



THE 58th ASEAN ECONOMIC MINISTERS' (AEM) MEETING
19 September 2026, Manila, Philippines

JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT

1. The Fifty-Eighth ASEAN Economic Ministers' (AEM) Meeting was held on 19 September 2026 in Manila, Philippines. The Meeting, which was chaired by the Philippines under the theme of *"Navigating Our Future, Together"*, was preceded by a preparatory meeting of the ASEAN Senior Economic Officials (SEOM) and joint meetings with the 40th ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) Council and the 29th ASEAN Investment Area (AIA) Council.

Regional and Global Developments

2. The Meeting welcomed that the ASEAN economy expanded by 4.9 per cent in 2025 and is projected to grow by 4.5 per cent in 2026¹, remaining well above the projected global growth rate of 3.0 per cent.² The Meeting acknowledged that, despite uncertainties arising from the Middle East crisis and global geo-economic uncertainties, ASEAN's economy continues to demonstrate resilience, supported by sustained manufacturing activity, resilient exports and investment, and steady domestic demand.³

3. At the same time, the Meeting welcomed the strong performance of ASEAN's external sector, with merchandise trade expanding by 13.7 per cent to US\$4.4 trillion in 2025, while foreign direct investment inflows increased by 10.1 per cent to US\$245.7 billion, underscoring continued investor confidence in the region. The Meeting further noted with satisfaction that ASEAN's trade in services expanded by 7.5 percent in 2025, increasing from US\$1.3 trillion to US\$1.4 trillion compared with the previous year. The Meeting further noted that intra-ASEAN trade in services grew by approximately 5.1 percent during the same period.

4. The Meeting further reaffirmed ASEAN's commitment to preserving an open, inclusive, transparent, and rules-based multilateral trading system, with the World

¹ ADB (2026, July), 'Asian Development Outlook, July 2026', retrieved from: <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/1155601/asian-development-outlook-july-2026.pdf>, pp. 12.

² IMF (2026, July), 'World Economic Outlook Update, July 2026', retrieved from: <https://www.imf.org/-/media/files/publications/weo/2026/update/july/english/text.pdf>, pp. 12.

³ ADB (2026, July), *Ibid.*, pp. 12.

Trade Organisation at its core. In this regard, the Meeting emphasised the importance of deepening regional economic integration, strengthening supply chain resilience, promoting investment, and advancing cooperation on emerging economic issues to sustain ASEAN's growth momentum and long-term competitiveness amidst an increasingly uncertain global environment.

AEC Strategic Plan 2026-2030

5. The Meeting affirmed ASEAN's strong commitment to the successful implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2045 and the AEC Strategic Plan 2026-2030, recognising the first year of implementation as a critical foundation for realising a more integrated, resilient, competitive, and inclusive regional economy. The Meeting also adopted the AEC Sectoral Plans as key instruments to guide the delivery of the AEC Strategic Plan 2026–2030, in support of ASEAN's aspiration to sustain high-quality growth and strengthen its position as a major player in the global economy.

6. The Meeting welcomed the adoption of the Enhanced AEC Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) Framework 2045 as a strategic instrument to strengthen ASEAN's results-based approach to implementing the AEC Strategic Plan 2026-2030. The Framework will enhance the tracking of progress and support evidence-based, timely policy adjustments throughout the implementation period, reflecting the Meeting's commitment to a robust, forward-looking, and accountable approach to regional economic integration.

Philippines' Priority Economic Deliverables

7. The Meeting welcomed the substantial progress achieved in the implementation of the 2026 Priority Economic Deliverables (PED), which reflect ASEAN's collective efforts to advance regional economic integration, resilience, and competitiveness under the Philippine Chairship. The Meeting commended the work of ASEAN Sectoral Bodies, supported by relevant stakeholders and Dialogue Partners, in translating these priorities into concrete outcomes for the region.

