

2002 MANILA DECLARATION

Adopted in Manila, Philippines on 28 August 2002

We, the undersigned ASEAN Ministers gathered in Manila, Philippines for the 2nd ASEAN Telecommunication Ministerial Meeting (TELMIN) with the theme, “Exploiting ASEAN Competitive Edge in Information and Communications Technology (ICT)” and in line with our Ministerial Understanding on ASEAN Cooperation in Telecommunications and Information Technology signed at the First TELMIN Meeting held in Kuala Lumpur on 13 July 2001, zealously strive to attain the ASEAN Vision 2020 of a “concert of Southeast Asian nations, outward looking, living in peace, stability and prosperity, bonded together in partnership in dynamic development and a community of caring societies”.

We affirm that we, in ASEAN, with a rich diversity that has provided the strength and inspiration to help one another, have created a community of Southeast Asian nations at peace with one another; rapidly achieving prosperity for people and steadily improving their lives.

We strongly believe in our innate resilience to steadfastly face the challenges of the 21st Century, building upon the keystones of our existing cooperative efforts to nurture the aspirations of our peoples and realize equitable and sustainable growth towards closer economic integration within ASEAN.

We are aware of the rapidly changing landscape of the global telecommunications industry and our need to harness technological advances in ICT as an effective tool to alleviate the unequal economic development, poverty, and socio-economic disparities in ASEAN.

WE HEREBY DECLARE THAT:

We recognize that telecommunications has progressed into a broader information and communication technology (ICT) and is among the strongest engines of economic growth, achieving substantial trade and investment flow in all sectors within ASEAN, propelling businesses to attain positive growth, thus sustaining the aspirations and very lives of our peoples, affecting as well, the political and socio-economic landscape of ASEAN.

We are mindful that the rapid technological advancement and convergence of the broadcasting, information technology and telecommunications sectors, require sharing of information and experiences in approaches to policies and regulations for the creation of a framework responsive to investment, infrastructure, and technology development amongst economies.

We are fully aware that the development gap among ASEAN members is a very important issue. Narrowing the development gap between older and newer ASEAN members is an instrument for successful integration in the region.

We are of the conviction that ASEAN must take advantage of the inherent aptitude of its peoples for technology, enabling it to be globally competitive, expanding its pool of technologically qualified and highly-trained ICT professionals and networking of academic, research and development institutions and maintaining ICT centers of excellence.

We commit to fulfill the four objectives of the e-ASEAN Framework Agreement: (1) to promote cooperation to develop, strengthen and enhance the competitiveness of the ICT sector; (2) reduce the digital divide within individual ASEAN Member States and amongst ASEAN Member States; (3) promote cooperation between the public and private sectors in realizing e-ASEAN; and (4) liberalize trade in ICT products, ICT services and investments to support the e-ASEAN initiative.

We also commit to create market conditions and formulate policies that foster competition in the ICT sector to encourage greater investments leading to greater customer choice and faster deployment of new technologies. To this end, we support the on-going negotiations under the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services to achieve freer flow of services in the region, and encourage more intensive efforts toward realizing a truly competitive ICT sector in the ASEAN region.

We support ongoing activities on national information and communication plans to promote awareness of ASEAN and its standing in the international community through various ICT programmes, projects, and other activities.

We resolve to fully exploit our competitive edge in ICT, by our strong commitment for cooperation and partnership in various ICT activities, policy development and in program implementation for sustained growth and development to achieve global competitiveness, peace and prosperity and make a difference in the social and economic life of all inhabitants in this region.

IN PURSUANCE THEREOF, WE HEREBY:

ADOPT the Terms of Reference (TOR) and Work Programs of the ASEAN Telecommunication Senior Official Meeting (ASEAN TELSOM) Working Groups attached to this declaration as Annexes 1 to 5. The Ministers appreciate the specificity, i.e. time bound, measurable, and realistic features of the TORs and of the excellent efforts undertaken by the ASEAN TELSOM and its Working Groups;

COMMEND the ASEAN Telecommunications Regulators Council (ATRC) in responding to the rapid changes in the global ICT landscape to take a proactive and coordinated stance in addressing emerging global challenges and developments such as Internet governance and telecoms regulatory issues;

