

## 1982 JOINT PRESS RELEASE OF THE 14<sup>TH</sup> ASEAN ECONOMIC MINISTERS' MEETING

*Signed in Singapore on 11-13 November 1982*

1. The 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ASEAN Economic Ministers was held in Singapore on 11-13 November 1982. The Meeting was opened by H.E. Mr Lee Kuan Yew, the Prime Minister of Singapore, and was preceded by a Preparatory Meeting of ASEAN Senior Economic Officials held on 8-9 November 1982.
2. The Meeting was attended by H.E. Dr. Widjojo Nitisastro, Minister Coordinator for Economic, Financial and Industrial Affairs of Indonesia; H.E. Mr. Radius Prawiro, Minister of Trade and Cooperatives of Indonesia; H.E. Mr. A.R. Soehoed, Minister of Industry of Indonesia; H.E. Dr. Subroto, Minister of Mines and Energy of Indonesia; H.E. Tengku Ahmad Rithauddeen, Minister of Trade and Industry of Malaysia; H.E. Dato Paul Leong Khee Seong, Minister of Primary Industries of Malaysia; H.E. Dato Abdul Manan Othman, Minister of Agriculture of Malaysia; H.E. Mr. Roberto V. Ongpin, Minister of Trade and Industry of the Philippines; H.E. Placido L. Mapa, Jr., Minister of Economic Planning and Director General of the National Economic and Development Authority of the Philippines; H.E. Dr. Placido L. Mapa, Jr., Minister of Economic Planning of the Philippines; H.E. Mr. Edgardo L. Tordesillas, Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry of the Philippines; H.E. Dr. Vicente B. Valdepenas, Jr., Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry of the Philippines; H.E. Dr. Tony Tan Keng Yam, Minister for Trade and Industry of Singapore; H.E. Prof. S. Jayakumar, Minister of State for Law and Home Affairs of Singapore; H.E. Mr. Lee Yock Suan, Minister of State for National Development of Singapore; H.E. Mr. Sidek Saniff, Parliamentary Secretary for Trade and Industry of Singapore; H.E. Major-General Chatichai Choonhavan, Minister of Industry of Thailand and H.E. Dr. Chirayu Isarangkun Na Ayuthaya, Deputy Minister of Industry of Thailand, and their respective delegations.
3. H.E. Mr. Chan Kai Yau, the Secretary-General of the ASEAN Secretariat, and members of his staff were also present.
4. The Meeting was opened by H.E. Mr Lee Kuan Yew, the Prime Minister of Singapore.
5. The Meeting was chaired by H.E. Dr. Tony Tan Keng Yam, Minister for Trade and Industry of Singapore. The Vice-Chairman was H.E. Major-General Chatichai Choonhavan, Minister of Industry of Thailand.
6. The Economic Ministers reviewed the world economic situation and expressed grave concern about increasing protectionism in industrialised countries.
7. The Ministers agreed to reiterate the ASEAN position on various issues at the forthcoming GATT Ministerial Meeting in Geneva.
8. On safeguards, ASEAN maintains its position on the principle of non-discrimination and the need to place all safeguard measures taken outside the GATT under the GATT discipline.
9. On agriculture, ASEAN proposes the launching of a round of negotiations for the liberalization of trade in agriculture and supports the establishment of an institutional body within the GATT

