

1979 JOINT PRESS RELEASE OF THE 8TH ASEAN ECONOMIC MINISTERS' MEETING

Signed in Manila, the Philippines on 7-8 September 1979

1. The Eighth Meeting of the ASEAN Economic Ministers held in Manila on 7-8 September 1979 was officially opened by H.E. Ferdinand E. Marcos, President and Prime Minister of the Republic of the Philippines. The Meeting was preceded by a Preparatory Meeting of ASEAN Senior Economic Officials held on 5-6 September 1979.
2. The Meeting was attended by H.E. Widjojo Nitisastro, Minister Coordinator for Economy, Finance and Industry of Indonesia; H.E. Radius Prawiro, Minister of Trade and Cooperatives of Indonesia; H.E. A.R. Soehoed Minister of Industry of Indonesia; H.E. Tan Sri V. Manickavasagam, Minister of Transport of Malaysia; H.E. Datuk Shariff Ahmad, Minister of Agriculture of Malaysia; H.E. Gerardo P. Sicat, Minister of Economic Planning of the Philippines; H.E. Cesar E.A. Virata, Minister of Finance of the Philippines; H.E. Roberto V. Ongpin, Minister of Industry of the Philippines; H.E. Luis R. Villafuerte, Minister of Trade of the Philippines; H.E. Jose P. Dans, Jr., Minister of Transportation and Communications of the Philippines; H.E. Jose D. Aspiras, Minister of Tourism of the Philippines, H.E. Jose J. Leido, Jr., Minister of Natural Resources of the Philippines; H.E. Goh Chok Tong, Minister of Trade and Industry of Singapore; H.E. Prasit Narongdej, Minister of Industry of Thailand; H.E. Charnchai Leethavorn, Deputy Minister of Finance of Thailand; H.E. 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 President of the Republic of the Philippines, H.E. Ferdinand E. Marcos, in his opening remarks welcomed the ASEAN Economic Ministers and their distinguished delegations. The President reviewed the political and economic developments in the region and observed that these developments impose greater pressures on the ASEAN economies to evolve fresh and innovative approaches to development.
5. The President was pleased to note that ASEAN has laid strong foundations for meeting these difficult challenges. He congratulated the ASEAN Economic Ministers for having made this possible. He particularly recognized the achievements of ASEAN cooperation in the fields of trade, industry, food and energy.
6. The President also commended the bilateral efforts of member countries for providing assistance to one another beyond the fine print of formal agreements and made the observation that this was clear indication of how ASEAN has matured over the years.
7. The President called upon the ASEAN Economic Ministers to consider new approaches to accelerate intra-ASEAN trade through such mechanisms as deeper wider tariff cuts and even across-the-board tariff cuts. He also indicated the need to expand all sources of energy, particularly those indigenous to the region.
8. The President congratulated the ASEAN Economic Ministers for finalizing the agreement implementing the first ASEAN Food Security Reserve for Rice and called for its immediate implementation.

9. The President also stated that ASEAN efforts should be complemented by positive and constructive interaction with the international community, particularly the developing countries, and in this regard, suggested that it would be useful for ASEAN to consider the selective expansion of economic cooperation with other developing countries within the framework of or through the mechanisms of ASEAN.
10. The Meeting considered and adopted the Reports of the five Committees of the ASEAN Economic Ministers.
11. The ASEAN Economic Ministers approved 1,001 additional items to be implemented with effect from 10 December 1979 under the ASEAN Preferential Trading Arrangements. This brings the number of items brought under the Preferential Trading Arrangements to 2,327. It was further agreed that in every future round of negotiations on trade preferences, each country would increase its offers from 100 to 150 items.
12. The ASEAN Economic Ministers accepted the ASEAN Compound Fertilizer Project to be established in the Philippines as the fourth ASEAN Industrial Project.
13. The Meeting decided that a Ministerial meeting be convened as soon as possible to find ways and means of widening and intensifying cooperation among ASEAN countries in the fields of petroleum and alternative sources of energy.
14. The ASEAN Economic Ministers endorsed the Agreement on the ASEAN Food Security Reserve which was initialled by the Agriculture Ministers at their Meeting in Manila on 28-29 August 1979.
15. The Meeting reviewed the progress of the negotiations between ASEAN and Australia on the Australian International Civil Aviation Policy (ICAP). The Meeting agreed to accept the "package settlement" reached at the Meeting of ASEAN-Australia Officials on the Australian ICAP in Kuala Lumpur on 2-7 May 1979 as an interim measure for immediate implementation as soon as the questions of airline capacity and availability of seats on non-stopover leg have been resolved and that, during the implementation period, improvements be sought in certain features in the "package settlement"; as follows:
 - a. quota for carriage of end-to-end traffic by ASEAN airlines;
 - b. level of stopover surcharge, including the question of carriage on non-stopover leg; and
 - c. normal first, economy and promotional fares
16. The Meeting noted the progress in ASEAN economic cooperation with third countries and international organisations.
17. The Meeting reviewed the status of negotiations on the Common Fund and on an International Agreement on Natural Rubber and agreed that ASEAN member countries should continue to coordinate their positions on the issues.

18. The Meeting reviewed the recent initiatives towards greater economic cooperation among developing countries (ECDC) and regarded economic cooperation among ASEAN countries as a form of ECDC. The Meeting agreed to study the possibility of extending ASEAN cooperation with other countries within the framework of ECDC. The Meeting also agreed to designate the Philippines as coordinator for ASEAN on ECDC matters.
19. The Delegations of Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand expressed their sincere appreciation to the Government and people of the Philippines for the warm hospitality accorded them and for the excellent arrangements made for the Meeting.
20. The Meeting was held in the traditional spirit of ASEAN cordiality and solidarity.