

1997 PRESS STATEMENT OF THE 2ND ASEAN INFORMAL MEETING OF HEADS OF STATE/GOVERNMENT OF THE MEMBER STATES OF ASEAN

Adopted in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 15 December 1997

1. The Second ASEAN Informal Summit was held from 14-15 December 1997 in Kuala Lumpur. The Meeting was chaired by H.E. Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, Prime Minister of Malaysia and was attended by HM Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah, H.E. Ali Alatas, Special Representative of the President of the Republic of Indonesia, H.E. Khamtay Siphandone, the Prime Minister of Laos, H.E. Senior General Than Shwe, Chairman of State Peace and Development Council and Prime Minister of Myanmar, H.E. Fidel V. Ramos, President of the Republic of the Philippines, H.E. Goh Chok Tong, Prime Minister of Singapore, H. E. Chuan Leekpai, Prime Minister of Thailand and H.E. Phan Van Khai, Prime Minister of Vietnam.
2. The Heads of States/Government (HSOG) of the member states of ASEAN warmly welcomed the participation of Laos and Myanmar, for the first time at the Informal Summit, as members of ASEAN.
3. In line with the agreement reached at the First Informal Summit in Jakarta in 1996, the Second ASEAN Informal Summit was also an occasion to commemorate ASEAN's Thirtieth Anniversary.
4. The HSOG witnessed the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on the ASEAN Foundation by the ASEAN Foreign Ministers; signing of the Protocol to implement the initial package of commitments under the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services by the ASEAN Economic Ministers and the launching of the ASEAN Commemorative Pictorial Book "ASEAN: One Region, One Vision".
5. The Meeting reviewed the decisions taken at the First ASEAN Informal Summit including the ASEAN Vision 2020, the ASEAN Foundation, ASEAN Mekong Basin Development Cooperation and agreed on the following :

ASEAN VISION 2020

The HSOG of ASEAN adopted the "ASEAN Vision 2020" reflecting the way forward for ASEAN into the 21st Century.

ASEAN FOUNDATION

The HSOG agreed to establish an ASEAN Foundation to develop fellowship and exchange programmes in the framework of human resources development. A Memorandum of Understanding on the establishment of the Foundation was signed by the Foreign Ministers. Pledges of contribution to the foundation have been made as follows:

Brunei – USD 1 million

Indonesia – USD 1 million

Laos – USD 500,000 (over 5 years)

Malaysia – RM1.5 million

Myanmar – USD500,000

Philippines – USD 500,000 (3-5 years)

Singapore – USD 500,000

Thailand – USD 100,000

Vietnam – USD 100,000

ASEAN MEKONG BASIN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION (AMBDC)

The HSOG discussed the progress of the ASEAN Mekong Basin Development Cooperation (AMBDC). They recognised that funding would be an important factor to ensure its success. They agreed that the proposed railway link from Singapore to Kunming in China, traversing and connecting the contiguous ASEAN member countries, be implemented on a consortium basis involving all ASEAN member countries and that an early decision be made as to its implementation. Non-ASEAN countries, such as the US, those in Europe and Japan will be invited to participate in its construction, as they would in the other Mekong Basin Development projects already identified.

OTHER DECISIONS

REALISATION OF AN ASEAN COMPRISING ALL TEN SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES

The HSOG agreed that consultations should be intensified so as to enable Cambodia to join ASEAN as soon as possible, preferably before the next ASEAN Summit.

SOUTHEAST ASIA NUCLEAR WEAPON – FREE ZONE (SEANWFZ) TREATY

The HSOG directed ASEAN officials to finalise the revision of the Protocol to the Treaty to enable all the original signatories to ratify the Treaty and to encourage Nuclear Weapon States to sign the Protocol.

INTRA-ASEAN TRADE

The HSOG were of the view that ASEAN nations should increase trade interactions within the region as a way to overcome the unprecedented devaluation of their currencies. Intra-ASEAN trade could not only continue as before but could even be expanded so long as prices remained competitive. They directed officials to study the possibility of establishing appropriate ASEAN payments arrangements that can assist member countries to conserve foreign exchange, and optimally utilise ASEAN capacities and resources within the region. The HSOG agreed that the implementation of the ASEAN Free Trade Area and the ASEAN Investment Area be accelerated to increase Intra-ASEAN trade and to benefit from the competitiveness of the region's economies resulting from the simultaneous currency depreciation.

ASEAN COOPERATION ON THE FACILITATION OF GOODS IN TRANSIT

The HSOG also directed that officials expeditiously study the necessary measures to facilitate the transportation of goods both in transit and interstate, covering land, maritime and air links. These measures will contribute towards enhancing intra-ASEAN trade and the further integration of ASEAN economies.

GLOBALISATION

The HSOG had an extensive exchange of views on the topic of globalisation. The Heads agreed that globalisation had, not only positive but also negative effects. The Heads directed officials to study the implications of globalisation on the ASEAN economies. The Heads took note of the Report of the ASEAN Finance Ministers' Meeting held on 1 December 1997. After considering the Report, and taking into account the latest developments, the HSOG issued a Joint Statement on the Financial Situation, reflecting their grave concern on the currency crisis affecting the region at present.

OTHER TOPICS

ASIATOM

The President of the Philippines proposed the establishment of ASIATOM, parallel to EURATOM. The HSOG welcomed the proposal for regional cooperation on nuclear safety and nuclear waste arrangements which could also include China, Japan and the Republic of Korea.

WATER

The HSOG resolved to cooperate with one another in ensuring the conservation and sustainability of water resources and the systematic transfer of knowledge and technology.

TRANS-NATIONAL CRIMES

The HSOG resolved to take firm and stern measures to combat trans-national crimes such as drug trafficking, trafficking in women and children as well as other trans-national crimes.