- to prepare for such negotiations, examine trade problems, practices and policies affecting agriculture, and provide effective solutions to, problems and distortions affecting competition.
10. With regard to tropical products, ASEAN maintains that the terms of reference of the Committee on Trade and Development should be expanded for it to become the permanent negotiating body to facilitate the liberalization of trade in tropical products.
  11. On non-tariff measures, ASEAN reiterates its position for the elimination of all non-tariff measures inconsistent with the provisions of the GATT. It maintains that there should be a standstill on new tariff and non-tariff barriers against exports and a phasing out of the remaining restrictions, particularly those quantitative restrictions affecting exports of developing countries.
  12. As regards to export credits, ASEAN takes the position that provisions on interest rate and maximum repayment terms of international undertakings on official export credits should not apply to developing countries' imports of capital goods. This is designed to facilitate the expansion of these imports consistent with the trade and development needs of these countries.
  13. The Meeting also discussed common ASEAN approaches to other international economic issues and agreed to take joint stands at international fora, particularly the 6<sup>th</sup> Session of UNCTAD in 1983.
  14. The Meeting considered and adopted the reports of various ASEAN Economic Committees.
  15. The Economic Ministers approved and initialled Basic Agreement on ASEAN Industrial Joint Venture (BAAIJV). The agreement is expected to provide a very effective framework for industrial cooperation amongst ASEAN private investors in as much as an AIJV product is assured of market access from all ASEAN member countries by way of substantial margins of tariff preference. The investors from the private sector are now being invited through the ASEAN Chambers of Commerce and Industry to submit nominations for AIJV products.
  16. The Meeting reviewed the progress of the existing ASEAN Industrial Projects (AIPs). The Economic Ministers initialled the Supplementary Agreement on the ASEAN Copper Fabrication Project (Philippines).
  17. The Meeting also agreed to a system of exchange on information on unfair business practices of suppliers and contractors, disputes on contracts and equipment performance and other related disputes.
  18. The Meeting reviewed the progress of efforts made to expand intra-ASEAN trade and agreed that across-the-board 20-25% tariff cuts be applied on items with import values up to a new ceiling of US\$10 million. The Meeting further agreed to the following recommendations:
    - (a) to replace the matrix approach of exchanging tariff preferences by the bilateral negotiations approach; and
    - (b) to explore at the next COTT Meeting the possible areas in which the sectoral approach may be applicable. Areas suggested were textiles, chemicals, rubber and rubber products, and cement and cement products.

- (c) to deepen the tariff cuts on non-food items already under PTA and on future exchanges to a maximum of 50%.
19. On ASEAN cooperation in transport and communications, the Meeting agreed to take a firm stand against any discriminatory attempts in civil aviation matters to harass or divide ASEAN airlines.
  20. The meeting heard the report by H.E. Dato Abdul Manan Othman, Chairman of the 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry held in Kuala Lumpur in early October 1982 and noted the considerable progress achieved in ASEAN cooperation in forestry, crops, livestock and fisheries, particularly in regard to the ASEAN Food Security Reserve, the ASEAN Quarantine Ring and ASEAN Food Handling.
  21. To further improve ASEAN cooperation in finance and banking, the Meeting considered and approved the study on Mobilisation of Domestic Resources in ASEAN, the continuation and expansion of the cooperation programmes with the EEC in the field of finance, and the selection of Thammasat University in Bangkok, Thailand, to undertake the study on the ASEAN Financial System.
  22. The Meeting also reviewed the progress made in ASEAN's dialogues with third countries and international organisations.
  23. The Meeting was informed of the difficulties ASEAN member countries experienced with regard to market access to the Japanese market, especially in tropical products such as bananas and canned pineapples. In this connection, the Meeting noted that ASEAN could improve its bargaining position vis-a-vis Japan on substantive economic issues if areas could be identified on which ASEAN could exercise leverage on Japan. The Meeting further agreed that ASEAN should seek to convene an economic Ministerial Meeting with Japan as soon as possible.
  24. The Meeting reiterated that Global Negotiations would not only be in the vital interest of the developing countries but would also be of concrete benefit to the developed countries in overcoming the present crisis afflicting the world economy and in ensuring global economic revival. However, although the decision to launch these Global Negotiations was agreed to by consensus three years ago, they were not realised up till now. The Meeting, therefore, emphasized the need for developed countries to show their political will so as to enable the launching during the 37<sup>th</sup> UN General Assembly.
  25. The Ministers agreed to hold their 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting during 12-14 May 1983 in Bangkok, Thailand.
  26. The delegations of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand expressed their sincere appreciation to the Government and people of Singapore for the warm hospitality accorded to them and the excellent arrangements made for the Meeting. The Meeting also expressed appreciation to the ASEAN Secretariat for their most valuable assistance.
  27. The Meeting was held in the traditional spirit of ASEAN cordiality and solidarity.