8. On trade facilitation and economic security PEDs, the Meeting noted developments on the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Strategic Trade Management for Secure Regional Trade and the ASEAN Semiconductor Roadmap, both of which are critical to strengthening ASEAN's economic security and resilience. The Meeting underscored the importance of strategic trade management in supporting secure, resilient, and trusted regional supply chains amid an increasingly complex global trade environment, and looked forward to its consideration at the upcoming ASEAN Summit.

9. On investment and intellectual property-related priorities, the Meeting noted progress under "Greener Future," the implementation programme of the Regional Investment Proposition Action Plan (RIPAP) 2025-2030, as well as the upcoming

release of the IP Valuation Manual, to support ASEAN Member States in unlocking the economic value of specific intellectual property assets and expanding avenues for IP-backed financing.

10. On digital economy and emerging sectors, the Meeting welcomed the conclusion and the preparations for the signing of the ASEAN Digital Economy Framework Agreement (DEFA) on the sidelines of the 49th ASEAN Summit, as well as developments on the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on the Cross-Border Movement of Digital Workers, which will complement DEFA by supporting digital talent mobility across the region. The ASEAN Declaration on the Advancement of Space Science, Technology, and Innovation Cooperation will also reflect ASEAN's growing focus on the sectors that will define the region's future competitiveness.

11. The Meeting underscored that the ASEAN DEFA will provide a stronger foundation for a more integrated, inclusive, competitive, and trusted digital economy, helping businesses, particularly MSMEs, participate more easily in the region's digital economy and enabling seamless cross-border digital transactions. The Meeting reaffirmed its commitment to the signing of the Agreement at the 49th ASEAN Summit in November.

12. The Meeting welcomed the progress in the development of an ASEAN Leaders' Declaration to establish the ASEAN Center of Excellence on Creative Industries (ACE-CI) in the Philippines. The ACE-CI is envisioned to serve as a platform to unlock the economic potential of creative industries, foster innovation and cultural entrepreneurship, and support inclusive growth across the region.

13. The Meeting also noted discussions on the establishment of the ASEAN Centre of Excellence for MSMEs (ACE-MSMEs) in the Philippines and welcomed the progress of the feasibility study. The Meeting looked forward to its completion and recommendations, which will inform the development of a stronger and coordinated capacity building programmes for MSMEs.

14. The Meeting was pleased to note that negotiations for the ASEAN-Canada Free Trade Agreement (ACAFTA) is on track towards its substantial conclusion in 2026.

15. The Meeting reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring continuity in the implementation of these priority economic deliverables through enhanced cross-sectoral coordination, effective monitoring, and continued collaboration, so that they generate meaningful and lasting benefits for the people and businesses of ASEAN.

Trade in Goods

16. The Meeting noted an increase of 11 percentage-points in the utilisation rate of the ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (ATIGA) from 51.7% in 2024 to 62.7%⁴ in

⁴ The utilisation rate for 2025 is based on trade data submissions from nine (9) AMS, except Malaysia

2025, reflecting continued progress in promoting greater utilisation of ATIGA preferential tariffs and strengthening intra-ASEAN trade. The Meeting welcomed the continued implementation of trade facilitative measures, including the full implementation of the electronic Form D (e-Form D) and the ASEAN-wide Self-certification scheme, which facilitate the seamless movement of goods and access to preferential tariff treatment. The Meeting further encouraged businesses, particularly MSMEs, to make greater use of available tools, such as the ASEAN Tariff Finder and ASEAN Solutions for Investment, Service, and Trade (ASSIST), to enhance their access to information on ATIGA benefits.

17. The Meeting welcomed the completion of the ASEAN Trade in Goods Strategic Action Plan (TIG-SAP) for 2026-2030 which is aligned with the ASEAN Economic Community Strategic Plan 2026-2030, specifically on the strategic measures to enhance intra-ASEAN trade through timely and effective implementation of the ATIGA and its subsequent upgrades, taking into account new and emerging issues (NEIs) relevant to the post-2025 environment.

