2025 JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT ON THE 57TH ASEAN ECONOMIC MINISTERS' (AEM) MEETING

Adopted in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 23 September 2025

1. The Fifty-Seventh ASEAN Economic Ministers' (AEM) Meeting was held on 23 September 2025, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The Meeting, which was chaired by Malaysia under the theme of *"Inclusivity and Sustainability,"* was preceded by a preparatory meeting of the ASEAN Senior Economic Officials (SEOM) and joint meetings with the 39th ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) Council and the 28th ASEAN Investment Area (AIA) Council.

REGIONAL AND GLOBAL DEVELOPMENTS

2. The Meeting noted that the ASEAN economy expanded by 4.8% in 2024 and is projected to experience a growth of 4.2% in 2025 compared to a projected global growth of 2.8%. The Meeting acknowledged that the 2025 outlook was revised downward on several occasions, reflecting the adverse impact and uncertainty arising from the global tariff landscape. The Meeting highlighted that ASEAN's trade in goods demonstrated robust growth of 8.9% to USD 3.8 trillion in 2024, driven by sustained demand from key trading partners, while ASEAN's trade in services also experienced an impressive growth of 12.2% to USD 1.3 trillion in the same period. The Meeting cautioned that early indicators suggest emerging vulnerabilities in regional trade performance in the latter half of 2025, attributable to the front-loading of exports in anticipation of tariff impositions concentrated in the early part of the year.[1][2][3] The Meeting recognized that in 2024, investment in ASEAN remained relatively resilient, with FDI inflows rising by 8.5% to USD 226.0 billion, outpacing the global FDI growth rate of 4%.

3. The Meeting expressed concern over the growing trend of protectionism and the rise of unilateral trade measures, which pose significant risks to the multilateral trading system and the stability of global supply chains. In response to these developments, the Meeting reaffirmed ASEAN's long-standing commitment to an open, inclusive, rules-based, and non-discriminatory multilateral trading system, anchored in WTO principles and disciplines. The Meeting underscored the critical and urgent need to strengthen the multilateral trading system through pragmatic, forward-looking and inclusive reforms, enhance predictability and bolster economic resilience amidst increasing global trade governance complexities and uncertainties.

4. The Meeting noted the preliminary recommendations of the ASEAN Geoeconomics Task Force (AGTF) which comprise of short to long-term proposals to further strengthening regional economic resilience against external shocks.

[1] OCBC. (2025, August 19). Global Market Research: ASEAN-5 & India. https://www.ocbc.com/iwovresources/sg/ocbc/gbc/pdf/regional%20focus/asean/asean.bracing%20for%20impact%20(19aug25).pdf
[2] The Straits Times. (2025, September 18). Singapore key exports disappoint with 11.3% drop in August as US tariffs take bigger toll. https://www.straitstimes.com/business/economy/singapore-key-exports-tumble-11-3-inaugust-as-us-tariffs-take-sharper-toll
[3] Business Today. (2025, September 19). Malaysia's External Trade Cools As US Tariff Adjustment Kicks In August. https://www.businesstoday.com.my/2025/09/19/malaysias-external-trade-cools-as-us-tariff-adjustmentkicks-in-august/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

5. The Meeting also underscored the importance of leveraging ASEAN's centrality in the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement to shape the emerging economic order, maximising the utilisation of existing ASEAN Plus One Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), accelerating the upgrade of strategic FTAs, including the Upgraded ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (ATIGA), and pursuing new, mutually beneficial trade partnerships, thereby reinforcing ASEAN's centrality in the evolving regional and global economic architecture. The Meeting also looked forward to engaging with the ASEAN Foreign Ministers to address the current geoeconomic challenges through a meeting at the sidelines of the 47th ASEAN Summit in October 2025.

MALAYSIA'S PRIORITY ECONOMIC DELIVERABLES

6. The Meeting discussed and welcomed the good progress in the implementation of the nine (9) Priority Economic Deliverables (PED) under Malaysia's ASEAN Chairmanship in 2025 within the purview of AEM. The Meeting acknowledged the importance of these PEDs in advancing ASEAN's economic agenda.

