

1997 JOINT COMMUNIQUE OF THE 30TH ASEAN MINISTERIAL MEETING

Issued in Subang Jaya, Malaysia on 24-25 July 1997

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1. The 30th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting was held in Subang Jaya, Malaysia from 24–25 July 1997.

IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS OF THE FIRST ASEAN INFORMAL SUMMIT

2. The Foreign Ministers welcomed warmly the admission of Laos and Myanmar into ASEAN. They expressed satisfaction that the admission of Laos and Myanmar, on the 30th anniversary of ASEAN, has advanced the vision of the Founding Fathers to build a united community of Southeast Asian Nations. The Foreign Ministers recalled the decision taken by ASEAN Heads of State/Government at the 5th Summit in Bangkok in December 1995 to admit Cambodia into ASEAN and underlined their conviction that the admission of Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar would serve the long-term interest of regional peace, stability and prosperity. They agreed that a firm foundation for common action to promote regional cooperation in Southeast Asia is being accomplished. The Foreign Ministers affirmed their commitment to heighten collaboration with Laos and Myanmar to facilitate the integration of both these countries into the mainstream of ASEAN activities. They encouraged the ASEAN Secretariat to continue to provide technical assistance to Laos and Myanmar and urged the ASEAN Dialogue Partners to actively support this endeavour.
3. In line with the decision of the 1st ASEAN Informal Summit pertaining to the celebration of the 30th anniversary of ASEAN, the Foreign Ministers noted that the celebrations would be launched in Jakarta by H.E. President Soeharto on 8 August 1997. Furthermore, they noted that the highlight of the celebrations would be the convening of the Commemorative Summit on the occasion of the 2nd ASEAN informal Summit in Kuala Lumpur on 14–16 December 1997. In this connection, they looked forward to the convening of Summit meetings between the Heads of State/ Government of ASEAN and the Heads of State/Government of the People's Republic of China, Japan and the Republic of Korea on the occasion of the Commemorative Summit.
4. The Foreign Ministers noted with satisfaction the year-long events in the respective ASEAN member states commemorating the 30th anniversary. In particular, they expressed their support for the national and regional level activities including the ASEAN Festival of Songs, the ASEAN Award for Culture and Information, the issuance of commemorative coins and stamps, special publications, exhibitions and seminars. The Foreign Ministers noted that the theme of the 30th Anniversary is "One ASEAN into the 21st Century". They approved the special logo which would be used on all commemorative items.
5. The Foreign Minister agreed to recommend to the ASEAN Heads of State/Government that, on the occasion of the Commemorative Summit in Kuala Lumpur, the five signatories to the ASEAN (Bangkok) Declaration of 1967 be conferred the ASEAN Heads of Government Citation (ASEAN Citation) for their distinguished leadership, outstanding statesmanship, unwavering courage and vision. The Foreign Ministers noted that the ASEAN Citation, the highest form of recognition in ASEAN, would consist of a gold medallion and a citation signed by all the ASEAN Heads of State/Government.

6. In line with the decision of the 1st ASEAN Informal Summit pertaining to the establishment of the ASEAN Foundation, the Foreign Ministers agreed that the Foundation should be established through a Memorandum of Understanding to be signed during the Commemorative Summit in Kuala Lumpur. The Foreign Ministers recalled the primary objective of the ASEAN Foundation would be to promote ASEAN awareness, to increase interaction among the peoples of ASEAN member countries, widen their participation in ASEAN activities and to address issues of unequal economic development, poverty and socio-economic disparity.

