

# *Daulat Tuanku*

**MERAFAK SEMBAH  
SETINGGI-TINGGI  
TAHNIAH**

**Kebawah Duli Yang Maha Mulia  
Sultan Muhammad V**

D.K., D.M.N., D.K. (Selangor), D.K. (Negeri Sembilan),  
D.K. (Johor), D.K. (Perak),  
D.K. (Perlis), D.K. (Kedah), D.K. (Terengganu),  
S.P.M.K., S.J.M.K., S.P.K.K., S.P.S.K.

**Al-Sultan Kelantan**

Di atas Perlantikan

Sebagai

**Seri Paduka Baginda  
Yang di-Pertuan Agong XV**

Pada

**13 Disember 2016M  
Bersamaan 13 Rabiulawal 1438H**

***"Semoga Allah Subhanahu Wataala  
Memberkati Pemerintahan  
Seri Paduka Baginda Tuanku"***



# TRADE PERFORMANCE FOR PERIOD OF JANUARY-OCTOBER 2016 AND THE MONTH OF OCTOBER 2016

## October Exports Highest in 2016

Malaysia's exports in October 2016 amounted to RM69.2 billion, the highest recorded thus far in 2016. Compared to September 2016, exports increased by 1.7%. Total trade increased by 0.1% to RM128.63 billion while imports were lower by 1.7% to RM59.44 billion. Trade surplus widened to RM9.76 billion from RM7.56 billion in September 2016. The October surplus was the 228th consecutive month of trade surplus since November 1997.

Due to the high-base effect of October 2015, exports for the month declined by 8.6% year-on-year while imports decreased by 6.6%. Overall, trade was lower by 7.7% to RM128.63 billion.

Malaysia's total trade was sustained almost at the same level for the first ten months of 2016, amounting to RM1.206 trillion compared with RM1.210 trillion in the corresponding period in 2015. During the period, exports were lower by 0.6% to RM637.55 billion from RM641.52 billion and imports decreased marginally by 0.1% to Embargo until 1200 hours, Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup> December 2016 RM568.03 billion from RM568.48 billion. Trade surplus of RM69.52 billion was recorded, compared to RM73.04 billion in the same period of 2015.

## Export Performance of Major Sectors

Overall, exports of both manufactured and agricultural goods increased in the first ten months of 2016. Exports of mining goods, however, declined.

## Export Composition

For the first ten months of 2016, exports of manufactured goods increased by 2% to RM526.22 billion with higher

exports recorded for electrical and electronic (E&E) products, optical and scientific equipment, chemicals and chemical products, machinery, equipment and parts, processed food as well as transport equipment. Manufacturing exports contributed 82.5% to total exports as compared to 80.4% during the same period last year.

Exports of agricultural goods rose by 1.6% to RM56.93 billion mainly on higher exports of palm oil and palm-based agriculture products. Exports of palm oil increased by 0.1% to RM33.7 billion, attributed to higher Average Unit Value (AUV).

Exports of mining goods declined by 24% to RM50.08 billion attributed to lower exports of liquefied natural gas (LNG) and crude petroleum, due to lower AUV.

## Major exports in January-October 2016 were:

- E&E products, valued at RM234.46 billion and constituting 36.8% of total exports, increased by 1.9% from the corresponding period in 2015;
- Chemicals and chemical products, RM48.17 billion, 7.6% of total exports, increased by 4.9%;
- Palm oil and palm-based agriculture products, RM38.95 billion, 6.1% of total exports, increased by 2.3%;
- Machinery, equipment and parts, RM31.6 billion, 5% of total exports, increased by 5.8%; and Embargo until 1200 hours,
- Petroleum products, RM43.6 billion, 6.8% of total exports, decreased by 3.1%.

In October 2016, exports of manufactured goods decreased by 6.7% or RM4.08 billion to RM56.91 billion with lower exports of manufactures of metal by 43.8% or RM1.92 billion, machinery, equipment and parts (↓19.8% or RM717.7 million), petroleum products (↓7.4% or



RM402.2 million), rubber products (↓13.3% or RM264.3 million), chemicals and chemical products (↓4.7% or RM248.2 million) and wood products (↓13.3% or RM205.7 million).

