

2003 JOINT COMMUNIQUE OF THE 36TH ASEAN MINISTERIAL MEETING

Issued in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on 17 June 2003

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1. We, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), met in Phnom Penh on 16-17 June 2003, the first time that Cambodia had hosted our annual regular meeting. The meeting was chaired by H.E. Mr. HOR Namhong, Senior Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia.
2. Present for the event was Honorable Sir Rabbie Namaliu, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Immigration of Papua New Guinea, a special observer in ASEAN. His Excellency Mr. José Ramos-Horta, Senior Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, was present as guest of the Chairman of the 36th ASEAN Standing Committee.
3. His Excellency Samdech Hun Sen, Prime Minister of Cambodia, favored us with a keynote address, which we deeply appreciated. In his address, His Excellency the Prime Minister stressed the achievements of ASEAN in contributing to regional peace and security, Southeast Asia's sense of identity, and the political, security, economic, trade, investment and financial architecture of the region. He cited in particular the agreements and decisions reached at the 8th ASEAN Summit in Phnom Penh in terms of ASEAN's economic integration and solidarity. His Excellency Prime Minister Hun Sen urged the ASEAN Foreign Ministers to accomplish six tasks:
 - exercising political leadership in promoting ASEAN cooperation and integration;
 - effectively coordinating the implementation of the Initiative for ASEAN Integration and other programs for the development of the Mekong Basin and ensuring their consistency with one another;
 - taking a leading political role in the implementation of the recommendations of the East Asia Study Group for advancing the ASEAN +3 process;
 - ensuring the coordinated implementation of the ASEAN Tourism Agreement and of the measures agreed upon for overcoming the impact of SARS and promoting Southeast Asia as a SARS-free region;
 - making sure that the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in Southeast Asia are observed and implemented; and
 - taking a leadership role in carrying out measures to combat international terrorism.
4. With the theme "Towards an ASEAN Economic Community – Integrated and Outward-Looking," we explored ways for deeper regional integration, while further devoting attention to the Initiative for ASEAN Integration and the ASEAN Tourism Agreement.
5. We exchanged views on some of the most critical issues of our time, including the threat of international terrorism. We were gratified by ASEAN's ability to respond quickly to critical developments affecting Southeast Asia, recalling in particular the Special ASEAN Leaders' Meeting and the Special ASEAN-China Leaders' Meeting on SARS on 29 April 2003 in Bangkok to work out cooperative measures for dealing with SARS and our informal meeting in Karambunai, Malaysia, to address the effects of the situations in Iraq and

Korea on the region and our countries. We agreed that these developments provided ASEAN with not only challenges but also opportunities to enhance ASEAN solidarity and cooperation.

6. In this new context, we resolved to continue to build upon the basic principles and fundamental values by which ASEAN has recorded considerable achievements. We committed ourselves to further strengthening solidarity and cohesiveness in ASEAN's traditional spirit. We attached great importance to further promoting ASEAN's resilience and cooperation in the spirit of "prosper thy neighbor" and self-help. We resolved to redouble our efforts in deepening economic integration and narrowing the development gap. We reaffirmed our commitment to remain outward-looking and, in this light, resolved to enhance equal partnership and cooperation with countries outside the region, particularly our Dialogue Partners, and with international institutions. We committed ourselves to joining efforts with others in the international community in striving for a world of peace, stability and justice.
7. We placed our support behind the process of dialogue and consultation on the situation on the Korean peninsula and stressed the importance of a nuclear weapons-free Korea. We called for a central and vital role for the United Nations in a post-war Iraq. We reiterated our determination to cooperate in the fight against international terrorism.