POLITICAL AND SECURITY COOPERATION

7. Recognizing the increasingly central role of ASEAN in the maintenance of peace and stability in the region, the Foreign Ministers underlined their commitment to continue working closely together as well as with the ASEAN Dialogue Partners and the ARF participants to enhance peace and strengthen regional stability.
8. The Foreign Ministers reviewed the progress made in the implementation of ASEAN's "Programme of Action on ZOPFAN". In this connection they noted with satisfaction the level of political and security cooperation among ASEAN countries at regional and international fora. In reviewing intra-ASEAN security cooperation, the Foreign Ministers welcomed proposals among the defence agencies to conduct seminars relevant to facilitating and enhancing confidence-building among ASEAN member states.
9. The Foreign Ministers noted with satisfaction the closer cooperative relations between ASEAN and non-governmental organizations including the ASEAN-ISIS and CSCAP. They underscored that such interaction was beneficial to the promotion of peace and ability and fostering a strong ASEAN identity.
10. The Foreign Minister expressed their satisfaction that the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (SEANWFZ) Treaty, signed by all the leaders of the ten Southeast Asian nations in Bangkok in December in 1995, has entered into force on 27 March 1997. They also noted that the Treaty was registered with the UN on 26 June 1997. In this context, they recalled that the Commission, to be established by the Treaty, would oversee the implementation of the Treaty and ensure compliance with its provisions. Nonetheless, pending the establishment of the Commission, the Foreign Ministers accepted the recommendation of the ASEAN Senior Officials to extend the mandate of the ASEAN SOM Working Group on ZOPFAN and SEANWFZ, to pursue consultations with Nuclear Weapon States pertaining to the Protocol to the Treaty. The Foreign Ministers called upon Nuclear Weapon States to demonstrate their support for nuclear-weapon-free zones by acceding to the Protocol of the SEANWFZ Treaty.
11. The Foreign Ministers agreed that appropriate amendments to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) would facilitate association with the TAC by non-Southeast Asian States. They directed the ASEAN Senior Officials to expedite the drafting of the Protocol to this effect.
12. In welcoming the broadened and deepened scope of cooperation between ASEAN and its Dialogue Partners, the Foreign Ministers emphasized that such collaboration must be conducted on the basis of equality, mutual respect and mutual benefit.

13. The Foreign Ministers expressed satisfaction with the progress of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) as the multilateral forum for promoting security dialogue and cooperation in the region. They noted the increasing readiness among the participants to address substantive security issues in a cooperative manner, and that enhanced confidence and trust have resulted from practical activities undertaken at Track I and Track II levels. They expressed the hope that the ARF would move from Stage I (confidence building) to Stage II (preventive diplomacy) in accordance with the spirit of the ASEAN Concept Paper on the ARF 1995. They welcomed the increasing interest shown by defence agencies on the discussion on security issues. They believed that these positive developments would augur well for the long term peace and stability of the region. The Foreign Ministers underlined the importance of maintaining the evolutionary approach and taking decisions by consensus at the ARF. They reiterated ASEAN's commitment to remain the primary driving force of the ARF process.

REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

14. The Foreign Ministers had a useful exchange of views on current developments in the regional and international situation. The Foreign Ministers expressed satisfaction over the increasing constructive exchanges and cooperation among countries in Southeast Asia. They looked forward to the further consolidation of these processes with the entry of Laos and Myanmar into ASEAN. Recognising that national stability would enhance regional peace and prosperity, the Foreign Minister underlined the importance of accelerated economic growth, social progress and cultural development within their respective countries. They committed themselves to mutual cooperation and joint endeavours towards this direction.
15. The Foreign Ministers recalled and reiterated their statements dated 8 and 10 July 1997 on the situation in Cambodia. They thanked H.E. Ali Alatas, Minister of Foreign Minister of Indonesia, H.E. Domingo L Siazon, Jr, Secretary of Foreign Affairs for the Philippines and H.E. Prachuab Chaiyasan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand for leading a delegation to call on His Majesty King Norodom Sihanouk and the two Cambodian co-Prime Ministers H.R.H. Samdech Krom Preah Samdech Norodom Ranariddh and H.E. Samdech Hun Sen, with a view to find a peaceful solution to situation in Cambodia. They also took note of the new position expressed by H.E. Ung Huot, the Foreign Minister of the Royal Government of Cambodia, on behalf of Second Prime Minister Hun Sen, that Cambodia welcomes ASEAN's role in helping to restore political stability in the country. The Foreign Ministers agreed that upon reconfirmation of this new position, the ASEAN Ministerial delegation comprising the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand would continue with its efforts to assist Cambodia to find a peaceful resolution of the situation in that country. The Foreign Ministers stressed ASEAN's commitment to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries. They noted that ASEAN had offered its good offices to Cambodia in the light of the recent unfortunate developments and in view of Cambodia's interest in joining ASEAN. They expressed the hope that the situation in the country would return to normalcy and that a solution could be found in the spirit of the Paris Peace Accords. Recalling the decision of the 1st ASEAN Informal Summit in Jakarta in 1996, the Foreign Ministers also expressed regret that Cambodia could not be admitted into ASEAN due to the present circumstances in the country, while reaffirming that Cambodia's Observer status at the AMM remains unchanged. They expressed the hope that a peaceful solution would soon be found so that Cambodia would be able to join ASEAN and fulfil the vision of an ASEAN community of 10 as envisaged by the Founding Fathers of ASEAN.