7. The Meeting welcomed the full completion of the PED on the Joint Declaration on Economic Cooperation between the Association of the Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC); substantive conclusion of two (2) PEDs on the Negotiation and Signing of the 2nd Protocol to Amend the ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (ATIGA) and the Signing of the ASEAN-China Free Trade Area 3.0 Upgrade Protocol, and the Meeting further noted the good progress of the remaining six (6) PEDs, which are in various stages of implementation and are expected to be concluded by the end of this year.

AEC BLUEPRINT 2025 IMPLEMENTATION

8. The Meeting noted the updates of the AEC Blueprint 2025 and encouraged all AEC sectoral bodies to press ahead with their efforts towards the timely completion of the remaining initiatives.

TRADE IN GOODS

9. The Meeting commended the conclusion of the ATIGA Upgrade negotiations on 24 May 2025 and noted the target to sign the 2nd Protocol to Amend the ATIGA at the sidelines of the 47th ASEAN Summit and Related Summits in October 2025.

10. The Meeting acknowledged that this significant milestone comes at a defining moment, as the global trade environment faces unprecedented uncertainty and volatility. The upgraded ATIGA stands as a strategic instrument to fortify ASEAN's economic resilience, enabling the region to better absorb external shocks, safeguard supply chains, and navigate global disruptions with greater confidence as it deepens and broadens economic integration among ASEAN Member States (AMS), fostering an environment conducive to the growth and development of robust supply chains. Moving beyond traditional trade-in-goods elements, the upgraded ATIGA addresses emerging issues, including the Circular Economy, Remanufactured Goods, Trade and Environment, Trade in Humanitarian Crisis Situations, Food Security, and Supply Chain Connectivity. In the meantime, it enhances provisions to prevent the use of nontariff barriers, promote greater transparency, deepen market access, and facilitate increased participation in regional supply chains. Furthermore, a new Alternative Dispute Resolution mechanism has been included to expedite the resolution of trade-in-goods disputes among AMS, thereby streamlining trade and investment flows across the region.

11. By having the proactive support of the upgraded ATIGA, ASEAN can not only mitigate the impact of external trade frictions but also enhance its collective power and global competitiveness.

12. The Meeting noted the progress made in the exchange of electronic trade-related documents through the ASEAN Single Window, including the ATIGA e-Form D and the ASEAN Customs Declaration Document (ACDD), which are now being exchanged by all AMS The electronic Phytosanitary (e-Phyto) certificate has been exchanged by Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand, while the electronic Animal Health (e-AH) certificate is undergoing testing between Indonesia and Thailand.

13. The Meeting acknowledged the on-going discussions with Dialogue Partners (DPs) on Single Window cooperation. The Meeting noted the completion of the generic legal template as well as the progress made in developing the new ASEAN Single Window technical specification, and looked forward to the system enhancement and the establishment of connectivity with DPs by AMS.

TRADE FACILITATION

14. The Meeting noted that the ASEAN Secretariat and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) have jointly developed the 2025 Report on the Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation in ASEAN, which is expected to be published by October 2025. The Report assesses the implementation of trade facilitation measures in the ASEAN region and provide relevant recommendations. It covers not only measures provided in the World Trade Organisation Trade Facilitation Agreement (WTO TFA) but also WTO TFA-Plus measures, such as digital trade facilitation (specifically cross-border paperless trade) and sustainable measures. The sustainable measures will focus on the agricultural sector, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), women traders, trade finance, e-commerce, and emergency preparedness.

15. The Meeting also noted that the findings from the 2025 UN Global Survey indicate that ASEAN’s trade facilitation performance rate has reached an impressive 83%, exceeding the global average (70.4%) and the Asia-Pacific Regional average (70%). The Meeting encouraged AMS to consider the implementation of the recommendations of the Report.