ASEAN INTEGRATION

REGIONAL ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

8. Keenly aware that regional economic integration is crucial for ASEAN's competitiveness, we reaffirmed the need to move deeper economic integration toward an ASEAN economic community. We commended the work of the ASEAN Economic Ministers, the High Level Task Force on ASEAN economic integration and the Senior Economic Officials in this regard. In this light, we were gratified by the progress being made in the efforts to develop ideas for the content and direction of the next stage of regional economic integration. We appreciated the briefing given us at this meeting on the full report of the ASEAN Competitiveness Study, which had been commissioned by the ASEAN Economic Ministers. We noted with appreciation the studies on the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) done by the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, the ASEAN Institutes of Strategic and International Studies (ASEAN-ISIS), and the ASEAN Secretariat. Recognizing the importance of business inputs for deeper regional economic integration, we encouraged the ASEAN Business Advisory Council to provide inputs and suggestion on the ASEAN economic community. We noted with appreciation the European Commission's readiness to share with ASEAN the European Union's experience with regional economic integration. We requested the ASEAN Secretariat to pursue the matter with the European Commission. We directed our Senior Officials to look into the political implications of the ASEAN economic community for the future of ASEAN.
9. We had extensive discussions on the concept of the ASEAN Economic Community. We agreed to ensure that the AEC would further contribute to narrow and close the development gap within ASEAN. In this regard, we recognized that deepening ASEAN economic integration and establishing an ASEAN Economic Community would have profound implications for ASEAN's institutions and practices; for example, in matters pertaining to the enforceability of and compliance with ASEAN agreements, the settlement of disputes, the coordination of national policies, the mandate and capacity of the ASEAN Secretariat, and the resources available for ASEAN purposes. Accordingly, we directed the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting, the ASEAN Standing Committee and the ASEAN Secretariat to work thoroughly on these matters and report to us at the earliest opportunity. We agreed to submit our views on the AEC to the 9th ASEAN Summit in Bali in October 2003.

10. We reviewed the Hanoi Plan of Action and agreed that the next Plan of Action should focus on regional economic integration, while further narrowing the development gap within the region.

ASEAN TOURISM AGREEMENT

11. We reiterated our gratification over the signing by ASEAN's leaders of the ASEAN Tourism Agreement (ATA) in Phnom Penh on 4 November 2002. Stressing the great importance of tourism to the development of our countries and noting that the implementation of the ATA was the responsibility of various national agencies and ASEAN bodies, we called for the early negotiation and conclusion of the agreements and other instruments necessary for the realization of the ATA's purposes. We directed the ASEAN Standing Committee and the ASEAN Secretariat, working together with the ASEAN Tourism Ministers and the National Tourism Organizations, to support this task. We called on the developed countries to refrain from indiscriminately issuing travel advisories that adversely affect trade and tourism in the region.

INITIATIVE FOR ASEAN INTEGRATION AND THE MEKONG BASIN

12. We reaffirmed the critical political and economic significance of IAI in narrowing the development gap in ASEAN and strengthening the competitiveness of ASEAN as a whole. In this connection, we called for closer coordination among ASEAN bodies to accelerate activities within the framework of the IAI and the Ha Noi Declaration on Narrowing the Development Gap for closer ASEAN Integration. Recalling that the 8th ASEAN Summit had approved the Work Plan for the Initiative for ASEAN Integration as a priority for ASEAN, we were gratified by the efforts of the member-countries to implement the Work Plan. Noting that the newer members had incorporated several elements of the IAI in their national policies and national development plans, we encouraged the international community to extend concrete support to the projects embodied in the IAI Work Plan. In the long run, an integrated ASEAN with open markets would serve the economic interests of ASEAN as well as its trading partners.
13. We reviewed ASEAN-China cooperation on the development of the Mekong Basin within the ASEAN Mekong Basin Development Cooperation (AMBDC) framework. We reiterated our call on Japan and the Republic of Korea to consider participating in the core group of the AMBDC, and the international community and international financial institutions to support the completion of the Singapore-Kunming Rail Link, specifically the construction of the missing segments of this project. Recalling the first GMS summit in Phnom Penh on 3 November 2002, we expressed our appreciation for the Greater Mekong Sub-region program of the Asian Development Bank. We urged that the various programs for the development of the Mekong Basin be undertaken in close coordination to ensure the equitable and sustainable development of the basin, taking into account the interests of all countries, the concerns of the downstream countries, and the protection of the environment.

SUB-REGIONAL GROWTH AREAS

14. We acknowledged the contribution of the sub-regional growth areas in hastening regional integration, generating employment and raising the standard of living of people in these areas. Recognizing the importance of balanced development of various growth areas, we agreed on the need to attract investors and development assistance. We commended the Asian Development Bank for its study on Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA).