18. The Meeting further welcomed the Declaration on the Provisional Application of the Second Protocol to Amend the ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (Upgraded ATIGA), which will facilitate the early entry-into-force of the Upgraded ATIGA within 2026. The early EIF will allow ASEAN to timely realise the benefits of the Upgraded ATIGA by facilitating the seamless movement of goods, enhancing transparency and predictability for businesses, especially micro, small and medium enterprises across the region, and addressing trade in humanitarian crisis situations, thereby boosting intra-ASEAN trade and consolidating ASEAN as a single market and production base.

Trade Facilitation

19. The Meeting noted the Joint 2025 OECD-ASEAN Policy Report on Trade Facilitation using Trade Facilitation Indicators (TFIs), which was developed by the ASEAN Secretariat and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and published on 9 May 2026. The Report assesses ASEAN's progress in strengthening its trade facilitation policy environment and provides policy recommendations to further enhance trade facilitation across the region. The findings indicate that ASEAN's trade facilitation performance improved by approximately 30% since the entry into force of the World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement (WTO TFA) in February 2017. In addition, ASEAN also recorded a 6% improvement in reducing procedural complexities and administrative hurdles at the border, exceeding the Asia-Pacific average of 4.4%.

20. The Meeting also noted the progress on the 2026 Annual Report on the Implementation of Non-Tariff Measures (NTMs) in ASEAN. The Report aims to provide a comprehensive and evidence-based assessment of NTM implementation across selected priority sectors, and present recommendations to minimise the trade-distortive effects of NTMs. The Meeting looked forward to the finalisation of the Report in the first quarter of 2027.

ASEAN Customs Integration

21. The Meeting welcomed the implementation of the ASEAN Authorised Economic Operator Mutual Recognition Arrangement (AAMRA) by 10 AMS, except Timor-Leste, since 30 June 2026, which allows eligible AEOs to be regionally recognised and benefit from expedited customs clearance and priority treatment of their consignments thereby facilitating the more secure and efficient movement of goods within the region. The Meeting also noted the ongoing discussions between ASEAN Customs and Customs Administrations of relevant Dialogue Partners (DPs) on the possible establishment of AEO Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs).

22. We noted the preparations to pilot the railway mode under the ASEAN Customs Transit System (ACTS) among Malaysia, Thailand and Lao PDR by the end of 2026. We also welcomed the continued efforts of Brunei Darussalam and Indonesia to advance the necessary preparations and operational readiness for the ACTS pilot along the Borneo Corridor.

23. The Meeting welcomed ASEAN Customs to effectively implement its cooperation mechanisms on the exchange of intelligence information. These initiatives are crucial to strengthen regional border enforcement and effectively combat illicit trade in ASEAN.

24. The Meeting also noted the significant progress in the exchange of electronic trade-related documents through the ASEAN Single Window (ASW), including the ATIGA e-Form D, the ASEAN Customs Declaration Document (ACDD) and the e-Phytosanitary certificate. In 2025, the total volume of electronic document exchanges increased by 12.4% compared with 2024, including 1,346,971 ATIGA e-Form D and 3,990,196 ACDD messages.

25. The Meeting welcomed the endorsement of the AWS 2.0 Roadmap by the SEOM and the ASEAN Directors-General of Customs. The Meeting commended the finalisation of the ASW Technical Specifications as a new milestone in the implementation of the ASW 2.0 Roadmap, which will facilitate cooperation in the exchange of electronic documents between ASEAN and External Partners. The Meeting further noted that ASEAN has commenced discussions with several external partners, including Japan, Korea, China, and Hong Kong, China.

Standards, Technical Regulations, and Conformity Assessment Procedures

26. The Meeting noted the harmonisation of thirty-four (34) new standards, bringing the total number of ASEAN harmonised standards to 357 covering building and construction, cosmetics, electrical and electronics equipment, greenhouse gas (GHG), smart manufacturing, digital trade, rubber-based products, wood-based products, and medical devices. To expand the harmonisation of standards to new and emerging sectors, the endorsed ASEAN Foresighting Framework (AFF) is being used and provides a systematic approach to early identification of trending areas and

technologies relevant to ASEAN.

