

2008 JOINT STATEMENT OF THE SEVENTH ASEAN LAW MINISTERS MEETING

Adopted in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam on 21 October 2008

1. The Seventh ASEAN Law Ministers Meeting (ALAWMM) was held on 20-21 October 2008 in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam.
2. The Ministers expressed their appreciation to His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah Ibni His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office, for officiating the Opening of the Meeting as Guest of Honour and delivering the Keynote Address.
3. In his Keynote Address, His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah recognised the evolution of the ALAWMM since its inception 22 years ago. His Royal Highness noted the achievements of ASEAN and the recent formulation and signing of the ASEAN Charter, which would effectively transform ASEAN into a rules-based intergovernmental organisation. He commended the signing of the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) as well as the ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism (ACCT). His Royal Highness recognised the value of the MLAT in enabling the exchange of best practices and the development of the various regional legal systems and legal cooperation, and the ACCT in combating terrorism in the region.
4. His Royal Highness hoped that ALAWMM would play an integral part in building the ASEAN Community by 2015.
5. The Meeting was chaired by Honourable Dato Seri Paduka Haji Kifrawi bin Dato Paduka Haji Kifli, Attorney-General of Brunei Darussalam and attended by H.E. Sam Sokphal, Secretary of State, Ministry of Justice, Kingdom of Cambodia; H. E. Mr. Andi Mattalatta, Minister for Law and Human Rights, Republic of Indonesia; H. E. Dr. Chaleune Yipaoheue, Minister of Justice, Lao People's Democratic Republic; Datuk Idrus Harun, Solicitor-General of Malaysia; H. E. U Tun Tun Oo, Deputy Attorney-General of the Union of Myanmar; H.E. Mr. Ricardo R. Blancaflor, Undersecretary, Department of Justice, Republic of the Philippines; H. E. K. Shanmugam, Minister for Law, Republic of Singapore; H. E. Mr. Somsak Kiatsuranont, Minister of Justice, Kingdom of Thailand; H. E. Prof. Dr. Ha Hung Cuong, Minister of Justice, Socialist Republic of Viet Nam; and H. E. Dr. Soeung Rathchavy, Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN.
6. The Ministers noted the progress made by ASLOM in implementing various programmes to promote greater legal understanding and cooperation among ASEAN Member States which have been agreed upon at previous ALAWMMs and ASLOMs. The Ministers noted the significance of the recent formulation of the ASEAN Charter which will shortly be ratified by all ASEAN Member States and which will transform ASEAN into an integrated and cohesive rules-based intergovernmental organisation. They noted that this development would have a significant impact on ALAWMM as there will be an increasing need for legal understanding and cooperation among ASEAN Member States.
7. The Ministers commended the updating of the ASEAN Government Law Directory and the developments made by ASLOM with regard to the Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, the ASEAN Legal Information Authorities (ALIA), Exchange of Study Visits, the Model ASEAN Extradition Treaty and the ASEAN Convention on Counter-Terrorism.
8. The Ministers noted with satisfaction the various ASEAN Law Forums that have taken place and the role envisaged for ALAWMM in the draft ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint. The Ministers also noted the proposals to develop a Model Law on Maritime Security, the Framework Agreement on Conservation of Coastal and Marine Environment, and the conduct of another ASEAN Government Legal Officers Programme.

9. The Ministers noted and endorsed the Reports of the 11th ASLOM held on 29-30 January 2007 in Siem Reap, Cambodia and the 12th ASLOM held on 17-18 October 2008 in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam.
10. The Ministers endorsed the Recommendations on harmonising the arbitration laws and practices of ASEAN Member States made by the ASLOM Working Group on Examining Modalities for the Harmonisation of Trade Laws of ASEAN Member States as revised by the 12th ASLOM.
11. The Ministers agreed in principle to the ASEAN SOM Working Group's proposal to entrust ALAWMM to develop programmes to strengthen the rule of law, legal cooperation, and legal infrastructures in cooperation with other sectoral bodies and relevant entities, including the ASEAN Law Association (ALA).
12. The Ministers noted Brunei Darussalam's proposal on Progressive Liberalisation of Trade in Legal Services and agreed that another ASEAN Law Forum be convened to further discuss this proposal.
13. The Ministers thanked Indonesia for offering to host the 13th ASLOM in 2010 and Cambodia for offering to host the 14th ASLOM and the 8th ALAWMM in 2011.