Joint Ministerial Declaration on Future Economic Cooperation between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK) 2026

Preamble

We, the Ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Member States and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK), gather to mark the fifth anniversary of the ASEAN-UK Dialogue Partnership and to set a focused agenda for enhanced and substantive future economic cooperation. ASEAN and the UK share a diverse economic and commercial relationship that continues to flourish. We recall the 2021 Joint Ministerial Declaration on Future Economic Cooperation and its successful implementation underpinned by the ASEAN-UK Plan of Action (2022-2026), which have laid a strong foundation for our maturing partnership.

ASEAN and the UK recognise that the overall vision in the ASEAN Economic Community Strategic Plan 2026-2030 centred on six inter-related strategic goals: 1) Action-Oriented Community; 2) Sustainable Community; 3) Enterprising, Bold and Innovative Community; 4) Adaptable and Pro-Active Community; 5) Nimble and Resilient Community; and 6) Inclusive, Participatory and Collaborative Community, remains relevant and will serve as an important foundation for further developing ASEAN-UK economic relations. ASEAN and the UK further recognise the UK's Trade Strategy 2025 and its commitment to open, predictable and modern trade arrangements. We acknowledge UK's Modern Industrial Strategy 2025 that sets out long-term industrial vision as key drivers of future economic growth. The alignment between the priorities of ASEAN and the UK in economic integration, digital transformation, innovation and creativity, sustainable and inclusive growth, and commitment to open and rules-based trade provides a strong basis for deepening economic and trade cooperation, and maximising mutual opportunities.

Maintaining Open Markets

1. ASEAN and the UK reaffirm our shared commitment to uphold a predictable, open, free, non-discriminatory, transparent, fair, inclusive, sustainable and rules-based multilateral trading system with the World Trade Organization (WTO) at its core, ASEAN Centrality and implementation of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP). We note the continued deepening of our economic ties, with the ASEAN-UK trade relationship reaching over £62.0 billion in 2025, underscoring the growing scale and strategic importance of our partnership.

Strengthening Economic Resilience

2. ASEAN and the UK recognise the increasingly complex and rapidly shifting global landscape shaped by evolving geopolitical dynamics and emerging economic uncertainties. We reaffirm our commitment to strengthen economic resilience by enhancing the openness, stability, adaptability and competitiveness of our interconnected economies. We will work together to promote fair, open and rules-based markets that enable trade, investment, resilient supply chains and future-oriented industries to flourish amid these challenges.

3. ASEAN and the UK welcome continued knowledge-sharing and the exchange of best practices on policies, frameworks and initiatives that strengthen economic resilience and support our ability to respond to emerging global shifts. We look forward to continued regular engagement to deepen cooperation on risk mitigation, economic continuity planning and supply chain resilience, amongst others. Through these sustained interactions, we aim to reinforce a stable and predictable economic environment and secured long-term, sustainable and inclusive growth for our nations.

Financial Services

4. ASEAN and the UK recognise that well-functioning and inclusive financial systems are essential to strengthening regional integration and supporting trade and investment flows. We acknowledge the importance of regulatory cooperation in fostering predictable, efficient and interoperable financial markets. We will enhance regulatory dialogue and cooperation to support broader access to financial services to foster economic participation, market confidence and sustainable growth across the regions.

5. We understand the transformative role of Financial Technology, digital payments and cross-border payment connectivity in expanding financial inclusion and facilitating smoother regional transactions. We will deepen collaboration in these areas, supporting efforts to enhance financial inclusion and accessibility while improving the efficiency of cross-border transactions.

6. Sustainable finance is critical to advancing climate-aligned goals and supporting the development of green industries and unlocking regional green capabilities. We reaffirm the importance of a just, inclusive and orderly transition across the region and will advance cooperation on sustainable finance, including through knowledge-sharing, capacity building and investment facilitation to support long-term economic resilience.

Regulatory Reform

7. ASEAN and the UK recognise the importance of predictable, transparent and agile regulatory environments that facilitate trade and investment and contribute to a conducive business environment. We will collaborate to simplify, streamline and where appropriate, support regulatory harmonisation in agreed areas, including measures that support stronger consumer product safety regime and safer, more reliable markets.

