

1994 JOINT COMMUNIQUE OF THE 27TH ASEAN MINISTERIAL MEETING

Issued in Bangkok, Thailand on 23 July 1994

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1. The 27th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting was held in Bangkok from 22-23 July 1994.

POLITICAL AND SECURITY COOPERATION

2. The Foreign Ministers noted and welcomed ASEAN's increasingly central role in fostering political and security cooperation in Southeast Asia and the Asia-Pacific, through initiatives such as the historic inaugural meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) to be held in Bangkok on 25 July 1994. The ARF could become an effective consultative Asia-Pacific Forum for promoting open dialogue on political and security cooperation in the region. In this context, ASEAN should work with its ARF partners to bring about a more predictable and constructive pattern of relations in the Asia-Pacific.
3. The Foreign Ministers noted the significance of the 27th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (AMM) as it was the first time that the Foreign Ministers of all ten Southeast Asian countries were present. They hoped that relation of ASEAN with the four other Southeast Asian states would further intensify, and reiterated their commitment to building a Southeast Asian community through common membership in ASEAN. They affirmed their readiness accept Vietnam as a member of ASEAN and instructed their senior officials and the ASEAN Secretary General to undertake early consultations with Vietnamese officials concerning the appropriate modalities and arrangements.
4. The Foreign Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to ASEAN's principles and objectives on regional peace and security, particularly those contained in the ASEAN Declaration on the Zone of Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) of 1971, the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, as well as the concept of Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (SEANWFZ). They reiterated their determination to continue working towards the early realization of such principles and objectives through the effective implementation of ASEAN's "Programme of Action for ZOPFAN." They noted the growing recognition for the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia and expressed their intent to facilitate association with the Treaty by non-regional states. They also noted the progress made in resolving legal and technical aspects of the draft Treaty on Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (SEANWFZ). They directed the ASEAN SOM Working Group on ZOPFAN and SEANWFZ to expedite its work on these issues.
5. The Foreign Ministers noted with satisfaction that ASEAN cooperation was also being fostered on a parallel track, through the contribution, for example, of the ASEAN Institutes of Strategic and International Studies (ASEAN-ISIS), the Workshop Series on ASEAN-UN Cooperation in Peace and Preventive Diplomacy, co-chaired by Thailand and Singapore, and the informal meeting in Manila (30-31 May 1994) of academicians and other citizens from ASEAN and the four other Southeast Asian countries resulting in their statement "Southeast Asia Beyond the Year 2000:A Statement of Vision".

INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL ISSUES

6. The Foreign Ministers had a wide-ranging exchange of views on the current international and regional developments. They noted the overall positive trends towards political dialogue and

cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. They expressed concern over sources of tension and conflict that persist in different parts of the world.