16. In reviewing the situation in the South China Sea, the Foreign Ministers emphasized that several issues remained a source of concern. Nevertheless, they were encouraged by the continued efforts to seek peaceful solutions to the negotiations, on the basis of international law, particularly the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and the Manila Declaration on the South China Sea. They noted the readiness among the parties concerned to engage in dialogue to address these differences. In this connection, they highlighted the importance of exercising restraint in the conduct of activities in the area as agreed by the parties concerned. The Foreign Ministers also noted the positive contributions made by the series of Workshop on Managing Potential Conflicts in the South China Sea.
17. The Foreign Ministers discussed the situation in the Korean Peninsula and reaffirmed the importance of maintaining the 1953 Armistice Agreement until a permanent peace agreement is in place. They welcomed recent developments on the proposed four party talks and expressed the hope that this could pave the way to the establishment of a permanent peace mechanism. Noting the severe food crisis confronting the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and its impact on the well-being and security of the people, the Foreign Ministers called upon the international community to help alleviate the situation.
18. The Foreign Ministers welcomed the return of Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty, marking the end of centuries of colonialism in this part of the world. They expressed confidence that the substantial links between ASEAN member countries and Hong Kong Special Administration Region of the People's Republic of China would be maintained and continue to expand.
19. On the Asia-Pacific region as a whole, the Foreign Ministers reiterated the importance of friendly and cooperative relations among the major regional powers to sustain peace and stability as well as promote economic growth.
20. The Foreign Ministers viewed with deep concern the current deadlock in the peace process in the Middle East. Emphasising the importance of maintaining the momentum of the peace process, they reaffirmed their support for the implementation of all agreements signed and all pledges and commitments made by parties following the Madrid Conference and in particular, the principle of land for peace, in due compliance with relevant United Nations Resolutions. These, they stressed, represented the only basis for a comprehensive settlement of the situation in Middle East which would ensure the full restoration of the rights of the Palestinians, the final settlement of the status of Jerusalem and the return of Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967. The Foreign Ministers demanded that Israel take steps for the immediate and full cessation of the construction of a new settlement at Jabel Abu Ghneim to the South of occupied East Jerusalem and of all other Israel settlement activities as well as of all illegal measures and actions in Jerusalem.
21. In reviewing the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Foreign Ministers called upon all parties concerned to fully implement the Dayton Peace Agreements. They welcomed the Political Declaration adopted at Sintra. They expressed particular concern that several thousand refugees and displaced persons were unable to return and that freedom of movement had not been fully restored throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. They deplored the fact that many indicted war criminals had not been apprehended, with some still exercising influence in the affairs of government. They reiterated their demand that those indicted war criminals be brought to justice through the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague, and strongly urged all states and parties concerned to cooperate with the Tribunal and its organs. The Foreign Ministers called upon the international community to continue assisting in the reconstruction of Bosnia and

