest in exploring cooperation with ASEAN in the ACTS and the exchange of electronic trade administration documents, which aim at improving trade efficiency and reducing costs for businesses and consumers of both ASEAN and China. We reaffirm our commitment to deepening the collaboration with all dialogue partners to support ASEAN customs administrations in exploring the incorporation of emerging issues.

15. We welcome constructive consultations with the private sector to discuss various issues, including Informed Compliance, the AAMRA, Low-Value Shipments, Cross-Border E-Commerce, ASW, ACTS, and combating illicit trade, among others. We note that the private sector expresses its appreciation for ASEAN customs' initiative in promoting informed

compliance in the region, highlighting its value in supporting the private sector to comply with relevant customs regulations more efficiently. We reaffirm our continued commitment to strengthening collaboration with the private sector to enhance trade facilitation, improve customs efficiency, and tackle illicit trade, thereby fostering a sound business environment in the region.

