

2002 JOINT COMMUNIQUE OF THE FIFTH MEETING OF ASEAN LAW MINISTERS

Adopted in Bangkok, Thailand on 18 June 2002

The 5th Meeting of ASEAN Law Ministers was held in Bangkok on 17th - 18th June 2002.

The Ministers expressed their appreciation to H.E. Pol. Lt. Col. Dr. Thaksin Shinawatra, Prime Minister of Thailand, for gracing the Opening of the Meeting as Guest-of-Honour and delivering the Keynote Address.

In his Keynote Address, H.E. Pol. Lt. Col. Dr. Thaksin Shinawatra recognised the necessity and importance of closer cooperation in the field of law among ASEAN Member Countries. He asked the Ministers to consider expanding the scope of the Meeting to the next level of cooperation. He encouraged the Ministers to consider strengthening, deepening, and improving our education syllabus to focus more on the study of the laws and legal framework of ASEAN Member Countries. He recognised the urgency to develop new and more effective cross-border cooperation as well as proper responses and effective measures to deal with transnational crimes and criminals.

The Meeting was attended by H.E. Pehin Dato Isa, Special Adviser to His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam in the Prime Minister's Office and Minister of Home Affairs of Brunei Darussalam; H.E. Neav Sithong, Minister of Justice of the Kingdom of Cambodia; H.E. Prof. Dr. Yusril Ihza Mahendra, Minister of Justice and Human Rights of the Republic of Indonesia; H.E. Mr. Kham Ouane Bouppha, Minister of Justice of the Lao People's Democratic Republic; Dato' Abdul Gani Patail, Attorney General of Malaysia; U Soe Lynn Han, First Secretary of Embassy of the Union of Myanmar; H.E. Prof. Hernando B. Perez, Secretary of Justice of the Republic of the Philippines; H.E. Prof. S. Jayakumar, Minister for Law of the Republic of Singapore; H.E. Mr. Chaturon Chaisang, Minister of Justice of the Kingdom of Thailand and H.E. Dr. Nguyen Dinh Loc, Minister of Justice of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

H.E. Dato' Ahmad Mokhtar Selat, Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN, was also present.

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 Organisational Arrangement for Cooperation in the Legal Field, Bali, Indonesia, 1986, the Manila Declaration of 1987, the Singapore Declaration of 1992, the Bangkok Summit Declaration of 1995, the Hanoi Declaration of 1998 and the ASEAN Vision 2020. The Ministers acknowledged the work and efforts of the ASEAN Senior Law Officials and agreed that the ASEAN Senior Law Officials Meeting (ASLOM) should continue to examine the role of law and develop further mechanisms to facilitate greater ASEAN cooperation in the legal field.

The Ministers underlined the importance of enhancing linkages with and supporting the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crimes (AMMTC) in preventing and combating transnational crimes.

The Ministers in their Opening Statements highlighted the importance of having a strong legal framework as the foundation for economic and social development and the necessity that ASEAN Member Countries should establish mechanisms, such as mutual legal assistance in criminal matters and extradition, in order to prevent and combat transnational crimes and terrorism.

The Ministers considered and approved the recommendation of the 8th ASEAN Senior Law Officials Meeting on 15th - 16th June 2002 in Bangkok to establish an ASEAN Law Forum with participation by officials, practitioners and academics to discuss matters of ASEAN laws upon consultation with other Member Countries. The Ministers agreed that the first ASEAN Law Forum to be entitled "ASEAN Laws and Practices: From Academics to Practitioners Perspectives" would be organised by Thailand by the end of 2002. The topics to be discussed at this and/or any subsequent Forums can include the issues of (a) mutual legal assistance in preventing and combating transnational crimes; (b) modalities for harmonization of ASEAN trade laws; (c) uniform laws for the legalization of documents; and (d) sharing of information and experiences in mediation processes.

The Ministers agreed to hold the 6th ASEAN Law Ministers Meeting (ALAWMM) in Viet Nam in mid 2005, with the exact date to be agreed upon after consultations among the Member Countries.

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