Herzegovina. They paid tribute to the SFOR and the states contributing to these operations. They expressed the view that the continued presence of SFOR until conditions in Bosnia and Herzegovina have stabilised would be crucial towards the preservation of the unity and sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

22. The Foreign Ministers expressed their satisfaction at the outcome of the 12th Ministerial Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement held in New Delhi on 7-8 April 1997, and reaffirmed their conviction that the fundamental principles of the Movement remained valid and relevant under the current circumstances. They emphasized the importance of the Movement as a cohesive force and a major forum for consultations among the developing countries thereby strengthening its negotiating power vis-a-vis the developed countries on crucial political and economic issues. In this context, the Foreign Ministers reaffirmed their support to the commitment of the Movement to jointly promote its collective positions on political, economic, social and other issues in the UN and the international arena.
23. The Foreign Ministers noted the progress achieved so far in the deliberations on the reform of the Security Council currently being undertaken in the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation On and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. They also welcomed the general agreement that there should be expansion in the membership of the Security Council taking into account the increase in the membership of the United Nations. They agreed that an increase in the membership of the Security Council should aim at enhancing its efficiency and effectiveness. The Foreign Ministers emphasized that additional membership of the Council should represent countries from the developing regions of Asia, Africa, Latin America and the industrialized countries. They underlined that new permanent members of the Council should enjoy the same rights as current permanent members. In this context, they agreed that the use of the veto should be curtailed with a view to its eventual elimination. They were also of the view that there should be periodic review of the reform of the Security Council. The Foreign Ministers agreed that ASEAN member countries participate actively in the deliberations of the work of the Open Ended Working Group On and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council.
24. The Foreign Ministers reaffirmed their commitment towards the goal of general and complete disarmament, emphasizing their conviction that the end of the Cold War would enhance the attainment this objective. They supported the various initiatives undertaken by the international community according the highest priority to nuclear disarmament. They recalled in particular the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice which highlighted "an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to conclusion negotiations leading up to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control". In this connection, they called for the commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a phased programme for the elimination of nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework including a Nuclear Weapons Convention. The Foreign Ministers emphasized the importance of full and effective implementation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and called upon all states, particularly the nuclear weapon states, to fulfil their obligations and commitments particularly those related to Article VI of the Treaty. They welcomed the opening of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty for signature in September 1996 and called upon those states whose membership as States Party would have a strong effect on the Treaty to ratify as early as possible. They also attached great importance to the non-proliferation of other weapons of mass destruction, including the entry into force of the CWC, BWC and CCW. The Foreign Ministers also emphasized the importance of convening the 4th Special Session of the

UN General Assembly devoted to disarmament which would set the future course of action in the field of disarmament arms control and related international security matters.

ECONOMIC COOPERATION

ASEAN FREE TRADE AREA (AFTA)

25. The Foreign Ministers observed that 1997 marks the 5th year of the implementation of the CEPT Scheme for AFTA. They noted that although Member Countries were halfway to the deadline of 2003 for realizing AFTA, nearly 91% of all tariff lines in ASEAN has already been included in the CEPT Scheme. Average tariff lines for products in the Inclusion List have now fallen to 6.38% from 12.76% in 1993. The Ministers expressed satisfaction that for the first half of 1996, intra-ASEAN exports of all products reached \$36.28 billion. This was 12% higher than the \$32.47 billion of intra-ASEAN exports for the same period in 1995.
26. The Foreign Ministers emphasized the need to eliminate non-tariff barriers in ASEAN and noted the achievements in this area, such as the removal of all customs surcharges at the end of 1996, prioritization of twenty product groups for harmonization of standards and the adoption of a framework for harmonizing phytosanitary measures in ASEAN. The Ministers were also encouraged by the progress in customs harmonization. Recognizing the extensive contribution to trade facilitation made by the ASEAN Agreement on Customs, the Foreign Ministers commended the Finance Ministers acknowledged that the Agreement provided a legal framework for the harmonization of tariff nomenclature, customs valuations systems and procedures in ASEAN. They also welcomed the theme, Partnership for World Class Standards and Excellence, for cooperation in customs matters in ASEAN.
27. The Foreign Ministers reiterated their commitment to open regionalism and a rules-based multilateral trading system. In this connection, they welcomed and expressed their continued support for progress made in the second phase of the AFTA-CER linkage programmes, and were pleased to note that the ASEAN Economic Ministers have held consultations with their counterparts from the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the Mercado Comun del Sur (MERCOSUR), the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The Ministers stressed the need for these linkages to promote greater inter-regional trade, investment and technology flows and to bring the private sectors of ASEAN and these other regional groupings together.
28. The Foreign Minister commended the new initiatives to achieve competitive, in food production including the General Guidelines for the Preparation and Handling of Halal Food, the increased application of science and technology, human resources development and greater liberalization of trade in culture and forest products to further enhance intra-ASEAN food trade. The Ministers welcomed the adoption of the Memorandum of Understanding for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles to institutionalize ASEAN's concern about environment while pursuing the development of the fisheries sector.