POLITICAL AND SECURITY COOPERATION

POLITICAL COOPERATION

15. In discussing political and security cooperation, we considered a wide range of issues without prejudice to the cardinal principle of non-interference.
16. We acknowledged the equally significant importance of the political security cooperation in the process of achieving ASEAN integration. We agreed to continue considering this component of integration that will ensure peace, stability, and prosperity in the region.
17. We re-affirmed our support for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of Indonesia. We recognized the efforts of the Indonesian Government to restore peace and order in Aceh. We also pledged our support to deny the separatist movement access to means of violence through, among all, preventing arms smuggling into the Aceh province.
18. We discussed the recent political developments in Myanmar, particularly the incident of 30 May 2003. We noted the efforts of the Government of Myanmar to promote peace and development. In this connection, we urged Myanmar to resume its efforts of national reconciliation and dialogue among all parties concerned leading to a peaceful transition to democracy. We welcomed the assurances given by Myanmar that the measures taken following the incident were temporary and looked forward to the early lifting of restrictions placed on Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the NLD members. We also reaffirmed our continued support for the efforts of the UNSG Special Representative Tan Sri Razali Ismail.

TERRORISM

19. We reiterated our condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. At the same time, we emphasized the need to address the root causes of terrorism and rejected any attempt to associate terrorism with any religion, race, nationality or ethnic group. We reviewed, with satisfaction, the intensified cooperation among ASEAN member-countries in the fight against terrorism, which had made possible the arrest of persons engaged in terrorist activities and helped prevent the occurrence of terrorist acts. We renewed our resolve to pursue the purposes of the Declaration on Terrorism issued by the 8th ASEAN Summit on 4 November 2002. We affirmed our resolve to continue working with our law-enforcement authorities in carrying out the specific measures laid down in the ASEAN Declaration on Joint Action to Counter Terrorism, which the ASEAN leaders issued in November 2001, and in the work plan adopted by the Special ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Terrorism in May 2002.
20. We renewed our determination to cooperate closely with the international community in combating international terrorism. We were gratified by the results of the International Conference on Anti-Terrorism and Tourism Recovery in Manila in November 2002, the Regional Conference on Combating Money-Laundering and Terrorist Financing in Bali in December 2002, and the Inter-sessional Meeting on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime of the ASEAN Regional Forum in Karambunai in March 2003. We welcomed the success of the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime and the first-ever SOMTC+3 and SOMTC+1 meetings with China, the European Union and the United States on 9-13 June 2003 in Ha Noi. We looked forward to the implementation of the undertakings that we made with the Secretary of State of the United States of America in our joint declaration of 1 August 2002 and the commitments that we undertook with our European Union counterparts in the joint declaration that the ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting issued on 28 January 2003. We also looked forward to further discussion of cooperation against international terrorism at both the ASEAN Regional Forum and the Post-

Ministerial Conferences in the days ahead and particularly to the issuance of an ARF Statement on Cooperative Counter-Terrorist Actions on Border Security.

21. We welcomed the establishment of the Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism in Kuala Lumpur.

TRANSNATIONAL CRIME

22. Reaffirming our resolve to combat transnational crime, we noted with appreciation the progress of the Work Programme to Implement the ASEAN Plan of Action to Combat Transnational Crime and urged member countries to maintain the momentum of joint activities. In this regard, we appreciated the convening by Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand of ASEAN workshops under the Work Programme and urged other member countries to undertake similar capacity-building measures for combating transnational crime. We were pleased with the cooperation initiated with China, Japan and the Republic of Korea, the European Union, and the United States in combating transnational crime. We looked forward to the 4th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC) and AMMTC +3 in Bangkok in December 2003.
23. We affirmed our determination to ensure the implementation of the commitments made by our leaders and the Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China in the joint statement that they adopted in Phnom Penh on 4 November 2002 providing for cooperation on non-traditional security issues, including drug-trafficking, people-smuggling, trafficking in women and children, sea piracy, terrorism, arms smuggling, money laundering, international economic crime, and cyber-crime.
24. We welcomed the outcome of the Second Regional Conference on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime in Bali on 29 April 2003. We urged the international community to assist source countries in addressing the root causes of the illegal movement of people, contribute to support programs for displaced persons, and help in alleviating the plight of refugees.
25. We placed particular importance on international cooperation against piracy and other threats to maritime security and looked forward to discussing this critical issue at the ASEAN Regional Forum with a view to the issuance of an ARF statement in this regard.

