

1978 JOINT PRESS RELEASE OF THE 7TH ASEAN ECONOMIC MINISTERS' MEETING

Signed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 14-16 December 1978

1. The Seventh Meeting of the ASEAN Economic Ministers held in Kuala Lumpur on 14-16 December 1978 was officially opened by H.E. Datuk Hussein Onn, Prime Minister of Malaysia. The Meeting was preceded by a preparatory meeting of ASEAN Senior Economic Officials on 12-13 December 1978.
2. The Meeting was attended by H.E. Prof. Dr. Emil Salim, Minister for Development Control and Environment of Indonesia; H.E. Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamed, Deputy Prime Minister/ Minister of Trade and Industry of Malaysia; H.E. Tan Sri Manickavasagam, Minister of Transport of Malaysia; H.E. Datuk Shariff Ahmad, Minister of Agriculture of Malaysia; H.E. Paul Leong Khee Seong, Minister of Primary Industries of Malaysia; H.E. Datuk Lew Sip Hon, Deputy of Minister of Trade and Industry of Malaysia; H.E. Dr. Gerardo P. Sicat, Secretary of Economic Planning of the Philippines; H.E. Troadio T. Quiazon Jr., Minister of Trade of the Philippines; H.E. Goh Chok Tong, Senior Minister of State for Finance of Singapore; H.E. Kasame Chatikavanij, Minister of Industry of Thailand; and H.E. Mr. Prok Amaranand, Deputy Minister of Commerce of Thailand and their respective Delegations.
3. H.E. Datuk Ali bin Abdullah, Secretary-General of the ASEAN Secretariat was present.
4. The Prime Minister of Malaysia, H.E. Datuk Hussein Onn in his opening remarks welcomed their Excellencies the ASEAN Ministers and their distinguished delegates. The Prime Minister stated that the Meeting was a significant one as the results of the meeting would chart yet another landmark in ASEAN regional cooperation.
5. The Prime Minister was pleased to note that satisfactory progress had been achieved in the fields of trade cooperation, food, agriculture and forestry as well as ASEAN's collective approach to the international issues on commodities, Multilateral Trade Negotiations and other international economic issues. The Prime Minister, however, observed that the progress achieved in the materialization of the five ASEAN Industrial Projects had not been satisfactory. Recognizing that the successful implementation of these projects was crucial for ASEAN unity and cooperation, the Prime Minister called upon the Meeting to get on with the important task with renewed vigour.
6. The Prime Minister also called for the promotion of ASEAN self-reliance in shipping, particularly with regard to reasonable and stable freight rates as well as to the provisions of adequate, efficient and economic shipping services for the carriage of expanding intra and extra ASEAN trade.
7. The Meeting considered and adopted the Reports of the five committees of the ASEAN Economic Ministers.
8. The Economic Ministers approved 500 additional items to be implemented with effect from 15 March 1979 under the ASEAN Preferential Trading Arrangements. This brings the number of items brought under the Preferential Trading Arrangements to 1,326.

9. The Economic Ministers agreed to adopt the operational procedures for facilitating a scheme on preferential procurement by Government entities to be implemented with effect from 1 January 1979.
10. The Meeting agreed that ASEAN Trade Fairs be held once in every two years and that the Second ASEAN Trade Fair be held in Singapore in 1980.
11. The Economic Ministers initialled the Basic Agreement on ASEAN Industrial Project and the Supplementary Agreements for the ASEAN Urea Project (Indonesia) and the ASEAN Urea Project (Malaysia).
12. The Economic Ministers also accepted the ASEAN Rock Salt-Soda Ash Project to be established in Thailand as the third ASEAN Industrial Project.
13. With regard to the ASEAN Food Security Reserve, the Economic Ministers agreed to the establishment of an ASEAN Emergency Reserve (Rice) of 50,000 metric tons.
14. The Meeting reviewed the progress in ASEAN cooperation on transportation and communications particularly in the field of land transportation, shipping and ports. As shipping is vital to the expansion of intra and extra ASEAN trade, the Meeting decided that concerted efforts should be made by various specialised ASEAN agencies to achieve self-reliance in shipping.
15. On the new Australian International Civil Aviation Policy (ICAP), the Meeting agreed to an ASEAN common stand as a basis for discussion at the forthcoming ASEAN-Australia Experts Meeting on the ICAP in Canberra, Australia.
16. The ASEAN Economic Ministers also agreed that a study be made of the whole air travel business in the ASEAN Region and the basis of air services agreements in the context of the protectionist policy of the developed countries and that this matter be brought up for discussion at UNCTAD.
17. The Meeting also reviewed the progress in ASEAN dialogues with third countries and international organisations.
18. The Meeting reviewed the progress of the resumed UNCTAD Negotiating Conference on the Common Fund and the Negotiating Conference on Natural Rubber which were held in Geneva recently. The Meeting agreed that ASEAN should continue to play an active and constructive role in the negotiations on the Common Fund.
19. The Delegations of Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand expressed their sincere appreciation to the people and Government of Malaysia for the warm hospitality accorded them and for the excellent arrangement for the Meeting.
20. The Meeting was held in the traditional spirit of ASEAN cordiality and solidarity.