29. The Foreign Ministers also expressed their satisfaction with the progress achieved in other areas of economic cooperation such as intellectual property, industry, services, transportation and communications, minerals and energy and finance and banking.
30. The Foreign Ministers applauded the intensification of cooperation in the field of investment in ASEAN. They noted the progress made in the implementation of the Plan of Action on Cooperation and Promotion on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Intra-ASEAN Investment, and the steps taken to establish an ASEAN Investment Area (AIA) pursuant to the call of the ASEAN Heads of Government at the 5th ASEAN Summit in Bangkok. The bold and broad-based regional initiative will enhance ASEAN's penance as a highly conducive investment region and hone ASEAN competitiveness to an even finer edge. The AIA will be a synergistic and strategic alliance among the ASEAN member countries in developing Southeast Asia into a formidable global FDI destination.
31. The Foreign Ministers noted the development in energy cooperation among ASEAN Member Countries and expressed their satisfaction with the institutionalisation of the ASEAN Energy Business Forum (AEBF) as an annual event between the public and private sectors, the progress made in the implementation of the Medium Term Programme of Action on ASEAN Energy Cooperation for 1996/97 and the proposed project on Grid Feasibility Study for the ASEAN-CLM Electricity by Grid Interconnection and Electricity and the Environment. The Foreign Ministers signed the Protocol Amending the ASEAN Energy Agreement of 1986 providing for the accession of new members to the Agreement.
32. The Foreign Ministers appreciated the concrete steps taken to develop the ASEAN-Mekong Basin Development Cooperation Framework (AMBDC). They noted that this initiative would promote the economic integration of the Mekong riparian states and create a new dimension in ASEAN economic cooperation. They supported the recommendations put forward by the meeting of the Experts Group held in Bangkok in November 1996 for further consideration by the ASEAN-Mekong Ministers that an ASEAN-Mekong Feasibility Study Fund be established. They also noted that the Working Group on Rail Link met in December 1996 in Kuala Lumpur. The Ministers welcomed the decision of the Working Group to appoint a team of consultants to carry out a feasibility study. They noted that since the decision, KL Consultants had visited Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, China, Vietnam and Thailand to carry out the preliminary work.
33. The Foreign Ministers considered the proposal to convene an ASEAN Roundtable on Legal Technical and Economic Issues of Multimedia Technology. The participants at the ASEAN Roundtable will then decide on the most appropriate modality to proceed.

INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ISSUES

WORLD TRADE ORGANISATION (WTO)

34. The Foreign Ministers lauded the successful conclusion of the 1st Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO). They agreed that the Singapore Meeting has strengthened the WTO as a forum for negotiations and as a driving force for the continuing liberalization of global trade. They strongly affirmed their commitment to fully implementing both the Uruguay Round Agreements including the built-in agenda and the Singapore Ministerial Conference Declaration, which called on all WTO members, to in particular, dismantle tariff and non-tariff barriers to achieve sustainable growth. The Ministers also called for the universality of the WTO and the need to bring applicants expeditiously into

the WTO system. The Ministers reaffirmed the primacy of the multilateral trading system and their commitment to ensuring that regional trade agreements are complementary and consistent with WTO rules. The Ministers further expressed their commitment to constructive engagement in the WTO at the ministerial level and the early conclusion of pending WTO issues. They looked forward to the 50th anniversary celebrations of GATT and the 2nd Ministerial Conference in May 1998, which will build upon the momentum of trade liberalization beyond the Uruguay Round.

35. The Foreign Ministers while recognizing the importance of trade in bringing about economic development to the ASEAN countries, maintained that human rights issues should not be made conditional to the promotion of free trade among nations. The Ministers believed that the issues should be dealt at the appropriate fora. The Foreign Minister expressed concern over the emerging trend of state, provincial and other local authorities in countries outside this region seeking to impose trade sanctions against other states on grounds of alleged human rights violations and non-trade related issues. The Foreign Ministers noted that the international trading system would be undermined if this trend persisted. They called on all national governments to continue to adhere to WTO rules.
36. The Foreign Ministers also reiterated their full support for Vietnam's admission into the WTO and indicated their readiness to collaborate with Vietnam to facilitate its preparations for membership in the WTO.
37. The Foreign Ministers attached high priority to the High-Level Meeting on Least-Developed Countries to be held from 27-28 October 1997 in Geneva. They expressed the hope that the Meeting would contribute to the integration of the least developed countries both in Africa and Asia into the global economy.

INTERNATIONAL CURRENCY MANIPULATION

38. The Foreign Ministers expressed serious concerns over coordinated efforts to destabilise ASEAN currencies for self-serving purposes, thus threatening the stability of all ASEAN economies. They called for further intensification of ASEAN's cooperation to safeguard and promote ASEAN's interest in this regard.

EAST ASIA ECONOMIC CAUCUS (EAEC)

39. The Foreign Ministers noted with satisfaction, the increasing cooperation among the potential EAEC members and expressed the hope that the Caucus would soon be formally instituted for the benefit of its members.

ASIA PACIFIC ECONOMIC COOPERATION (APEC)

40. The Foreign Ministers lauded APEC's efforts in forging meaningful liberalization undertakings and economic cooperation that are beneficial to all its members. A specific work path has been laid out to advance trade and investment liberalization, including early voluntary liberalization. These voluntary yet decisive initiatives to lower the labyrinth of barriers to trade and investment in the region provide impetus for greater opportunities in a more integrated global economy.
41. The Foreign Ministers were further encouraged by APEC's efforts to achieve greater efficiency in managing and coordinating the various APEC activities. It is hoped that with the landmark APEC Framework for Economic Development Cooperation adopted in Manila last year, APEC could generate focused and measurable outcomes in this economic and

technical cooperation agenda that would complement APEC's utilization agenda and ensure sustained growth and equitable development in the region.

42. The Foreign Ministers also reiterated their full support for Vietnam's admission to APEC with the belief that her membership would be a positive contribution to the forum.

ASIA-EUROPE MEETING (ASEM)

43. The Foreign were pleased to note the growing number of initiatives in various areas of ASEM cooperation that have emerged since the 1st ASEM Leaders' Meeting (ASEM I). At the ministerial level, this include the recent Foreign Ministers' Meeting (FMM) in February 1997 and the forthcoming Finance Ministers' Meeting (FinMM) and the imminent Economic Ministers' Meeting (EMM) in September 1997. At the FMM held in Singapore, the Ministers recognized the importance of an orderly and coordinated development of ASEM activities in the long term. The Foreign Ministers agreed to support an early elaboration of an Asia-Europe Cooperation Framework that outlines the principles and mechanisms for ASEM cooperation in agreed areas.