27. The Meeting noted the implementation of MRAs on Electrical and Electronic Equipment, where thirty (30) testing and certification bodies have been recognised by the AMS, an increase from 24 in 2025. The Meeting welcomed the good progress in the Implementation of MRA on Type Approval for Automotive Products (APMRA) through the identification of technical services performing testing and inspection of automotive products for listing and designation under the MRA. The Meeting noted the progress on implementation of MRA on Inspection and Certification System on Food Hygiene for Prepared Foodstuff, MRA on Bio-Equivalence Study Report for Generic Medicinal Products and the expansion of scope of MRA for Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) Inspection on Manufacturer of Medicinal Products. The Meeting also noted the progress of ratification of the MRA on Type Approval for Automotive Products and MRA on Building and Construction Materials.

28. The Meeting noted the effective implementation of harmonised regulatory regimes on cosmetics, electrical and electronics, and medical devices. The Meeting welcomed the Explanatory Notes for the Implementation of the ASEAN Food Safety Regulatory Framework Agreement providing common understanding of the relevant provisions of the Agreement.

Trade in Services

29. The Meeting reaffirmed ASEAN's commitment to maintain an open, integrated, and competitive ASEAN services market. With a view to ensuring a high level of commitment and continuing relevance of the ASEAN Trade in Services Agreement (ATISA) to the evolving market and business realities, the Meeting agreed to continue work under the implementation of the ATISA, including to review relevant provisions of the ATISA that may be included in the scope of the general review.

30. The Meeting welcomed the continued progress of the implementation of the ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs) across the seven (7) professions, which have facilitated the recognition and mobility of qualified professionals across the region. We welcomed the growing number of registered professionals and foreign professionals under the MRAs for engineering, accountancy, and architectural services.

31. The Meeting welcomed the completion of negotiations on the draft MRA on Land Surveying and Geomatics Services and looked forward to its conclusion and signing in 2027, which will support greater professional mobility and deeper regional integration in surveying and geomatics services.

32. The Meeting welcomed Viet Nam's successful completion of its Referencing Report for the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRf) as the fifth Member States that have completed this process, and encouraged remaining Member States to continue advancing their referencing efforts.

33. The Meeting welcomed the adoption of the ASEAN Guidelines on Digital Recognition of Qualifications and Credentials, which will support greater trust, transparency, and mobility of learners and professionals across ASEAN. The Meeting also noted the ongoing work of the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework Committee (AQRFC) to strengthen quality assurance systems, promote comparability of qualifications, and enhance recognition mechanisms to facilitate labour mobility and lifelong learning in the region.

Investment

34. The Meeting welcomed the completion of signing of the Fifth Protocol to Amend the ASEAN Comprehensive Investment Agreement (ACIA). This Protocol will operationalise the transition of the existing single-annex reservation list under the ACIA to a more modern two-annex negative list, which provides even greater certainty and transparency to investors on the ASEAN investment regime. The Meeting noted the discussions on the Schedule of Reservations and Non-Conforming Measures.

35. The Meeting also welcomed the official adoption of the ASEAN Sustainable Investment Guidelines (ASIG) on 26 March 2026. ASIG will serve as a non-legally binding instrument to guide AMS to foster responsible and inclusive investment practices that contribute to sustainable and long-term well-being of ASEAN's economy, environment and society. The Meeting looked forward to the implementation of the Guidelines, including through the activities as set forth under the AEC Strategic Plan 2026-2030.