Exports of agricultural goods increased by 2.9% to RM6.57 billion from October 2015, driven mainly by higher exports of palm oil and palm-based agriculture products, by RM164.5 million. Exports of palm oil in October 2016 grew by 0.9% to RM3.94 billion, compared with RM3.91 billion in October last year.

Exports of mining goods dropped by 34.8% to RM5.2 billion, due to the decline in exports of LNG and crude petroleum. Exports of LNG and crude petroleum contracted by 40.2% and 27.9%, respectively due to lower AUV and volume.

On a month-on-month basis, all sectors registered increases. Manufactured goods increased by 1.5% or RM860.5 million, agricultural goods (↑2.4% or RM152 million) and mining goods (↑2.2% or RM111.1 million).

## Performance of Major Markets

Exports to ASEAN Remained Strong at 4.2% growth

In January-October 2016, exports to ASEAN grew by 4.2% or RM7.62 billion to reach a value of RM188.27 billion. This was supported by growth in exports of E&E products, petroleum products, manufactures of metal, processed food, machinery, equipment and parts as well as chemicals and chemical products. Meanwhile,

imports from ASEAN fell by 6.5% to RM140.3 billion while trade with ASEAN decreased by 0.6% to RM328.58 billion compared with the same period of 2015.

Among major ASEAN markets, increase in exports was recorded for Viet Nam, Singapore, Myanmar, the Philippines, Cambodia and Laos. Exports to Viet Nam expanded by RM5.21 billion contributed mainly by petroleum products, Singapore (↑RM3.4 billion, E&E products) and Myanmar (↑RM814 million, petroleum products).

Breakdown of exports to ASEAN countries in the first ten months of 2016 is as follows:

- Singapore RM 93.04 billion, increased by 3.8%
- Thailand RM 36.02 billion, ↓1.7%
- Indonesia RM 22.54 billion, ↓6.2%
- Viet Nam RM 19.34 billion, ↑36.9%
- Philippines RM 11.39 billion, ↑5.0%
- Myanmar RM 3.11 billion, ↑35.4%
- Brunei RM 1.75 billion, ↓23.2%
- Cambodia RM 1.02 billion, ↑41.0%
- Lao PDR RM 64.1 million, ↑52.0%

In October 2016, exports to ASEAN declined by 2.6% or RM530 million to RM19.98 billion. Exports to ASEAN accounted for 28.9% of Malaysia's total exports, expanding from 27.1% registered in October last year. The decrease in exports was led by lower exports of crude petroleum, chemicals and chemical products, machinery, equipment and parts as well as optical and scientific equipment. Imports from ASEAN fell by 11% to RM15.37 billion while trade decreased by 6.4% to RM35.35 billion. Compared to September 2016, exports to ASEAN declined marginally by 0.5%.

### Exports to the USA Up 9.7%

In the first ten months of 2016, trade with the United States of America (USA) rose 5.4% to RM112.08 billion. Exports expanded by 9.7% or RM5.84 billion to RM66.39 billion while imports were lower by 0.3% to RM45.68 billion. The exports increase was contributed mainly by manufactured goods which expanded by 10.6% to RM63.43 billion with higher exports recorded for almost all major products particularly E&E products, optical and scientific equipment, transport equipment, chemicals and chemical products, manufactures of metal as well as wood products.

In October 2016, exports to the

USA shrank by 3.5% to RM7.04 billion due to lower exports of E&E products, palm oil and palm-based agriculture products as well as rubber products. Imports were down by 21.4% to RM4.34 billion and trade declined by 11.2% to RM11.39 billion. On a month-on-month basis, exports to the USA increased by 1.6%.