7. The Foreign Ministers reiterated their support for the Royal Government of Cambodia, but noted with concern that peace and stability in Cambodia has not been fully realized. They condemned the recent attempt to overthrow the legitimately elected Government and also deplored the recent proclamation by the Khmer Rouge of their so-called "provisional government".
8. The Foreign Ministers reaffirmed the principles contained in the ASEAN Declaration on the South China Sea and its positive contribution to a significant reduction of tension in the region. They expressed appreciation that the on-going Workshop Series on Managing Potential Conflicts in the South China Sea, initiated by Indonesia, had promoted confidence-building among the countries directly concerned. They noted that some countries concerned were already having bilateral consultations. They were convinced that, given the political will and spirit of cooperation of all states concerned, peace and stability in the region could be significantly enhanced.
9. The Foreign Ministers exchanged views on political and security developments in Northeast Asia and looked forward to the early convening of the Inter-Korean Summit and the resumption of the high-level talks between the United States of America and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.
10. The Foreign Ministers expressed their support for the latest peace proposal made by the Contact Group comprising representatives of the United Nations, the European Union, the United States, and the Russian Federation, which emphasized the preservation of the unity and integrity of the state of Bosnia-Herzegovina as a single state within internationally recognized borders. They called upon all concerned to support the peace proposal. They also called for the lifting of the arms embargo against Bosnia-Herzegovina in the light of the rejection by the Serbs of the peace proposal.
11. The Foreign Ministers welcomed the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements of 13 September 1993 and the Cairo Agreement of 4 May 1994 between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO). They urged Israel and the other parties directly involved in the Middle East question to intensify their engagement in the peace process to achieve an expeditious, just and peaceful settlement.
12. The Foreign Ministers expressed their deep concern over the tragic events in Rwanda. They called upon the international community to provide humanitarian assistance to alleviate the suffering of the Rwandans and to address the grave problems caused by the massive influx of refugees to neighbouring countries.
13. The Foreign Ministers welcomed the historic victory of the South African people over apartheid and the establishment of a non-racial and democratically elected government in that country. They looked forward to strengthening and promoting closer political and economic ties with the new Government of South Africa.
14. The Foreign Ministers noted with satisfaction the successful outcome of the 11th Ministerial Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) held in Cairo from 30 May to 3 June 1994. They welcomed the Cairo Declaration, which calls upon the member countries of NAM to closely coordinate their positions on various global issues, to further strengthen South-South cooperation, and to pursue the renewal of North-South dialogue for strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnership on the basis of common interest, common benefit, genuine interdependence and shared responsibility.

INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ISSUES

15. The Foreign Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to the objectives of promoting trade liberalization to sustain world economic growth. They strongly urged the major developed countries to take the necessary steps to ratify the Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization by the target date of 1 January 1995 and to implement the Uruguay Round results in accordance with the agreed rules.
16. The Foreign Ministers expressed serious concern that the linkage of worker rights, labour standards and environmental issues to trade could become a new pretext for protectionism and could undermine the progress achieved so far in the liberalization of world trade. While stressing the importance of uplifting social conditions, they maintained that these issues are more appropriately addressed by other competent international bodies such as the International Labour Organization (ILO).
17. The Ministers reaffirmed their strong support for Singapore's offer to host the first Ministerial Review Conference of the WTO and Thailand's bid for the chairmanship for the WTO's Committee on Agriculture.

ASIA PACIFIC ECONOMIC COOPERATION

18. The Foreign Ministers welcomed the efforts of APEC in promoting greater economic cooperation and trade liberalization and emphasized the need to take into account the different levels of economic development among APEC member economies to sustain healthy economic growth in the Asia-Pacific region. They urged that greater attention should be given to the promotion of human resource development and the transfer of technology and management skills, the enhancement of the role of the private/business sector, the development of infrastructure and particularly, the implementation of the APEC Business Volunteer Programme and the establishment of an APEC Centre for Technology and Training for Small and Medium Enterprises in the Philippines. They expressed support for Indonesia as the host of the 6th APEC Ministerial Meeting and the APEC Economic Leaders' Informal Meeting in November 1994.

EAST ASIA ECONOMIC CAUCUS

19. The Foreign Ministers noted the progress made in the consultations to launch the East Asia Economic Caucus with potential members and welcomed their valuable inputs and suggestions. The Ministers agreed that these consultations should continue.

ASEAN FREE TRADE AREA

20. The Foreign Ministers expressed satisfaction at the progress of the implementation of the Common Effective Preferential Tariff Scheme (CEPT) for AFTA. They were particularly gratified to note that all Member Countries had begun implementing the tariff reduction programme in 1994. The Foreign Ministers expressed confidence that the CEPT would enhance the competitiveness of ASEAN as an international production base and encourage the inflow of foreign direct investments into the region. Noting the changing world economic environment after the conclusion of the Uruguay Round, the Foreign Ministers expressed their full support for a rapid actualization of AFTA to maintain its economic relevance and its attractiveness to foreign investors. The Ministers agreed that AFTA's linkages with other regional trading arrangements as a means to complement efforts at further promoting multilateral trade liberalisation merit serious consideration.