36. The Meeting commended the progress achieved in the second year of implementation of the ASEAN Regional Investment Promotion Action Plan (RIPAP) for Phase 1 (2025-2027) as one of the Philippines' Priority Economic Deliverables entitled "*Greener Future – Implementation of the Regional Investment Promotion Action Plan 2025-2030*". In particular, the Meeting noted the inclusion of the Action Plan for Smart Grid Development as the most recent focused sector added under the RIPAP, the launching of the new *InvestASEAN* website, as well as the launching of "*Investment Ready Projects: A Guide for Investment Promotion Agencies*". The Meeting thanked the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) and the UK Government through the ASEAN Green Investment Catalyst (AGIC) Project under the ASEAN-UK Green Transition Fund (GTF) for their continued support, and looked forward to the further promotional activities and investment ready projects to be showcased during the annual ASEAN Investment Forum in November 2026 in Manila, the Philippines.

37. The Meeting discussed the ASEAN Investment Report 2026 entitled "*Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Intangibles Development*", for public launching at the ASEAN Business and Investment Summit (ABIS) in November 2026. The report highlights the latest FDI trends across ASEAN, particularly on the region's growing attractiveness as a destination for intangible-intensive FDI in sectors such as digital services, semiconductors, AI, data centres and R&D, indicating the increasing role of

intangible assets and knowledge-based activities in shaping productivity, competitiveness and value creation in the region. The Meeting extended its appreciation to the United Nations Trade and Development (UNCTAD) for its continued cooperation in preparing the Report, with support from the Government of Australia through the Australia for ASEAN Futures (Aus4ASEAN Futures) Programme.

38. The Meeting thanked the OECD for its "*Review of Investment Policies in ASEAN*" which takes a regional perspective to assess the current investment landscape across AMS in identifying key opportunities, challenges and policy responses needed to unlock investment and address existing bottlenecks, while supporting sustainable development. The Meeting looked forward to the launching of the Report in the end of 2026.

Competition Policy

39. The Meeting welcomed the continued advancement of ASEAN's regional competition agenda. The Meeting noted the progress towards the entry into force of the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Competition (AFAC) in 2027, which will foster a fair, dynamic and competitive regional market through strengthening regulatory coherence and cross-border enforcement cooperation in the region. The Meeting also welcomed the continued enhancement of the ASEAN Merger Information Sharing Portal (MISP) and the launch of the ASEAN Study on the Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Market Competition, which will support more effective competition enforcement and the development of future-ready competition policies across ASEAN, particularly in the digital era.

Consumer Protection

40. The Meeting welcomed ASEAN's continued efforts to strengthen regional consumer protection, including the decision to commence the development of the ASEAN Product Safety Portal, which will enhance regional cooperation on product safety and facilitate timely information sharing on product-related safety concerns. The Meeting also welcomed the launch of the ASEAN Study on the Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Consumers and the development of the ASEAN Guidelines on Product Liability, which will support ASEAN Member States in addressing emerging consumer protection challenges, strengthening business accountability, and fostering greater consumer confidence in the digital economy.

Intellectual Property

41. The Meeting welcomed the Upgraded ASEAN IP Register with the new "IP Intelligence" and "IP Portfolio" services. The Meeting noted that this initiative will contribute to the broader digitalisation of ASEAN's intellectual property ecosystem, improve usability of regional IP data, and support greater awareness of intellectual property as a strategic asset for innovation, technology transfer, and business growth.

42. The Meeting noted the progress made in finalising the upgraded ASEAN Framework Agreement on Intellectual Property Cooperation (AFAIPC 2.0), which is targeted for signing in 2027. The upgraded Agreement will strengthen regional intellectual property governance, deepen cross-border cooperation, promote innovation and creativity, and support ASEAN's digital, sustainable and innovation-driven economy.

Electronic Commerce and Digital Economy

43. The Meeting noted that ASEAN has successfully completed the implementation of the Bandar Seri Begawan Roadmap (BSBR), with the successful conclusion of the ASEAN DEFA Negotiations. This marks an important milestone in the region's efforts to accelerate digital transformation and build a more connected and integrated digital economy. The BSBR has supported progress in strengthening digital connectivity, facilitating cross-border digital trade, and creating a more enabling environment for businesses and consumers.

