

1981 JOINT PRESS RELEASE FOR THE SECOND MEETING OF THE ASEAN ECONOMIC MINISTERS ON ENERGY COOPERATION

Issued in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 27 April 1981

1. The Second Meeting of ASEAN Economic Ministers on Energy Cooperation as held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on 27 – 28 April 1981.
2. The Meeting was attended by H.E. Subroto, Minister of Mines and Energy of Indonesia, H.E. Geronimo Velasco, Minister of Energy of the Philippines, H.E. Goh Chok Tong, Minister for Trade and Industry and Health of Singapore, H.E. Wing Commander Thinakorn Bhandhugravi, Minister of Science, Technology and Energy of Thailand and H.E. Datuk Leo Moggie Minister for Energy, Telecommunication and Post of Malaysia and their respective delegations.
3. H.E. Narcisco G. Reyes, the Secretary-General of the ASEAN Secretariat was also present.
4. The Meeting was officially opened by Y.A.B. Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia at the Ballroom Equatorial Hotel, in the presence of other dignitaries. In his opening address, Y.A.B. the Deputy Prime Minister, among other things, stated that in spite of outside prediction that ASEAN unity may begin to strain after 13 years of association, ASEAN has again demonstrated to the world its steadfastness towards its goal of regional economic cooperation.
5. The Deputy Prime Minister also stressed that the energy problem in developing countries has not subsided and these countries will continue to face difficulties in the future. The Deputy Prime Minister noted that fortunately a considerable amount of energy resources exists in the ASEAN region although widely differing in each ASEAN member country. The Deputy Prime Minister noted that the enormous potential of non-oil energy resources is yet to be utilized, and financial constraints have been one of the major causes for the slow progress so far in this respect,
6. The Deputy Prime Minister congratulated the ASEAN Committee on Science and Technology for pursuing vigorously its efforts to expand its R & D in alternative sources of energy.
7. The Deputy Prime Minister was particularly pleased to note that great efforts have been made in regional cooperation with respect to the ASEAN electric power interconnection and on coal development. Another potential area of cooperation which the Deputy Prime Minister felt that ASEAN could pursue is in energy conservation.
8. The Meeting reviewed the progress that had been achieved in the field of energy cooperation since the First Meeting of the ASEAN Economic Ministers on Energy Cooperation which was held in Bali in September 1980.
9. The Meeting of Senior Officials on Energy Cooperation considered the reports of the Committee on Industry, Minerals and Energy (COIME), the ASEAN Council on Petroleum (ASCOPE) and the Working Group on Non-Conventional Energy Research of the Committee on Science and Technology (COST).
10. Energy activities of COST are directed towards the enhancement of ASEAN capabilities in non-conventional energy R & D, the development of non-conventional energy technologies and the application of these technologies. Priority was accorded to ten research areas, including solar, bio-energy, coal, wind, geothermal and micro hydro technologies.

11. The activities of COIME focussed on the four areas of non-petroleum commercial sources of energy: coal, geothermal, hydro and uranium.

12. ASCOPE reported that its activities were classified into five major areas:

- exchange of information
- corporative studies
- economic feasibility studies
- exchange of trainees and training facilities
- organization of Conferences, Seminars and Workshops.

13. The Meeting also noted the status reports on ASEAN cooperation on energy with third countries and organizations as follows:

ASEAN – Japan

ASEAN – Australia

ASEAN – United States of America

ASEAN – New Zealand

ASEAN – UNDP/ESCAP

ASEAN – EEC

14. On the recommendation of the Meeting of the Senior Officials on Energy Cooperation, the Meeting agreed to the establishment of a Committee on Energy Cooperation (COEC) to promote effective regional cooperation in the field of energy in ASEAN.

15. The Meeting also considered the Report of the First Meeting of the ASEAN Experts Group on Coal held in Bandung, Indonesia, 6 – 7 April 1981, and adopted the Recommendations of that Meeting. These include the establishment of an ASEAN Coal Information Centre, joint coal market surveys, undertakings in survey, exploration, and development, joint studies on coal distribution and utilization and joint cooperation on coal matters with third countries or organizations.

16. The Meeting also considered the Report of the First Meeting of the Heads of National ASEAN Power Utilities/Authorities held in Jakarta, Indonesia, 13 – 14 April 1981 and adopted the recommendations of that Meeting. Ten projects will be undertaken under the aegis of the Forum of Heads of ASEAN Power Utilities/Authorities, which cover the spectrum of utility operations. These include cooperation in computer applications, electrical interconnections, research, development and engineering, training, rural and urban electrification and standardization. The specific projects include cooperation in micro hydro, geothermal and nuclear development. The Forum will also establish an Electric Power Information Centre to act as the repository and information exchange centre.

17. Rising oil prices have naturally made energy conservation an attractive proposition as was said by the Deputy Prime Minister. Because of the diversity in the use of energy, the potential for conservation occurs almost everywhere and at all levels. Active conservation measures would in itself constitute an invisible energy resource in our energy economy. In this respect, the different energy situation in each member country has developed diverse capabilities with respect to energy conservation, which can be shared among all the member countries.

18. The Meeting agreed that efforts be made to share experience in research, development and implementation of conservation measures including regulations, incentives and public awareness.

19. The Meeting was held in the traditional ASEAN spirit of solidarity and cordiality.