44. The Foreign Ministers expressed their support for the Singapore-based Asia Europe Foundation which was launched at the FMM in February 1997 and noted that the 2nd meeting of the ASEM Foreign Ministers would be held in Germany in the first half of 1999. They supported the establishment of an Asia-Europe Vision Group at ASEM II in 1998 and hoped that the 2nd ASEM would be able to further develop a stronger Asia-Europe partnership for greater growth mutually benefiting both regions. These links between Asia and Europe would promote peace, sustainable growth and mutual prosperity in both regions. The Ministers expressed their satisfaction that ASEM activities has helped strengthen cooperation between the private sectors of both regions. In this regard, they noted that the 1st Asia-Europe Business Forum (AEBF) which was held in Paris in October 1996, will be followed by a 2nd AEBF to be held in Bangkok in November 1997. The Ministers also welcomed the initiative to bring participants in the public and private sectors together as evidenced by the Asia-Europe Business Conference held in Jakarta in July 1997.

FUNCTIONAL COOPERATION

45. The Foreign Ministers expressed satisfaction with the progress made in implementing the Framework for Elevating Functional Cooperation to a Higher Plane with the development of a number of flagship projects in science and technology, environment, culture and information, social development, drugs and narcotics control; the establishment of ASEAN awards which will be carried out by the respective committees and greater publicity accorded to functional cooperation activities; the implementation of cost-sharing schemes and the strengthening of the Functional Cooperation Bureau of the ASEAN Secretariat. The Ministers called on the Functional Cooperation Committees to advance the development and implementation of flagship projects, taking into consideration the theme for cooperation: Shared prosperity through human development, technological competitiveness and social cohesiveness. They encourage the development of an integrated approach of the functional and economic cooperation mechanism within ASEAN, including the closer working relationship of the Economic and Functional Bureaus of the ASEAN Secretariat.

46. The Foreign Ministers agreed to launch the ASEAN Award as a highly prestigious award which would be conferred on individuals and organization in recognition of outstanding work and contribution towards the promotion and development of regional cooperation aimed at sharing prosperity through human development, technological competitiveness and social cohesiveness. The ASEAN Award for the individual category would consist of a medal, a certificate and US\$20,000 while that for the organization category would consist of a trophy, a certificate and a grant of up to US\$200,000 for the purposes of research, a study, or a project to be undertaken by the organization. The award would be conferred every three years during the Summit Meeting of the ASEAN Heads of Government, beginning with the 6th ASEAN Summit to be held in Vietnam in December 1998.
47. The Foreign Ministers stressed the need to protect the region's biological diversity and natural resources and expressed their support for the efforts of the ASEAN Ministers for the Environment to establish the ASEAN Regional Centre for Biodiversity Conservation in the Philippines as a flagship project on the occasion of the 30th Anniversary of ASEAN. In this connection, the Ministers noted that the international community at the 19th Special Session of the UN General Assembly for an Overall Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of Agenda 21, reaffirmed its commitment to the global membership established in Rio and to the continuous dialogue and action inspired by the need to achieve a more efficient and equitable world economy as means to provide a supportive international climate for achieving environmental and developmental goals. They affirmed the acceleration of the implementation of Agenda 21 in a comprehensive manner.
48. Affirming the expanding role of science and technology resources and capabilities and competitiveness in propelling economic performance and enhancing social well-being, the Foreign Ministers urged that new and creative approaches in science and technology development cooperation be intensified by considering mechanisms for greater self-reliance with a view of developing indigenous technological and innovative capabilities, promote greater private and public sector collaboration and continue active cooperation with Dialogue Partners. They called for the early launching and accelerated implementation of flagship projects in science and technology, human resources development and information technology development to meet the challenges of boosting industrial competitiveness, maintaining rapid industrial growth, and improving human welfare. Moreover, the Ministers emphasized that technology development in ASEAN must be environmentally sustainable, safe and sound.
49. The Foreign Ministers noted with satisfaction that the information networks and services of the ASEAN Information Ministers have generated a sustained coverage of ASEAN and its activities in the mass media of Member Countries in response to the mandate of the 5th ASEAN Summit calling for wider publicity for ASEAN and its activities. They also observed that the ASEAN Plan of Action on Culture and Information (1994-97) has contributed significantly to raising public awareness of ASEAN and forming a sense of common ASEAN identity. The Ministers encouraged the special emphasis being given to youth and the studies being made to develop the ASEAN Satellite Channel.
50. The Foreign Ministers welcomed the consensus reached at the WTO Ministerial Conference in Singapore which renews members' commitment to the observance of internationally recognized core labour, standards and recognizes the International Organization (ILO) as the competent body to deal with those standards. They reiterated the position taken by the ASEAN Labour Ministers that trade access should not be linked to workers conditions or the levels of implementation of labour standards in a particular country. They supported the view that the so-called core fundamental labour standards should be thoroughly reviewed before