ASEAN CUSTOMS INTEGRATION

16. The Meeting noted that six (6) AMS, namely Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand, have implemented the ASEAN Authorised Economic Operator Mutual Recognition Arrangement (AAMRA) since 28 February 2025. Lao PDR has commenced the 2nd Pathfinder Pilot with the six (6) implementing AMS since July 2025, while Cambodia, Myanmar and Viet Nam planned to join the 2nd Pathfinder Pilot at a later stage, with the aim of achieving full implementation of AAMRA across all ten (10) AMS by December 2025. This initiative aims to streamline customs clearance and reduce inspection times, ultimately boosting trade efficiency, cutting costs, and enhancing regional competitiveness. Looking ahead, ASEAN plans to conduct a feasibility study on AEO MRAs between ASEAN and DPs in 2026 to facilitate the preparatory steps for negotiating AEO MRAs between ASEAN as a bloc and DPs in 2027.

17. The Meeting also urged ASEAN Customs to cooperate in enhancing customs enforcement, and combat origin fraud. Addressing those concerns is vital for ASEAN's efforts to ensure the origin authenticity.

18. The Meeting noted that the ASEAN Customs Transit System (ACTS), operational since 2 November 2020, has significantly facilitated trade across ASEAN. To date, it has logged 653 movements among six (6) Participating Member States (PMS), namely Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia,

Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam. The system recorded 256 movements from September 2024 to September 2025. Furthermore, efforts are underway to increase movements and enable ACTS movements starting from Myanmar by the end of 2025.

STANDARDS, TECHNICAL REGULATIONS, AND CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

19. The Meeting noted the completion of the ACCSQ Sectoral Plan 2026–2030, which was developed in alignment with the broader AEC Strategic Plan 2026–2030 and will support the realisation of ASEAN's shared strategic goals in the area of standards and conformance. This milestone marks an important step in ASEAN's effort to continue pursuing the harmonisation of standards, technical regulations, and conformity assessment procedures, in line with involving business needs and rising consumer demands.

20. The Meeting acknowledged the signing of the updated "ASEAN Framework Agreement on Mutual Recognition Arrangements" and the "Protocol to Amend the ASEAN Sectoral Mutual Recognition Arrangement for Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) Inspection of Manufacturers of Medicinal Products" and looked forward to their entry-into-force for expeditious implementation.

21. The Meeting noted the adoption of the Roadmap on Digital Trade Standards in ASEAN, a key step towards accelerating digital trade and digital integration in the region.

22. The Meeting noted the finalisation of the ASEAN Foresighting Framework Policy Paper, which establishes a systematic approach for the early identification of emerging areas and technologies to guide future harmonisation of standards.

TRADE IN SERVICES

23. The Meeting welcomed the progress made in preparing the initial set of Schedules of Non-Conforming Measures under the ASEAN Trade in Services Agreement (ATISA), and tasked officials to ensure that these Schedules are finalised by April 2026 and in line with the provisions under the ATISA.

24. The Meeting noted ongoing discussions to operationalise the ratchet mechanism under the ATISA that promotes more certainty in strengthening long-term liberalisation in the services sector. Ministers encouraged officials to accelerate their work to incorporate this mechanism into the ATISA Schedules of Non-Conforming Measures with a view to do so before the end of the transition period in April 2028.

INVESTMENT

25. The Meeting looked forward to the completion of signing of the Fifth Protocol to Amend the ASEAN Comprehensive Investment Agreement (ACIA) within the year. This Protocol will operationalise the transition of the existing single-annex reservation list under the ACIA to a more modern two-annex negative list which provides even greater certainty and transparency to investors on the ASEAN investment regime. The Meeting tasked the officials to finalise the work on the two-annex Schedule of Reservations and Non-Conforming Measures in a timely manner before 180 days after the completion of the signing of the Protocol by all AMS.

26. The Meeting also welcomed the finalisation of the non-legally binding ASEAN Sustainable Investment Guidelines (ASIG), which aims to guide AMS to foster responsible and inclusive investment practices that contribute to sustainable and long-term well-being of ASEAN’s economy, environment and society. The ASIG covers seven principles and future initiatives under investment policy, promotion, administration, facilitation, corporate practice, and collaborative effort. The Meeting looked forward to the adoption and fruitful implementation of the Guidelines, including through the activities as set forth under the AEC Strategic Plan 2026-2030.

