

2001 HANOI DECLARATION ON NARROWING DEVELOPMENT GAP FOR CLOSER ASEAN INTEGRATION

Adopted in Ha Noi, Viet Nam on 23 July 2001

WE, the Foreign Ministers of the ASEAN Member countries representing Brunei Darussalam, the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Republic of Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Union of Myanmar, the Republic of the Philippines, the Republic of Singapore, the Kingdom of Thailand and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam;

ACKNOWLEDGING; that the benefits of globalization are at present unevenly distributed and that the development gap among nations and regions would be further widened without effective measures to address the negative impact of globalization;

RECALLING the commitment of the ASEAN leaders, proclaimed in the ASEAN Vision 2020 at the Second informal ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur in 1997, to promote equitable economic development and the reduction of poverty and economic disparities in the ASEAN region and in the Hanoi Plan of Action adopted at the 6th ASEAN Summit in Hanoi; in 1998 prescribing concrete measures to reduce the development gap among ASEAN Member Countries and to promote the economic integration of the new Member Countries into ASEAN; and

EVOKING the decision of the ASEAN leaders on the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) adopted at the Fourth Informal Summit in Singapore in 2000, giving direction to and sharpening the focus of collective efforts in ASEAN to narrow the development gap within ASEAN as well as between, ASEAN and other parts of the world.

DO HEREBY DECLARE:

We resolve to promote, through concerted efforts, effective cooperation and mutual assistance to narrow the development gap among ASEAN Member Countries and between ASEAN and the rest of the world for the sake of dynamic and sustained growth of our region and prosperity of all our peoples.

We shall work together to identify, through research, analysis and consultation, the comparative strengths of our economics and their potential for complementary, with a view to promoting regional economic integration and a sense of community and shared responsibility among our nations.

We shall devote special efforts and resources to promoting the development of the newer Member Countries of ASEAN (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Viet Nam or CLMV) with priority given to infrastructure, human resource development, and information and communication technology.

We renew our call for the development of the region through sub- regional cooperative programmes, including the ASEAN-Mekong Basin Development Cooperation, the Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area, the Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth triangle, the Indonesia-Malaysia-Singapore Growth triangle and the West-East Corridor across Viet Nam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand and Myanmar. We encourage contact and coordination among the different frameworks as well as among the relevant regional organizations in order to benefit from their best practices.

We shall continue to expand and deepen our linkages with the rest of the world, particularly with China, Japan and the Republic of Korea within the ASEAN+3 framework, and with the other Dialogue Partners of ASEAN.

We are determined, for these purposes, to mobilize resources in partnership with other Dialogue Partners, the international community including the private sector to develop the following priority areas:

INFRASTRUCTURE

We shall strengthen our transportation linkages through developing and implementing more extensive land, sea and air infrastructural projects in order to facilitate the flow of goods and people and to generate higher income for people in the region. Such projects include the Singapore-Kunming Rail Link and the ASEAN Highway Network. We urge the international community to provide technical support to and participate in these major infrastructural projects.

We look forward to the expeditious implementation of the trans-ASEAN energy networks consisting of the ASEAN Power Grid and the trans-ASEAN Gas Pipeline projects; which would help ensure the security and sustainability of energy supplies in ASEAN.

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

We place the highest priority on the development of human resources as the key to economic growth, social stability and human fulfilment.

We are encouraged by the assistance being extended by ASEAN Member Countries to the newer Member Countries in various areas of human resource development including under the IAI framework.

We attach great importance to the establishment and strengthening of training institutes and programmes in CLMV and their linkage with those in the other ASEAN Member Countries for mutual assistance.

We strongly encourage efforts to promote and upgrade the Use of English as a tool of communication among all peoples of ASEAN in order to make ASEAN competitive in the knowledge-based economy.

We recognize the need to explore the setting up of benchmarks and time-tables in the field of education to ensure the development of skills and attitudes of our people required by the knowledge-based economy and the information age.

We welcome the comprehensive assessment being under-taken of the training needs of government officials in CLMV, and urge international support to meet these training needs while mobilizing our own resources for this endeavour.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

ASEAN is determined to use information and communication technology (ICT) as a tool for narrowing the development gap and closing the digital divide within and among Member Countries as well as between ASEAN and the rest of the world. We reaffirm the importance for ASEAN to promote the development and the use of ICT for raising people's income, especially in the rural areas, for improving the system of public education, and for enhancing the benefits of public health and medical care for the poor. Therefore, we call for the urgent implementation of the e-ASEAN Framework Agreement and the Asian IT Belt initiative.

We look forward to the expeditious liberalization and facilitation of trade and investment in the ICT sector to ensure the widespread availability and use of inexpensive ICT goods and services, and to adopt concrete measures aimed at facilitating e-commerce in the region.

We reaffirm the importance of the assessment to be conducted, with international support, of the needs of CLMV in terms of their e-readiness, especially the level of ICT skills and infrastructure requirements. We call on the international community including the private sector to cooperate with ASEAN in meeting those needs effectively.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

We fully support the measures being undertaken to integrate CLMV into ASEAN as a regional economy, including the ASEAN Free Trade Area, the ASEAN Investment Area and liberalization of trade in services.

We especially welcome the decision by the ASEAN Economic Ministers on the extension of unilateral preferential treatment by the six older ASEAN Member Countries to imports from CLMV on bilateral basis.

We call for renewed resolve to conclude the remaining protocols necessary to implement the ASEAN Agreement on Goods in Transit so as to facilitate land transport in Southeast Asia and lower its cost. We look forward to the early conclusion of the ASEAN multi-modal and inter-state transport agreements.

We reaffirm the importance of expanding more efficient air services in our region for the freer movement of people and goods. This would greatly help integrate the ASEAN region, foster commercial and human contacts, and stimulate broad-based economic activities and growth. In this light, we reiterate ASEAN's resolve to develop a Competitive Air Services Policy which may be a gradual step towards an Open Sky Policy in ASEAN.

We reiterate the call of our Governments on members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) to expedite the accession of Cambodia, Laos and Viet Nam to the Organization so as to enable them to benefit more fully from the multilateral trading system in the world market.

We shall step up our efforts to make possible the participation of Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar in the working groups of APEC and ASEM with a view to their eventual full membership in those forums.

We shall convene a workshop in Cambodia to develop a comprehensive and coherent programme for the Mekong development cooperation, especially for the integration of CLMV into the ASEAN economic mainstream. We likewise support the convening of a seminar in Brunei Darussalam on "Complementing Regional Integration through Sub-regional Groupings/Growth Areas such as the BIMP-EAGA, IMS-GT, IMT-GT and the Greater Mekong Sub-region".

We shall establish an IAI Unit in the ASEAN Secretariat to enhance its capability in coordinating and supporting ASEAN's efforts in realizing the objectives of this declaration.