Member Countries consider ratifying them. The Ministers also affirmed their support for the statement of the Non-Aligned movement which called upon the ILO to assist in the progressive attainment of higher standards of labour welfare by focusing on all areas of its work and giving due regard to the stage of socio-economic development reached by individual member status.

ASEANWEB

51. The Foreign Ministers noted with satisfaction the considerable contribution of the ASEANWEB in providing up-to-the minute information on development in ASEAN to a global audience. They observed that the ASEANWEB has become the primary source of information on ASEAN activities, as evident by the growing number of researchers, increasing amount of interest from the private sector and international organizations requesting reciprocal hypertext links between ASEANWEB and their respective homepages. The Ministers called for the further development of ASEAN's website with a view to giving greater impetus to the progress already made in this area.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

52. Acknowledging the continuing importance of development cooperation in strengthening regional cooperation, the Foreign Ministers expressed appreciation for the contribution of ASEAN's Dialogue Partners in this area. In view of the increasing significance of economic cooperation in the dialogue process and the imperative of elevating functional cooperation to a higher plane, the Ministers called upon the Dialogue Partners to accord equal priority to the areas of trade investment, market access and technology transfer, as well as science and technology, culture and information, environment and social development. They further stressed the need for sustained cooperation in addressing transnational concerns including the fight against terrorism, trafficking of people, illicit drugs and arms, piracy and communicable diseases.
53. The Foreign Ministers reiterated the principle of non-discrimination in the pursuit of development cooperation in ASEAN. In the wake of the admission of new members, the Ministers stressed the need for additional funding in view of the anticipated increase in development assistance requirements.
54. The Foreign Ministers encourage the exploration of joint programming approaches with Dialogue Partners based on shared primary objectives and programming themes with a view to widening the benefits, enhancing efficiencies and assuring sustainability of the implementation of ASEAN's development cooperation.
55. The Foreign Ministers noted that meetings have been convened with ASEAN's new Dialogue Partners, namely, China, India and the Russian Federation, and that various mechanisms and structures have been established to promote closer cooperation for mutual benefit. They also noted that the sectoral dialogue relations with Pakistan have been established with the exchange of letters between the Secretary-General of ASEAN and the Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.
56. The Foreign Ministers called for the strengthening of ASEAN's relations with other inter-governmental regional organizations, including the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), the Central American States, the Rio Group and the South Pacific Forum. They also welcomed the initiatives undertaken by the ASEAN

Secretariat to forge closer ties with them through the development of concrete and action-oriented activities.

SELECTION OF SECRETARY-GENERAL OF ASEAN

57. The Foreign Ministers agreed to recommend to the ASEAN Heads of State/Government of ASEAN the appointment of that H.E. Rodolfo. C. Severino, Under Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs, the Philippines to be appointed as the Secretary-General of ASEAN beginning 1 January 1998. The Foreign Ministers expressed, at the same time, their profound appreciation to the outgoing Secretary-General, H.E. Dato Ajit Singh, for his great dedication to the ASEAN cause and leadership of the ASEAN Secretariat during a period of important developments in the history of ASEAN.