

2017 JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT ON THE THIRD REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP (RCEP) INTERSESSIONAL MINISTERIAL MEETING

Adopted in Ha Noi, Viet Nam on 21 May 2017

1. The Ministers from the 16 RCEP Participating Countries (RPCs) attended the 3rd RCEP Intersessional Ministerial Meeting held on 21-22 May 2017 in Ha Noi, Viet Nam to take stock of the status of RCEP negotiations including the challenges faced following the conclusion of the 18th round of negotiations held on 2-12 May 2017 in Pasay City, Philippines. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to meet the Leaders' mandate for a swift conclusion of the RCEP negotiations in delivering the vision in the *Guiding Principles and Objectives for the RCEP Negotiations*.
2. The Ministers recognised that notwithstanding the continuing signs of global economic recovery, the risks of policy uncertainties and growing protectionist sentiment remain. The Ministers again emphasised the urgency for a successful and timely conclusion of the RCEP negotiations, bearing in mind the potential of the modern, comprehensive, high quality and mutually beneficial Agreement to serve as a beacon of open regionalism that will bring about inclusive and innovative growth as well as to contribute to further economic development and employment benefitting all. RCEP's market access commitments, rules and cooperation will deepen regional economic integration and promote supply chain growth.
3. The Ministers noted that the substantial conclusion of the RCEP has been identified as a priority deliverable in this milestone year of ASEAN's 50th anniversary. The Ministers noted the necessity of significant progress and committed to work together to this end. The Ministers highlighted that the negotiations have come to a critical juncture, and acknowledged that there are many challenging issues to resolve. The Ministers stressed that all RPCs must redouble efforts to translate their political commitments into actions to see through the RCEP towards a swift conclusion. The Ministers urged RPCs to continue engaging in the negotiation process in a positive and constructive manner.
4. The Ministers noted the progress made in all areas of negotiations and welcomed the conclusion of two chapters of the RCEP Agreement to date, namely the chapters on economic and technical cooperation, and on small and medium enterprises, while noted that other chapters are still in progress with some of them nearing conclusion. The Ministers noted the importance for RCEP having modern trade facilitative rules and the progress made in the text- based negotiations across all areas.
5. The Ministers welcomed a significant movement made toward the next phase of market access negotiations in goods and services, and commitments on investment and noted that more work is required to improve offers that have been tabled to date. The Ministers recognised the importance of all RPCs working together to address different levels of development among RPCs to achieve mutually beneficial and commercially meaningful outcomes. The Ministers reemphasised the need to achieve a balanced outcome in all areas of negotiations – goods, services, investment.
6. The Ministers called on all RPCs to redouble efforts to expedite the remaining work. The Ministers further emphasised the need to achieve good progress at each of the remaining rounds.
7. The Ministers noted with appreciation the intensification of efforts on stakeholder engagement which include business representatives and civil society, and underscored that the success of the RCEP Agreement will be contingent upon the concrete benefits it delivers to all.

LIST OF MINISTERS

- (a) **The Hon. Steven Ciobo MP**, Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment, Australia;
- (b) **H.E. Dato Paduka Lim Jock Hoi**, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Brunei Darussalam (representing **The Hon. Pehin Dato Lim Jock Seng**, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Brunei Darussalam);
- (c) **H.E. Pich Rithi**, Under Secretary of State for Ministry of Commerce, Cambodia (representing **H.E. Pan Sorasak**, Minister of Commerce, Cambodia);
- (d) **H.E. Zhong Shan**, Minister of Commerce, People's Republic of China;
- (e) **H.E. Nirmala Sitharaman**, Minister of State for Commerce and Industry (Independent Charge), India;
- (f) **H.E. Enggartiaso Lukita**, Minister of Trade, Indonesia;
- (g) **H.E. Hiroshige Seko**, Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, Japan;
- (h) **H.E. Kentaro Sonoura**, State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Japan;
- (i) **H.E. Lee Sangjin**, Deputy Minister for Trade Negotiations, Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy, Republic of Korea;
- (j) **H.E. Mrs. Khemmani Pholsena**, Minister of Industry and Commerce, Lao PDR;
- (k) **H.E. Dato' Sri Mustapa Mohamed**, Minister of International Trade and Industry, Malaysia;
- (l) **H.E. Maung Maung Win**, Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance, Myanmar (representing **H.E. Kyaw Win**, Union Minister for Planning and Finance, Myanmar);
- (m) **Hon. Todd McClay**, Minister of Trade, New Zealand;
- (n) **H.E. Ramon M. Lopez**, Secretary of Trade and Industry, Republic of the Philippines;
- (o) **H.E. Lim Hng Kiang**, Minister for Trade and Industry (Trade), Singapore;
- (p) **H.E. Winichai Chaemchaeng**, Vice Minister of Commerce, Thailand (representing **H.E. Mrs Apiradi Tantraporn**, Minister of Commerce, Thailand);
- (q) **H.E. Tran Tuan Anh**, Minister of Industry and Trade, Viet Nam; and
- (r) **H.E. Le Luong Minh**, Secretary-General of ASEAN