SOUTH CHINA SEA

26. We reaffirmed the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, which we signed with China in Phnom Penh on 4 November 2002, as an important step towards a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea and as a valuable contribution to peace and stability in the region. We stressed the need for observance of the provisions of the Declaration and urged all concerned parties to undertake the confidence-building and cooperative measures called for in accordance with the Declaration. We reiterated our call for continued self-restraint and the avoidance of any action that would complicate the situation in the South China Sea. We emphasized the need for all concerned to seek to deal with the disputes in the South China Sea by peaceful means in conformity with international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. We encouraged the continuation of the informal Workshops on Managing Potential Conflict in the South China Sea.

TREATY OF AMITY AND COOPERATION

27. We reaffirmed the importance of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia as a framework for governing relations within ASEAN and between ASEAN and countries outside the region. We warmly welcomed the decision of the People's Republic of China to accede to the Treaty and the intention of India and Russia to do so in the near future.

ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM

28. We reviewed the achievements of the ASEAN Regional Forum over the past ten years and concluded that the ARF had been a unique and indispensable forum for political and security dialogue and cooperation in the Asia-Pacific. We acknowledged the important responsibility borne by ASEAN as the driving force of the ARF. While reaffirming the need to continue our focus on CBMs as the foundation of the whole ARF process, we underlined the significance of moving toward the second stage of Preventive Diplomacy on the basis of consensus and at a pace comfortable to all. We commended the initiative of the ARF Chairman, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Cambodia, as part of the enhanced role of the ARF Chair and of preventive diplomacy.
29. We agreed to lift the moratorium, and to consider the application of new participants of ARF on a case-by-case basis. We agreed to accept Pakistan as a new participant in the ARF. In this regard, we decided to communicate our consensus to non-ASEAN ARF participants.

FUNCTIONAL COOPERATION

HEALTH

30. We affirmed our determination to do our part in carrying out the decisions reached at the Special ASEAN Leaders' Meeting on SARS and the Special ASEAN-China Leaders' Meeting on SARS, which we considered as exemplifying ASEAN's response to crises – quick, coordinated, pragmatic and flexible. Welcoming the declaration by the World Health Organization that the SARS-affected ASEAN countries had brought the disease under control, we were pleased by the fact that all of ASEAN was now SARS-free. We reiterated the ASEAN leaders' call on other countries to take measures to combat SARS similar to those being taken by ASEAN and to refrain from issuing indiscriminate travel advisories on account of SARS. We expressed our appreciation for the cooperation of China, Japan and the Republic of Korea with ASEAN in combating SARS as well as the work of WHO.
31. We noted with satisfaction the progress of the implementation of the ASEAN Work Program on HIV/AIDS II (2002-2005). We also noted that multi-sectoral cooperation on HIV/AIDS was being promoted by the inclusion of the subject in a number of ASEAN meetings. In this regard, we welcomed the convening of the 15th International Conference on AIDS to be held in Bangkok on 11-16 July 2004. We expressed our appreciation for UNAIDS, other international organizations and ASEAN's Dialogue Partners for supporting the operationalization of the Work Program.

ENVIRONMENT

32. We expressed our support for the ASEAN Environment Year, which was launched in Siem Reap in March 2003. Recognizing the vital importance of regional and international cooperation in preventing and combating trans-boundary haze pollution and mitigating its effects, we welcomed the ratification of the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution by five member-countries. We called on the other member-states to ratify the Agreement as soon as possible in order to ensure its early entry into force. We affirmed our commitment to its implementation as soon as possible. We commended the ASEAN

Environment Ministers for ASEAN's contribution to the World Summit on Sustainable Development and to the work of ensuring the implementation of its decisions.