Exports to China Rebounded 3.4% in October 2016 From January to October 2016, trade with China rose 1.2% to RM191.65 billion, with exports and imports amounting to RM77.4 billion and RM114.25 billion, respectively. Exports to China decreased by 7.2%, on account of lower exports of petroleum products, E&E products, palm oil and palm-based agriculture products as well as LNG. However, expansion in exports were recorded for chemicals and chemical products, optical and scientific equipment, crude petroleum, transport equipment and processed food. Imports from China were higher by 7.9%.

In October 2016, trade with China amounted to RM21.05 billion, a growth of 0.3% or RM54.4 million. This accounted for 16.4% of Malaysia's total trade. After seven consecutive months of decline, exports to China in October rebounded 3.4% due to higher exports of E&E products by RM966.3 million. Imports amounted to RM11.54 billion, a decline of 2.2%. Compared with September 2016, exports to China expanded by 6%.

Exports to the EU down by 0.4% In January-October 2016, exports to the European Union (EU) decreased by 0.4% to RM65.09 billion. Imports were lower by 2.2% to RM56.78 billion. As a result, trade with the EU declined by 1.3% to RM121.87 billion, compared to the corresponding period of 2015. The decline in exports was due mainly to lower exports of E&E products which decreased by 3.8% or RM1.26 billion. However, the decline was offset by increases in exports of machinery, equipment and parts, optical and scientific equipment, chemicals and chemical products, transport equipment as well as apparels.

In October 2016, trade with the EU amounted to RM13.24 billion, a decrease of 11.2%. Exports to the EU contracted by 12% to RM7.22 billion and imports decreased by 10.3% to RM6.03 billion. Lower exports to the EU was mainly attributed to E&E products, petroleum products as well as chemicals and chemical products. On a month-on-month basis, exports to the EU improved

by 4.9%.

### Trade with Japan Dropped by 6.8%

For the first ten months of 2016, trade with Japan was valued at RM97.84 billion as compared with RM104.95 billion in the same period of 2015. Exports to Japan contracted by 14.7% to RM51.24 billion due to lower exports of LNG, by 34.6% or RM8.34 billion. LNG accounted for 30.8% of Malaysia's total exports to Japan, declined from 40.2% in the same period last year. Higher exports, however, were registered for exports of manufactures of metal, processed food, textiles, machinery, equipment and parts as well as iron and steel products. Imports expanded by 3.8% to RM46.6 billion.

Trade with Japan in October 2016 amounted to RM9.74 billion, a decrease of 16.7% from October 2015. Exports to Japan decreased by 29.1% to RM4.89 billion underpinned by lower exports of LNG, by RM1.43 billion, and E&E products, RM240.4 million. Imports from Japan rose 1.1% to RM4.85 billion.

### Trade with FTA Partners

During January to October of 2016, trade with Free Trade Agreement (FTA) partners was valued at RM757.37 billion or 62.8% of Malaysia's trade. Exports amounted to RM395.22 billion while imports totalled RM362.15 billion. Increase in exports were recorded to Viet Nam, Singapore, Turkey, Myanmar, the Philippines, Pakistan, Cambodia and Laos.