27. Following the launch at the ASEAN Investment Forum (AIF) 2024 in October 2024, in Vientiane, Lao PDR, the Meeting welcomed the progress of implementation of the first year of the ASEAN Regional Investment Promotion Action Plan (RIPAP) for Phase 1 (2025-2027), an initiative developed in collaboration with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), with the support of the UK-ASEAN Green Transition Fund (GTF). The Action Plan is a living document, which takes into account Member States’ available resources and capacity as well as their respective investment promotion strategies and priorities, which serves as a dynamic and comprehensive workplan for Member States to collaborate in promoting investment across the ASEAN region and along the value chain of economic activities.

28. The Meeting discussed the ASEAN Investment Report 2025: “Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Supply Chain Development in ASEAN,” which will be finalised for public launch at the ASEAN Business and Investment Summit (ABIS) on 25 October 2025. The report highlights the latest FDI trends across ASEAN, reveals the pivotal role of FDI in building more efficient, resilient, and interconnected supply chain networks, examines how enabling policies, strategic investments, and indicates the converging intricate networks of companies and suppliers to strengthen supply chain dynamics and cross-border production connectivity, as well as outlines policy options to attract FDI and develop robust regional supply chain ecosystems. The Meeting expressed their appreciation to the United Nations Trade and Development (UNCTAD) for its continued cooperation in preparing the Report, with support from the Government of Australia through the Australia for ASEAN Futures (Aus4ASEAN Futures) Programme.

29. The Meeting also discussed the findings in the updated Policy Paper on "Global Minimum Tax (GMT): Policy Impact on Investment Promotion and Incentives in ASEAN Member States" and acknowledged the importance of closer policy coordination in addressing the impact of GMT to sustain the investment growth within the region. The Meeting expressed its appreciation to the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) for its support in updating the Policy Paper.

COMPETITION POLICY

30. The Meeting welcomed the signing of the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Competition (AFAC), that represents the region’s commitment to fostering a fair, competitive, dynamic, and rules-based business environment toward an ASEAN single and future-ready economy. The Agreement will contribute to enhancing regulatory coherence, facilitating cross-border competition law enforcement, boosting investor confidence, and supporting deeper economic integration.

31. The Meeting looked forward to the upcoming launch of the ASEAN Merger Information Sharing Portal (MISP) at the 11th ASEAN Competition Conference in September 2025. The MISP is expected to serve as a central platform to facilitate information exchange and coordination among ASEAN competition authorities on cross-border merger cases, promote transparency, and strengthen enforcement cooperation.

32. The Meeting also noted the endorsement of the updated Handbook on ASEAN Competition Policy and Law for Business, which integrates emerging competition issues related to sustainability and digital economy, and will serve as a reference for businesses. The Meeting further noted progress on development of the ASEAN Competition Business Perception Index (ACBPI), which is scheduled for finalisation by October 2025. The ACBPI provides valuable insights on business perception on competition policy and enforcement across the region and supports AMS competition authorities in improving their enforcement and advocacy strategies.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

33. The Meeting noted the progress of finalising the ASEAN Guidelines on Product Safety Labelling scheduled to be completed in 2025. The Guidelines aims to serve as a reference for AMS in developing and refining their national safety labelling requirement. The Guidelines could also guide businesses on how to apply the ASEAN's agreed principles in their product safety labelling.

34. The Meeting welcomed the finalisation of the Handbook on Consumer Protection Laws and Regulations 2024, which will be published by the end of 2025. The Handbook provides a comprehensive overview of ASEAN Member States' legal and institutional frameworks on consumer protection and incorporates emerging issues in consumer protection related to the digital and green economy.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

35. The Meeting noted the steady progress in negotiations toward the upgraded ASEAN Framework Agreement on Intellectual Property Cooperation (AFAIPC 2.0). The Meeting acknowledged that the negotiations is expected to substantively conclude by end-2025. The Meeting underscored the importance of this initiative in ensuring ASEAN as an innovation-driven, integrated, and globally competitive region.

36. The Meeting welcomed the inclusion of Geographical Indication (GI) database in the ASEAN IP Register, accessed through the ASEAN IP Portal which now serves as a centralised one-stop portal for accessing IP data across ASEAN Member States. With 8.26 million IP registrations more built-in value-added services, the Register has been expanding user base, and playing a growing role in supporting businesses, particularly MSMEs, to protect, promote and manage their IP assets. This platform also strengthens transparency, supports IP commercialisation, and catalyses business environment in ASEAN.