DRUGS

33. Recalling the designation of 2002-2003 as "ASEAN Drugs Awareness Years," we renewed our resolve to support ASEAN's commitment to achieve an ASEAN Drugs-Free Zone by 2015 and welcomed the implementation of projects such as the Study Trip on Drug Control Activities in Thailand for ASEAN Directors-General and Heads of Narcotics Control Focal Points of ASEAN and China, from 12 to 15 September 2002. We commended the national support given to the campaign by each member-country, particularly the collaboration among governments, non-governmental organizations and the mass media as well as efforts and cooperation framework among countries in the region. We welcomed the convening of the first meeting of the ASEAN-European Commission Sub-Committee on Narcotics in October 2002 in Kuala Lumpur. We also welcomed the launching of the ACCORD (ASEAN-China Cooperative Operations in Response to Dangerous Drugs) Regional Information Network and the establishment of the ACCORD Account to finance drug-control projects in ASEAN and China.

OTHER AREAS OF COOPERATION

34. We commended the vital work done in the past year by ASEAN ministers and officials in several areas of ASEAN functional cooperation, including science and technology, health, labor, law, rural development and poverty eradication, and culture and information. We affirmed our support for their work, which has contributed significantly for the betterment of our peoples' lives. We noted in particular the augmentation of the ASEAN Science Fund, the standardization of agriculture-related products, including pesticides, livestock, animal vaccines and forest products, and the many activities in culture and information that serve to expand awareness of ASEAN and help develop a stronger sense of regional identity.
35. We recognized the importance of the sea in trade, transportation and communication activities for all member countries. As it offers both opportunities and challenges, we stressed the need to cooperate to deal with maritime-related issues as well as to discuss their impact and implications in a comprehensive manner.
36. We reaffirmed our commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights. In this regard, we noted the ongoing ASEAN efforts and dialogues with the non-governmental Working Group for an ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism. We took note of the meeting between the ASEAN Senior Officials and the Working Group for an ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism in Phnom Penh on 14 June 2003 and the Track II conference on human rights held in Bangkok on 28-29 May 2003. We also noted the establishment of national human rights mechanisms in some Member Countries.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

37. We were satisfied with the progress being made in ASEAN +3 cooperation. We noted in particular that twelve bilateral currency swap arrangements had already been concluded by the ASEAN +3 countries, with an aggregate amount of US\$31.5 billion, to form the network of such arrangements envisioned in the Chiang Mai Initiative. We also welcomed the launching of the ASEAN +3 Pilot Scheme to establish an ASEAN/East Asia Emergency Rice Reserve to strengthen food security in the region.
38. Recalling that the leaders of ASEAN, China, Japan and the Republic of Korea had, at the ASEAN +3 Summit on 4 November 2002, adopted the Final Report of the East Asia Study

Group, which they had received from the Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea, we directed our officials to coordinate the implementation of the short-term and long-term measures recommended by the Final Report for the purpose of strengthening East Asian cooperation, including the possibility of an East Asia summit and of an East Asia free trade area. We called for the expeditious formulation and implementation of concrete projects to carry out the short-term measures.