ENCOURAGE the ATRC to expedite the implementation of the ATRC Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) on conformity assessment for telecommunication equipment testing and certification procedures and to identify and recommend activities requiring policy actions for ASEAN in general and e-ASEAN in particular to ASEAN TELSOM;

RE-ITERATE our desire to actively collaborate with the private sector and ASEAN dialogue partners to advance the activities of ASEAN TELSOM and TELMIN. In this regard, invite the private sector and dialogue partners to suggest appropriate cooperative mechanisms;

INSTRUCT THE TELSOM to intensify its work to achieve the ASEAN Vision 2020 through the full exploitation of ASEAN competitive edge in ICT in the various cooperation and collaborative works, as follows:

1. Develop programs that will strengthen ICT Human Resources within ASEAN and to retain within ASEAN the skills to sustain the growth and development of the ICT industry;
2. Initiate discussions with the private sector on the fair and more sustainable International Charging Arrangements for Internet Services (ICAIS);
3. Pursue the setting up of an ASEAN Network Security Coordinating Council as a focal point for a well coordinated management of information and network security issues including the protection of information and communications infrastructures and the prevention of misuse of ICT. An expert group to support the Council will be established and will focus, among others, on the implementation of measures and mechanisms to counter cyber-terrorism;
4. Promote intra-ASEAN trade and investment through the identification and elimination of impediments, fostering pro-business policies on ICT trade and investment and establishing regulatory environments which are transparent, predictable, and non-discriminatory;

5. Undertake a concrete first step towards combating the security threat on the Internet by encouraging the establishment of national level computer emergency response teams, or CERTs in all ASEAN countries to facilitate the prevention, detection, and resolution of security-related incidents on computer networks, and to strengthen collaboration and mutual assistance in these individual efforts through an ASEAN network of CERTs;
6. Accelerate the establishment of the ASEAN Information Infrastructure (AII) by strengthening the development of National Information Infrastructures (NIIs) of Member Countries and ensuring their interoperability and interconnectivity, thus facilitating the provision of efficient and quality infrastructure enhancing ASEAN global competitiveness;
7. Implement joint activities with the private sector, academia and other organizations in the areas of HRD and R&D of ICT products and services;
8. Implement ICT Projects to narrow the digital divide between developed and less developed ASEAN countries through the development of an ASEAN Digital Divide database; the showcasing and promotion of e-community and e-learning initiatives; the networking and close collaboration between ASEAN ICT Centres of Excellence for joint R&D initiatives in the field of software and content development, exploiting as much as possible ICT technologies, including open source computing platforms;
9. Facilitate the transformation of ASEAN into a knowledge-based economy by improving the adoption and usage of ICT products and services through universally accessible ICT networks and competitive and affordable ICT products and services;
10. Establish a database of best practices and applicable standards and frameworks relating to the ICT sector to facilitate the enhancement of ASEAN competitiveness;
11. Recommend incentives and policy guidance, in collaboration with the private sector, for the development of local and ASEAN content and other applications to maximize use of existing and planned infrastructures for ICT, as well as generate opportunities for business, livelihood and employment;
12. Undertake activities aimed at promoting the positive use of the Internet through the formulation of common ASEAN guidelines and the development of websites for the exchange of information in such areas as e-learning; e-commerce; tele-working, and e-community;
13. Develop common ASEAN position to address international and regional telecommunications and IT issues of common concern in WTO, WIPO, ITU, and other organizations; and
14. Study and recommend the most appropriate structure and operational and funding mechanism for developing and implementing ASEAN ICT Work Program, including the establishment of an ASEAN Center for ICT (ACICT), the greater use of existing centers of excellence in ASEAN countries, and strengthening the ICT unit of the ASEAN Secretariat.

We, the undersigned ASEAN Ministers, by this MANILA DECLARATION 2002, hereby CONFIRM our commitment to fully exploit ASEAN's competitive edge in ICT towards the accelerated fulfillment of the ASEAN VISION 2020 and the establishment of a vibrant and open ASEAN society consistent with our respective identities and people enjoying the equitable access to opportunities and improved social and sustainable economic development in the region.

Done at Manila, Philippines, on the 28th day of August, 2002.

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Minister of Communications
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H.E. LAM PHU AN

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