8. ASEAN and the UK recognise that internationally aligned standards and sound regulatory practices are essential for interoperability, market confidence, and deeper regional integration. We underscore the value of regulatory systems that are risk-based, transparent and future-ready. We will work together to promote the adoption of international standards and the enhancement of good regulatory practices, including through the ASEAN-UK Economic Integration Programme (EIP), to strengthen institutional capacity and support greater regulatory coherence between ASEAN and the UK.

9. We acknowledge the importance of regulatory frameworks that remain responsive to the rapid technological advancement and evolving market landscapes. We will enhance cooperation, including through technical assistance, to improve cross-sector regulatory alignment, intellectual property (IP) ecosystems and regional efforts towards IP harmonisation.

Digital Economy, Science, Technology and Innovation

10. ASEAN and the UK recognise that the digital economy is a key driver of growth, innovation and regional competitiveness, and the importance of strengthening legal and regulatory frameworks to support digital trade. We will work together to support ASEAN's implementation of the ASEAN Digital Economy Framework Agreement (DEFA), fostering trusted cross-border data flows, paperless trade and interoperable digital trade systems that enhance connectivity, efficiency and economic opportunities across the region.

11. We understand the advantages that digitalised customs, logistics and trade systems bring to regional integration and business efficiency. We highlight the importance of a secure and streamlined digital trade ecosystem. We will collaborate to support the digitalisation of ASEAN's trade and customs ecosystem to enhance effective cross-border trade procedures.

12. We recognise the critical role of emerging technologies, innovation and entrepreneurship to drive productivity, resilience and long-term competitiveness, and we understand the importance of their responsible and inclusive adoption. We

will support ASEAN's adoption of advanced and emerging technologies through standards cooperation, knowledge sharing, readiness assessment and capacity building programmes.

13. We will strengthen the regional technology commercialisation ecosystems to enhance the link between innovations and economic development in ASEAN. We will deepen collaboration that leverages technical expertise and partnerships to enhance institutional readiness, promote innovation uptake and support an inclusive and commercially enabling technology environment across the region.

Clean Energy

14. ASEAN and the UK recognise the importance of resilient and diversified clean energy and the urgent need to scale clean energy solutions to support secure, affordable, sustainable, resilient and inclusive growth, and acknowledge the importance of accelerating innovation and facilitating the commercialisation of low-carbon technologies. We will deepen our cooperation on clean energy, innovation and technology transfer, supporting efforts to accelerate low-carbon and resilient solutions across the regions while strengthening regional interconnectivity, energy security, including through more resilient energy supply chains, and supporting a just, inclusive and orderly energy transition.

15. We recognise that clear and predictable regulatory environments and robust investment frameworks are essential to unlock regional renewable energy potential, and we underscore the value of long-term planning and cross-border energy infrastructure development, including overland and subsea interconnections. We will work together to support the region's energy transition efforts through cooperation, technical assistance and funding to support the implementation of the ASEAN Power Grid, including cross-border electricity trade, regional power interconnection, grid modernisation, and the deployment of energy storage systems, to advance energy connectivity and promote efficient, reliable and affordable clean energy systems.

16. We encourage exploring opportunities for cooperation on emerging clean energy technologies and other related areas, including civil nuclear energy, energy efficiency and conservation, renewable energy integration, offshore wind, hydrogen, and digitalisation of energy systems, through knowledge sharing, policy dialogue, technical cooperation and capacity building.

Public-Private Sector Partnership

17. ASEAN and the UK underscore the significant contribution of public-private sector partnership that drives economic growth. We understand the important work of the

ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ASEAN BAC) and how the UK's private sector can support in advancing economic integration in our region, including through innovation, entrepreneurship and industry collaboration.

Cross-cutting enablers: Professional and Business Services, Skills and Inclusion

18. ASEAN and the UK recognise that high quality professional and business services are fundamental to enabling transparent, efficient and trusted commercial environments, and we underscore the role of these services in supporting innovation, creativity, deeper regional integration and investment.

19. We recognise that inclusive skills development is essential to ensuring that all segments of society can participate in and benefit from economic transformation. We acknowledge the importance of aligning skills development with evolving industry needs.

20. We recognise that Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) form the backbone of regional economies and that women and underserved groups are central to inclusive growth, and we understand the need to expand economic participation and capability development. We will promote inclusive skills programmes and targeted MSMEs support, including initiatives that enhance access to finance, digital capabilities and trade-related skills, ensuring smaller businesses can participate more effectively in regional and global value chains.