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises

44. The Meeting noted ASEAN's continued efforts to strengthen the competitiveness and resilience of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise (MSMEs), including through initiatives to support digitalisation, market access, access to finance, and greater participation in regional and global value chains.

45. The Meeting also welcomed progress on key MSME initiatives, including Artificial Intelligence (AI) for MSME Advancement in ASEAN (AIM ASEAN), the MSME Digital Trade Outreach Toolkit, the Ninth ASEAN Inclusive Business Forum, and cooperation with external partners, including MSME-related activities under the EU-ASEAN SCOPE Trade Programme, to support MSMEs in responding to emerging market requirements.

46. The Meeting further noted good progress on the ASEAN Unique Business Identification Number (UBIN), following the endorsement of the Terms of Reference of the UBIN Implementing Committee (UBIN-IC) and the convening of the 1st UBIN-IC Meeting on 14 July 2026. The Meeting noted the discussion on key implementation components, including proposed UBIN modalities, data structure, regulatory arrangement, funding, readiness criteria, and pilot approach, as well as the prioritisation of the initial Horizon one (1) use cases on Company Search and Data-as-a-Service. The Meeting encouraged ASEAN Member States to complete their internal consultations and provide timely inputs on the preferred ASEAN UBIN modality, data requirements, and readiness self-assessment.

Public-Private Sector Engagement

47. The Meeting welcomed the progress made in strengthening the effectiveness

of the public-private partnership following the endorsement of the revised Rules of Procedure for Private Sector Engagement under the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). The Meeting noted that most of the private sector recommendations have either been addressed through existing ASEAN initiatives or are under active consideration by the relevant ASEAN Sectoral Bodies, reflecting ASEAN's continued commitment to fostering a constructive and responsive public-private dialogue.

48. The Ministers welcomed the initiatives undertaken by the ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ASEAN-BAC) to strengthen its policy engagement with ASEAN Sectoral Bodies. These include the establishment of three permanent Working Groups on Supply Chain, Digital Economy, and Sustainability, as well as the launch of the ASEAN Business Barometer Survey to support the development of more structured, evidence-based, and actionable policy recommendations in support of the ASEAN Economic Community agenda.

Working towards a Global ASEAN

49. The Meeting underscored that Global ASEAN remains an important driver to advance regional integration, enhance its competitiveness and resilience in a rapidly evolving global landscape. The Meeting reaffirmed ASEAN's commitment to strengthening economic ties with both existing and new partners. These efforts reinforce ASEAN's position as a dynamic and outward-looking region that remains an integral part of the global economy.

50. The Meeting reaffirmed its commitment to ensure that its free trade agreements are modern and responsive to the region's evolving needs and challenges. To this end, the Meeting looked forward to the early entry into force of the ASEAN-China FTA (ACFTA) 3.0 Upgrade Protocol in 2026. The Meeting also welcomed the conclusion of negotiations for the First Protocol to Amend the ASEAN-Hong Kong, China Investment Agreement (AHKIA) and looked forward to its signing at the sidelines of the 10th AEM-HKC Consultation on 20 September 2026. In relation to the review of the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA), the Meeting looked forward to the conclusion of the negotiations, which would deliver mutually beneficial and more tangible benefits to businesses and encouraged efforts to advance the negotiations. The Meeting welcomed the launch of the ASEAN-Korea Free Trade Area (AKFTA) Upgrade negotiations in 2026 which will include new chapters on digital economy, supply chain resilience, and energy and raw materials. The Meeting encouraged officials to continue the good progress towards the substantial conclusion of negotiations by the end of 2027 with value-added outcomes beyond existing commitments. The Meeting also noted the ongoing work on the ASEAN Feasibility Study for the ASEAN – Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) FTA.