OTHER AREAS OF ECONOMIC COOPERATION

21. The Foreign Ministers reiterated the need to enhance cooperation in other economic areas such as minerals and energy, finance and banking, transportation, and communications, tourism promotion and industry consistent with the Framework Agreement on Enhancing ASEAN Economic Cooperation adopted by the 4th ASEAN Summit.

FUNCTIONAL COOPERATION

22. The Foreign Ministers expressed satisfaction at the completion of Action Plans in science and technology, environment, culture and information, social development, and drugs and narcotics control which would serve to focus ASEAN functional cooperation on areas of priority importance to ASEAN. The Foreign Ministers emphasized the need to pursue the strategies contained in the Plan of Action on Science and Technology in order to assist the region in coping with the challenges of global competition and as a means for continuing economic prosperity.
23. As part of ongoing regional efforts to implement Agenda 21, the Foreign Ministers welcomed the declaration of year 1995 as the ASEAN Environment Year by the ASEAN Ministers on the Environment and the adoption of a set of ASEAN Harmonized Environment Quality Standards.
24. The Foreign Ministers expressed grave concern underlined by the ASEAN Labour Ministers that attempts by some developed countries to introduce social clauses into International Trade Agreements would restrict market access and adversely affect the employment opportunities of workers in developing countries. They urged the ILO to support flexible and fair implementation of labour standards considering the needs of developing countries.
25. The Foreign Ministers welcomed the Resolution on the ASEAN Plan of Action for Children adopted by the ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Social Welfare which provides the framework for regional cooperation and collaboration for the survival, protection and development of children in the ASEAN region. They also endorsed the Joint Declaration adopted by the ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Information.

ASEAN FUND

26. The Foreign Ministers signed the new Agreement for the Establishment of a Fund for ASEAN which would provide a catalytic resource to pursue regional initiatives within the framework of ASEAN Summit decisions.

ASEAN FLAG

27. The Foreign Ministers adopted the ASEAN Flag as a symbol of ASEAN cooperation and solidarity in promoting the common aspirations of Member Countries for peace and prosperity in the region.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

COOPERATION WITH DIALOGUE PARTNERS

28. The Foreign Ministers reaffirmed the importance of ASEAN's relations with its Dialogue Partners in forging a better understanding on issues of common interest. They reiterated the concern over measures that restrict market access of ASEAN exports. In this regard, the Ministers called upon

the Dialogue Partners to be more forthcoming in responding positively to ASEAN's needs to foster a more meaningful partnership.

29. The Foreign Ministers reaffirmed the importance of development cooperation in contributing to ASEAN's economic growth and development. They expressed appreciation for the assistance provided by the Dialogue Partners in the implementation of various development projects. They noted that in recent years, development assistance has been used to promote economic and commercial objectives, especially in programmes and projects implemented by the private sector. They expressed the hope that Dialogue Partners and ASEAN would continue to work together to define the objectives of their development assistance in order to promote more effective utilization of resources committed under the development programmes with ASEAN.

COOPERATION WITH NON-DIALOGUE PARTNERS

30. The Foreign Ministers expressed satisfaction at the progress made in the ASEAN relations with India and China. They noted the on-going process to formulate appropriate modalities for the ASEAN relations with Russia and Pakistan. The Ministers agreed on various modalities to enhance cooperation with regional groupings such as the Gulf Cooperation Council.

LAOS AND VIETNAM

31. The Foreign Ministers noted with satisfaction the increasing cooperation between ASEAN and Laos and Vietnam and encouraged them to increase their participation in ASEAN meetings and cooperation programmes. They believed that increased participation in and greater familiarity with ASEAN would facilitate Laos and Vietnam in their preparations for eventual membership in ASEAN.

FIFTH ASEAN SUMMIT

32. The Foreign Ministers agreed to recommend to the Heads of Government that the 5th ASEAN Summit be held in Thailand in the second week of December 1995.