37. The Meeting also noted the ongoing development of the ASEAN Handbook on IP Rights in the Digital World, which aims to facilitate the commercialisation, protection and enforcement of IP rights in the digital economy, and looked forward to the publication of the Handbook by the end of 2025.

ELECTRONIC COMMERCE AND DIGITAL ECONOMY

38. 38. The Meeting commended the significant progress towards the completion of the Bandar Seri Begawan Roadmap (BSBR): An ASEAN Digital Transformation Agenda to Accelerate ASEAN's Economic Recovery and Digital Economy Integration within 2025. As the penultimate action item in the BSBR, we look forward to the substantial conclusion of the negotiations on the ASEAN Digital Economy Framework Agreement (DEFA). The agreement will seek to be a comprehensive and

forward-looking agreement, and serve as the foundation for the region's next bound of digital integration in ASEAN's journey towards a digitally-enabled and future-ready economy.

MICRO, SMALL, AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES

39. The Meeting underscored ASEAN's pivotal role in empowering micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to navigate emerging megatrends, including climate change, technological advancement, and evolving socio-economic dynamics. The Meeting recognised both the challenges and opportunities these trends present, particularly in strengthening business resilience, accelerating digital trade, and advancing inclusive and sustainable businesses models. In this regard, the Meeting looked forward to the finalisation of the ASEAN Strategic Action Plan for MSME Development 2026-2030, which will serve as ASEAN's blueprint to achieving these objectives.

40. The Meeting instructed officials to execute the Implementation Roadmap to Establish Regionally Comparable and Recognised Unique Business Identification Numbers (UBIN) in ASEAN in a timely manner. The Meeting looked forward to the launching and implementation of the ASEAN Centre of Excellence for MSMEs in Green Transition in 2025. The Meeting also welcomed the launch of Capacity Building and Talent Development Framework for Inclusive Business in ASEAN at the Eighth ASEAN Inclusive Business Forum on 11 September 2025 to guide AMS in supporting their businesses to adopt Inclusive Business models that promote sustainable economic growth.

PUBLIC-PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

41. The Meeting recognised the importance of fostering transparent, forward-looking, and constructive dialogues with the private sector to advance ASEAN's regional economic priorities. The Meeting endorsed the revised Rules of Procedure for Private Sector Engagement (ROP) under the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) to establish a more robust, structured, and efficient framework for public-private collaboration. The Meeting also encouraged all relevant AEC sectoral bodies to actively engage with the private sector, ensuring that industry insights are fully integrated into ASEAN's policy development processes.

42. The Ministers appreciated the ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ASEANBAC) for the progress made in implementation of its legacy projects, which are pertinent for the realisation of the ASEAN Economic Community. The Ministers welcomed the progress in the implementation of this year's legacy project, notably the ASEAN Business Entity and the ASEAN Common Carbon Framework, which aim to promote greater business integration and support sustainable, low-carbon growth in the region. The Meeting reaffirmed the important role of ASEAN-BAC in coordinating with regional business entities to ensure meaningful private sector engagement in regional strategy development and the identification of the business impediments.

ASEAN COMMUNITY STATISTICAL SYSTEM (ACSS)

43. 43. The Meeting thanked the ACSS for its continued efforts in the enhancement and harmonisation of key statistical areas relevant to the AEC integration monitoring. The Meeting appreciated the development of the ASEAN SDG Indicators Progress Report 2025. The Meeting also welcomed the progress of ACSS initiatives in improving ASEAN statistical capacity, including the development of Proof of Concept (POC) for the ASEAN Statistics Virtual Academy, the conduct of awareness program focusing on the importance of statistics for national and regional development, and the development of Concept Note on Data Governance Framework for AMS.

WORKING TOWARDS A GLOBAL ASEAN

44. The Meeting reaffirmed that Global ASEAN remains a critical component of ASEAN's economic strategy to deepen regional economic integration and strengthen ASEAN's relevance and competitiveness in an increasingly interconnected and complex global economy. By expanding and enhancing economic cooperation with both existing and new partners, ASEAN continues to position itself as a dynamic and outward-looking region that is well-placed to contribute to and benefit from global growth.