51. The Meeting recognised the key role of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement in advancing regional economic integration, strengthening supply chains, and deepening trade and investment links. The Meeting welcomed positive steps taken toward broadening the RCEP's membership, including

the continued interest of aspirant economies, namely (i) Hong Kong, China; (ii) Sri Lanka; (iii) Chile; (iv) Bangladesh; and (v) Uruguay, in acceding to the Agreement, and encouraged continued efforts to advance the accession process. The Meeting also noted the ongoing preparations for the General Review to upgrade the RCEP Agreement, which will strengthen the RCEP as a cornerstone of regional trade and ensure that the Agreement remains modern, future-ready, and responsive to the evolving regional and global economic landscape.

52. The Meeting positively noted ASEAN's dynamic economic cooperation with its external partners. The Meeting looked forward to the finalisation of the ASEAN-EU Digital Trade Principles (DTP) by November 2026. In commemoration of the 5th anniversary of ASEAN-UK dialogue relations in 2026, the Meeting also looked forward to the endorsement of the new ASEAN-United Kingdom Joint Ministerial Declaration on Future Economic Cooperation 2026 that lays out a forward-looking partnership anchored on shared priorities, and Economic Work Plan (EWP).

Narrowing the Development Gap

53. The Meeting underscored the importance of narrowing development gaps within and among ASEAN and welcomed the successful completion of the IAI Work Plan IV (2021–2025), under which a total of 120 projects valued at US\$26.41 million had been approved, addressing 21 out of 24 actions (87.5%) across the five Strategic Areas and all four enabling actions.

54. The Meeting further welcomed the adoption of the IAI Work Plan V (2026–2030) by ASEAN Leaders at the 47th ASEAN Summit. The new Work Plan comprises six Strategic Areas and three Cross-Cutting Mechanisms, operationalised through an Implementation Plan endorsed by the IAI Task Force on 5 June 2026. The Meeting noted the early progress in implementation with two projects amounting to US\$1.03 million approved as of 5 June 2026.

55. The Meeting commended the progress made in advancing Timor-Leste's economic integration since becoming ASEAN's 11th Member State, particularly its accession to 51 ASEAN Economic Agreements. The Meeting reaffirmed its commitment to supporting Timor-Leste in completing the remaining accession processes in a timely and coordinated manner, including through targeted capacity-building and technical assistance.

Achieving Sustainable Growth in ASEAN

56. The Meeting reaffirmed the importance of accelerating ASEAN's transition towards a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable growth, and welcomed the steady progress made in advancing the region's sustainability priorities. The Meeting acknowledged the progress in the development of the ASEAN Strategy for Carbon Neutrality Work Plan; the commencement of the ASEAN Green Economy Framework

Agreement (GEFA) Feasibility Study and the commencement of the Mid-Term Review of the Framework for Circular Economy for the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). The Meeting further acknowledged the progress in the development of the ASEAN Blue Economy Roadmap and looked forward to its finalisation and implementation to harness the potential of ASEAN's oceans, seas, and inland freshwater ecosystems.

Collaborating with External Partners

57. The Meeting acknowledged and commended the valuable contributions of the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) in advancing regional economic integration and cooperation across ASEAN and the wider East Asian region. The Meeting, in particular, thanked ERIA for its strong support to the Priority Economic Deliverables of the Philippines under its Chairship of ASEAN in 2026. The Meeting also welcomed ERIA's timely policy analysis and recommendations on the Strait of Hormuz crisis, which has contributed to regional discussions on energy security and supply chain connectivity.

58. The Meeting commended the valuable support extended by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in advancing ASEAN's economic integration across a wide range of areas, including macroeconomic surveillance, blue economy, financial cooperation, and supply chain resilience, among others. The Meeting looked forward to further leveraging its technical expertise and resources to support the implementation of ASEAN's economic priorities and advance shared objectives under the *ASEAN 2045: Our Shared Future*. The Meeting also looked forward to the signing of the ASEAN-ADB Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which is expected to provide a structured framework for sustained collaboration and further strengthen ASEAN-ADB partnership in support of regional priorities.