39. We reaffirmed our support for the implementation of the Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation between ASEAN and China, which our leaders and the Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China signed in Phnom Penh on 4 November 2002. We recalled that the Agreement provides for the creation of an ASEAN-China free trade area within ten years, the liberalization of and cooperation on trade in goods and trade in services, the liberalization of, cooperation in and the protection of investments, and cooperation in other areas of economic endeavor. We welcomed in particular the consideration given in the Agreement to the disparities between ASEAN countries in their levels of development. We were confident that the implementation of the agreement would result not only in the expected economic benefits for both ASEAN and China but also in stronger overall ASEAN-China relations, and thus contribute to the security and stability of this part of the world. We also welcomed the preferential tariff treatment that China is extending to the least-developed countries in ASEAN and the write-off of their debts to China.
40. We were gratified by the signing in Phnom Penh on 5 November 2002 of the Joint Declaration of the Leaders of ASEAN and Japan on the Comprehensive Economic Partnership (CEP). We welcomed, in particular, the fact that the CEP would encompass concrete projects and allow for flexible treatment for ASEAN's new members in addition to the special and differential treatment for developing countries called for in WTO. We noted with gratification the steps that had been taken to establish the joint committee that would draft a framework agreement for the realization of the CEP. We reviewed with satisfaction the activities that had taken place so far in observance of the ASEAN-Japan Exchange Year 2003. They would culminate in an ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit celebrating the 30th anniversary of ASEAN-Japan relations. Commending the Initiative for Development in East Asia (IDEA) by the Prime Minister of Japan, we reiterated our satisfaction with the conduct and outcome of the IDEA ministerial meeting in Tokyo in August 2002. We looked forward to an early implementation of its decisions.
41. We hailed the historic first meeting of the leaders of ASEAN and India in Phnom Penh on 5 November 2002. Noting their decision to meet annually henceforth, we agreed to ensure that follow-through action is taken on the measures agreed upon by our leaders and the Prime Minister of India for strengthening political, economic and cultural cooperation between ASEAN and India, on which we shall report to the ASEAN-India Summit in October this year. These measures include the pursuit of the ASEAN-India Regional Trade and Investment Area previously agreed upon. We were pleased to note that ASEAN and India had been working on a Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation with a view to its signing at the 2nd ASEAN-India Summit in Bali in October 2003.
42. We welcomed the groundwork that had been laid for carrying out the Enterprise for ASEAN Initiative proposed by the United States of America on 26 October 2002 to strengthen economic ties, including possible free trade areas, between the United States and individual ASEAN countries. We looked forward to the conclusion of an ASEAN-U.S. Trade and Investment Facilitation Agreement (TIFA). We expressed our expectation that the Enterprise for ASEAN Initiative would be realized for all ASEAN member-states in the shortest possible time. We also welcomed the U.S. initiative for an ASEAN Cooperation Plan and looked forward to the implementation of projects under the plan.

43. We reviewed the results of the 14th ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting (AEMM) in Brussels on 27-28 January 2003. We recalled the AEMM's discussion of our priorities for future ASEAN-EU cooperation and our agreement to develop, in line with those priorities, an agenda encompassing trade and investment promotion, sustainable and equitable development, the fight against crime and terrorism, cultural cooperation and people-to-people contacts, and dialogue on common concerns. We looked forward to the development of concrete measures, projects and mechanisms to carry out this agenda. We welcomed the decision reached at the consultations between the ASEAN Economic Ministers and the EU Trade Commissioner in Luang Prabang, Laos, on 4 April 2003 to work towards the establishment of a Trans-Regional EU-ASEAN Trade Initiative aimed at strengthening economic cooperation between the two regions.
44. We welcomed the progress being made in the Closer Economic Partnership (CEP) between ASEAN and the Closer Economic Relations (CER) countries of Australia and New Zealand. We considered the work on the CEP as a valuable contribution to the strengthening of the overall relationship between the two neighboring regions.
45. We looked forward to the signing by ASEAN and Russia of the Joint Declaration on Partnership for Peace and Security, and Prosperity and Development in the Asia-Pacific Region as an important step in institutionalizing and enhancing the present relations between them.
46. We reiterated our call for the expeditious admission of Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam into the World Trade Organization and for the early participation of Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar in the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) and in APEC.
47. We welcomed the efforts by Thailand and Viet Nam in preparing for the 11th Informal APEC Economic Leaders Meeting on 20-22 October 2003 in Bangkok and for the 5th ASEM Summit scheduled for October 2004 in Ha Noi respectively. We expressed our strong support to Thailand and Vietnam in making the Summits a success. The convening of the two summits in ASEAN Countries reflects the active role of ASEAN in enhancing inter-regional cooperation.

INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL ISSUES

KOREAN PENINSULA

48. Recalling the statements that we issued in Brussels on 28 January 2003 and in Karambunai, Sabah, on 19 March 2003, we viewed with continuing concern the tensions arising from the situation in Korea. We reaffirmed our conviction that a nuclear weapons-free Korea and a peaceful resolution of the current tensions through dialogue and negotiations would be a valuable contribution to the prospects for peace and stability in East Asia. We expressed our appreciation to His Excellency Mr. HOR Namhong, Senior Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Cambodia for his efforts, as Chairman of the ASEAN Standing Committee and the ASEAN Regional Forum, in contributing to the international endeavor to ease tensions in the Korean peninsula. We reaffirmed our support for the process of dialogue and consultation among the parties directly concerned, welcoming the talks held in Beijing on 23 April 2003 among China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States of America and the Cabinet-level meeting between North and South Korea in the same month. We looked forward to further discussions on this matter at the 10th ASEAN Regional Forum on 18 June 2003, confirming our view that the ARF could be a useful venue for facilitating dialogue on the Korean peninsula and support the incoming ASC/ARF Chair to contribute further to the efforts initiated by H.E. Mr. HOR Namhong.

IRAQ

49. Reiterating the statement that we issued at our informal meeting in Karambunai, Malaysia, March 2003, we reaffirmed our support for a central and vital role for the United Nations in the reconstruction and development of Iraq in accordance with the aspirations of the people of Iraq and with the UN's responsibility in the maintenance of international peace and stability. We stressed that all measures relating to the future of Iraq must be undertaken on the basis of respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and security of Iraq as well as for the wellbeing of the Iraqi people. We also urged the international community to extend adequate assistance to the people of Iraq to meet their basic needs and also to ensure that normalcy and law and order is restored and maintained.

MIDDLE EAST

50. We welcomed all initiatives to end the bloodshed in the Middle East and to secure durable peace on the basis of justice and called for respect for and the implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions. The Ministers welcomed the diplomatic efforts of the Quartet together with the Arab initiative. They hoped that the Quartet's Roadmap would finally lead to the realization of a viable Palestinian state and reaffirmed the right of all states in the region to exist within recognized and secure boundaries. They expressed concern over the escalating cycle of violence in the region and hoped that all parties would continue to play a constructive role so as not to derail the process towards achieving such an objective. Given the complexity of the issues involved, the Ministers stressed that all efforts in the political, security, economic, humanitarian and institution-building must proceed together and be all encompassing.

SOUTH ASIA

51. We welcomed the recent positive developments in the relations between India and Pakistan, particularly the peaceful initiatives by the Indian Prime Minister, which constitute encouraging steps towards a fully normalized relationship between the two sides. We expressed the hope that the two sides would continue their dialogue and cooperation and resolve their differences through peaceful means in the interests of the two peoples and for the sake of peace and stability in South Asia and the world.

ASIA COOPERATION DIALOGUE

52. We acknowledged the significance of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD), which is serving as a bridge between the sub-regions of Asia, creating an Asia-wide network of cooperation. We noted the progress of the ACD in terms of both dialogue and projects during the past year, with the support of all ASEAN countries and look forward to the second ACD Ministerial Meeting on 21-22 June 2003 in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

ASIAN BOND MARKET

53. We welcomed the active participation of five ASEAN member countries in the Asian Bond Fund, which was launched in Bangkok by the Prime Minister of Thailand on 2 June 2003, and looked forward to the eventual participation of other ASEAN member countries.

MULTILATERALISM

54. We reaffirmed the importance of strictly abiding by the principles of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations. In this regard, we underlined the central and vital role of the United Nations in the maintenance of peace and security and the strengthening of international cooperation.

INSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

55. We congratulated Mr. Ong Keng Yong on his appointment by the ASEAN Leaders to be Secretary-General of ASEAN from 2003-2007. We welcomed his initiatives to streamline and strengthen the ASEAN Secretariat and to enhance its role in line with the changing political and economic environment and regional priorities. We expressed our strong support to the Secretary-General's continuing efforts in this regard.

NEW ASEAN CHAIRMANSHIP

56. We elected Indonesia as the Chair of the 37th ASEAN Standing Committee and the Lao People's Democratic Republic as the Vice-Chair. We looked forward to the Joint Ministerial Meeting (JMM), the 9th ASEAN Summit and its related meetings in Bali on 7-8 October 2003 in Indonesia and the 37th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, the 11th ASEAN Regional Forum and the Post-Ministerial Conferences in Indonesia in 2004.