45. The Meeting welcomed significant progress made in strengthening economic cooperation with existing DPs, particularly through a series of Free Trade Agreement (FTA) Upgrade initiatives. In this regard, the Meeting welcomed the entry-into-force of the Second Protocol to Amend the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA) on 21 April 2025, which modernises and improves the Agreement to be more trade-facilitative and business-friendly. The Meeting also welcomed the full conclusion of negotiations for the ASEAN-China Free Trade Area (ACFTA) 3.0 Upgrade Protocol and looked forward to its signing at the 28th ASEAN-China Summit in 2025. The Meeting noted the ongoing negotiations for the review of the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA) and reiterated the importance of working towards a timely and commercially meaningful outcome. The Meeting noted the good progress made in the negotiations for the ASEAN-Canada FTA (ACAFTA) and reaffirmed the commitment to work towards its substantial conclusion in an expeditious and pragmatic manner. With the Republic of Korea, the Meeting noted the progress in finalising the Joint Scoping Paper for a possible upgrade of the ASEAN-Korea Free Trade Area (AKFTA) and looked forward to the launch of the AKFTA Upgrade negotiations at the 26th ASEAN-Republic of Korea Summit. These efforts underscore ASEAN's commitment to ensuring that its FTAs remain relevant, comprehensive, future-proof, and aligned with modern business needs.

46. The Meeting reaffirmed its full commitment to play a central role in strengthening the effective and full implementation of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement amid the continued uncertainty in the global trade environment. The Meeting welcomed the full operationalisation of the RCEP Support Unit (RSU) and its efforts to date in providing support to the RCEP Joint Committee (RJC) and its Subsidiary Bodies (SBs). Noting the interests from Hong Kong, China, Sri Lanka, Chile, and Bangladesh to accede to the RCEP Agreement, the Meeting encouraged officials to expedite discussions to commence the accession process as soon as possible.

47. The Meeting reaffirmed its commitment to strengthen, expand, and diversify economic linkages, as well as to explore new avenues of cooperation with external partners. This is aligned with the Global ASEAN Strategy. The Meeting welcomed the Joint Declaration on Economic Cooperation between ASEAN and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) adopted at the 2nd ASEAN-GCC Summit on 27 May 2025, which calls for sectoral collaboration and for ASEAN to work with the GCC on a Joint Feasibility Study on the ASEAN-GCC FTA. In addition, the Meeting agreed to intensify efforts to concretise sectoral cooperation with the European Union (EU), and work towards an ASEAN-CPTPP Dialogue. These developments mark a new chapter in ASEAN's engagement with external partners and open new opportunities for trade, investment, and sustainable development between the regions. The Meeting recognised the importance of such efforts in reinforcing ASEAN's resilience and adaptability in a rapidly evolving global landscape.

NARROWING THE DEVELOPMENT GAP

48. The Meeting underscored the importance of narrowing development gaps in the ASEAN region, with particular emphasis on the progress of the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) Work Plan IV (2021–2025). The Meeting noted that 114 projects have been implemented, addressing 17 out of 24 actions (70.8%) across the five strategic areas, as well as all four enabling actions. The Meeting further noted the ongoing development of the IAI Work Plan V (2026–2030), including the completion of national consultations with Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Viet Nam, and Timor-Leste in July 2025. The Meeting commended the successful convening of the Roundtable Discussion to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of the IAI on 11 August 2025 at the ASEAN Secretariat, which provided a platform between ASEAN Member States and ASEAN Partners to exchange views on how the new IAI Work Plan can effectively address remaining disparities, align with the ASEAN Community Vision 2045, and contribute substantively to the implementation of its Strategic Plans Achieving Sustainable Growth in ASEAN

