

1996 JOINT COMMUNIQUE OF THE THIRD ASEAN MINISTERS OF LAW MEETING

Adopted in Manila, The Philippines on 13 September 1996

1. The Third Meeting of ASEAN Law Ministers was held in Manila on 13 September 1996.
2. The Ministers expressed their appreciation to H.E. President Fidel V. Ramos for gracing the opening of the Meeting as Guest of Honor. In his speech, H.E. President Ramos stressed the importance of the Rule of Law for the continued economic growth in the Region. He said that the diversity of ASEAN legal systems should encourage the member countries to find a common concept and framework towards the resolution of disputes and differences.
3. The Meeting was attended by H.E. Pengiran Bahrin bin Pengiran Haji Abbas, Minister of Law and Attorney-General of Brunei Darussalam; H.E. Oetojo Oesman, SH., Minister of Justice of The Republic of Indonesia; H.E. Dato Abang Abu Bakar, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department of Malaysia; H.E. Teofisto T. Guingona, Jr., Secretary of Justice of The Republic of Philippines, H.E. Prof. S. Jayakumar, Minister for Law of The Republic of Singapore; Hon Chut Chonlavorn, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Justice, The Kingdom of Thailand; and H.E. Nguyen Dinh Loc, Minister of Justice of The Socialist Republic of Vietnam.
4. Mr. Medardo C. Abad, representing the ASEAN Secretariat, was also present.
5. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to the ASEAN Bangkok Declaration of 1967, the Declaration of ASEAN Concord of 1976, the ASEAN Ministerial Understanding on the Organizational Arrangement for Cooperation in the Legal Field, Bali, Indonesia, 1986, the Manila Declaration of 1987, the Singapore Declaration of 1992, and the Bangkok Summit Declaration of 1995, and agreed that the ASEAN Senior Law Officials Meeting (ASLOM) should continue to examine the role of law in the context of facilitating greater ASEAN cooperation.
6. The Ministers took note that the Attorneys-General of ASEAN held a Meeting in Jakarta on 24–25 July 1995 and that the Attorneys-General reached consensus in a document called the Jakarta Consensus.
7. The Ministers considered the recommendation of the ASEAN Senior Law Officials Meetings on 12–14 April 1993 in Kuala Lumpur and on 18–20 September 1995 in Bandar Seri Begawan that there would be co-operation in the exchange of legal materials and continuing legal education among ASEAN countries. The Ministers also agreed that each ASEAN Member Country shall designate its respective authority/agency as the focal point responsible for transmitting and receiving official requests for the exchange of legal materials. The cost of the legal materials, including administrative costs, shall be borne by the requesting country. A requested country may, however, waive such charge or costs. The requested country shall use its best endeavors to provide the requested legal materials.
8. The Ministers noted that the exchange of study visits by law officials of ASEAN Member Countries is to be strongly encouraged. Information on appropriate Continuing Legal Education Programmes available in ASEAN Member Countries shall be disseminated by and through the national focal points. Continuing Legal Education programmes undertaken by an ASEAN Member Country, where appropriate, are to be made available to other ASEAN Member Countries. Exchange of teachers and experts in the field of law among ASEAN Member Countries is also to be encouraged. The cost of such visits shall be borne by the requesting party. A requested country may, however, waive such charges or costs.

9. The Ministers endorsed the recommendation of the ASEAN Senior Law Officials Meeting on 11–12 September 1996 to request the ASEAN Secretariat to modify its Home Page to provide hypertext links to the legal information database of each Member Country as and when that Member Country sets up its database in order to further the objective of establishing an ASEAN Legal Information Network System.
10. The Ministers agreed to hold the next meeting of the ASEAN Ministers of Law at Singapore in three (3) years time, i.e., in 1999, with the exact date to be agreed upon after consultations among the Member Countries.