49. The Meeting noted the progress made in the implementation of sustainability initiatives under the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) pillar. The implementation of ASEAN Strategy for Carbon Neutrality is currently underway with most of the initiatives are currently active. The Meeting also pleased to learn that the ASEAN Task Force for Carbon Neutrality has convened its inaugural meeting on 19 May 2025 and has deliberated on developing workplan, milestones and indicators to better monitor the progress of decarbonisation efforts in the region. The Meeting noted that the ATFCN invited the Chair of the ASEAN Working Group on Climate Change (AWGCC) and the ASEAN Committee on Science, Technology & Innovation (COSTI) to the 2nd ATFCN Meeting on 22 September 2025 to be briefed on their respective initiatives in effort to ensure alignment and avoid potential duplication of ASEAN initiatives on carbon neutrality across all ASEAN community pillars. Such alignment and cross-pillar cooperation will also help to inform the development of an effective workplan for the ATF-CN.

50. ASEAN's transition towards circular economy model also demonstrated encouraging progress, with 20% completion rate and 46% of the outlined initiatives are currently on-going. The Meeting further noted that the Focal Group on Circular Economy has established an Independent Advisory Panel consisting of private sector players and regional think tanks, to provide industry insights and feedback to support effective implementation of the Framework for Circular Economy for the AEC.

51. The Meeting also noted the convening of a Ministerial Interface Meeting between the ASEAN Energy Ministers, ASEAN Economic Ministers, ASEAN Finance Ministers, and ASEAN Central Bank Governors on 14 August 2025 to plan for coordination and collaboration among ASEAN policymakers, energy regulators and power utilities to support the implementation of the ASEAN Power Grid (APG) Financing Facility. The Meeting reaffirmed the APG's role in advancing ASEAN 2045, recognized and supported the existing interconnection projects and supported the acceleration of APG implementation with the support of the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank.

COLLABORATING WITH EXTERNAL PARTNERS

52. The Meeting expressed appreciation for the continued support of the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) in providing evidence-based policy inputs and forward-looking analysis in support of ASEAN's regional economic integration agenda, including Priority Economic Deliverables 2025. The Meeting noted ERIA's valuable contributions in assessing geoeconomic shifts, supply chain realignments, as well as digital and sustainability transitions. The Meeting

encouraged ERIA to continue its close collaboration with ASEAN sectoral bodies, particularly in support of the implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2045 and its Strategic Plans.

53. The Meeting expressed appreciation on the progress of the ASEAN-WIPO Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Cooperation in Specific areas between ASEAN and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). The Meeting welcomed WIPO's contribution in assisting the ASEAN Working Group on IP Cooperation on developing its five-year IP Action Plan and supporting some 60,000 recipients of capacity-building, training and mentorship under the activities of the MoU thus far. The Meeting further welcomed the progress made on the ASEAN IP Register, under the ASEAN IP Portal, which has recently expanded its coverage to include geographical indications in the database.

54. The Meeting further expressed ASEAN's appreciation to its Dialogue, Development, and Sectoral Development Partners for the technical assistance and capacity-building provided to ASEAN which contributed to AEC efforts in implementing the AEC Blueprint 2025. The Meeting looked forward to their continued support and partnership as ASEAN transitions to the implementation of the AEC Strategic Plan 2026–2030, with a view to deepening economic integration, enhancing resilience, and ensuring that ASEAN remains competitive and future-ready in an evolving global landscape.

AEC STRATEGIC PLAN 2026-2030

55. The Meeting welcomed the adoption of the List of Quick Wins for the AEC Strategic Plan 2026 – 2030, recognising these as high-impact, forward-looking initiatives designed to enhance economic integration and regional competitiveness. The Meeting also noted the ongoing finalisation of the Consolidated List of Activities and Key Outcome Indicators, which aim to promote inclusivity, transparency, and practicality in implementing the AEC Strategic Plan 2026 – 2030. The Meeting looked forward to the rollout of the enhanced Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework of the AEC Strategic Plan, which will facilitate systemic tracking of implementation progress and outcomes, thereby supporting evidence-based policy adjustments and reinforcing ASEAN's institutional agility and resilience. The Meeting commended the successful convening of the Regional Socialisation of the AEC Strategic Plan 2026– 2030 on 12 June 2025, and looked forward to continued outreach efforts to further promote transparency and accountability among stakeholders.