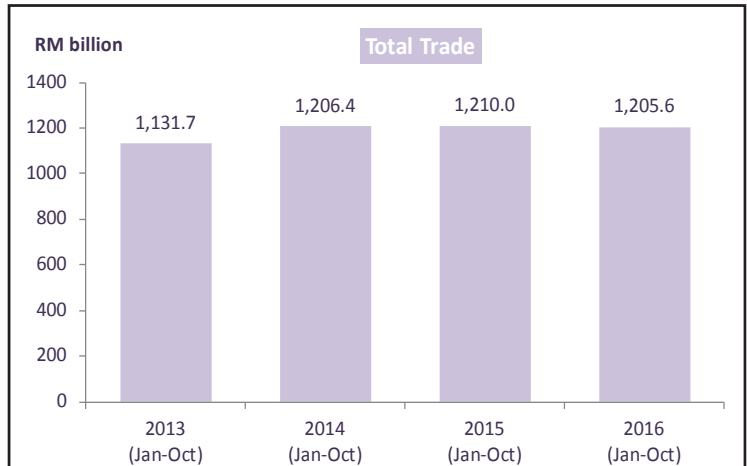
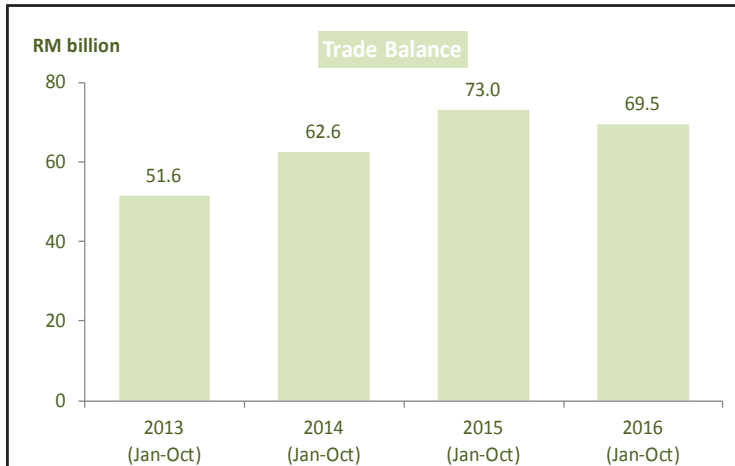
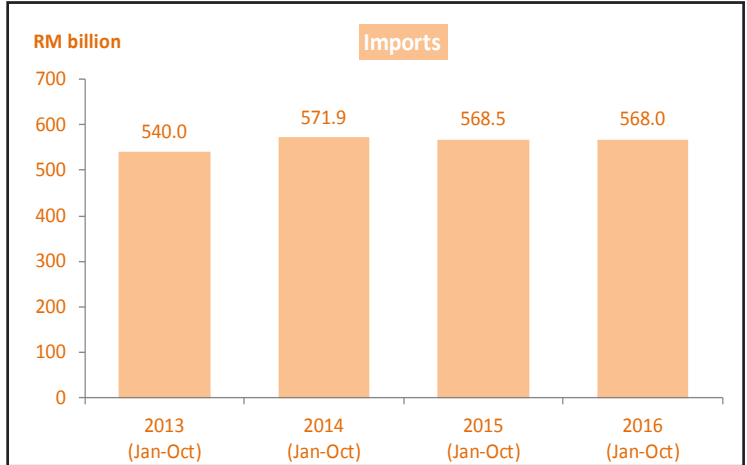
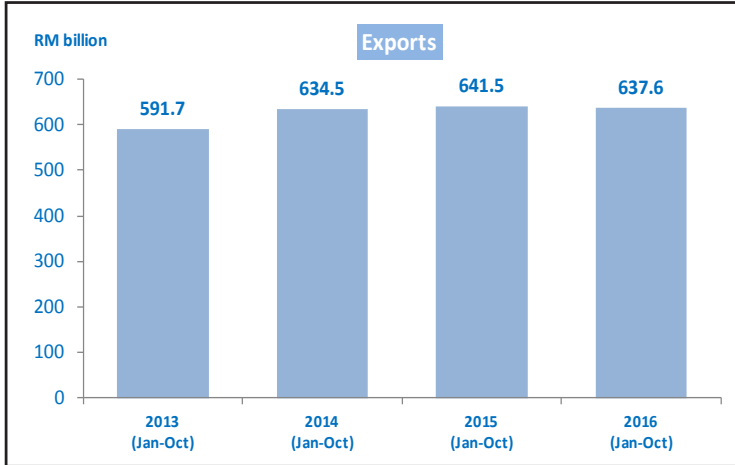
During the period, exports to Turkey surged by 93.5% or RM2.65 billion to RM5.49 billion and exports to Pakistan rose by 12.1% to RM3.91 billion. The increase was contributed mainly by higher exports of palm oil and palm-based agriculture products.

In October 2016, trade with FTA partners was RM81.84 billion, accounting for 63.6% of Malaysia's trade. Exports to FTA partners amounted to RM43.16 billion while imports from FTA partners were valued at RM38.69 billion.

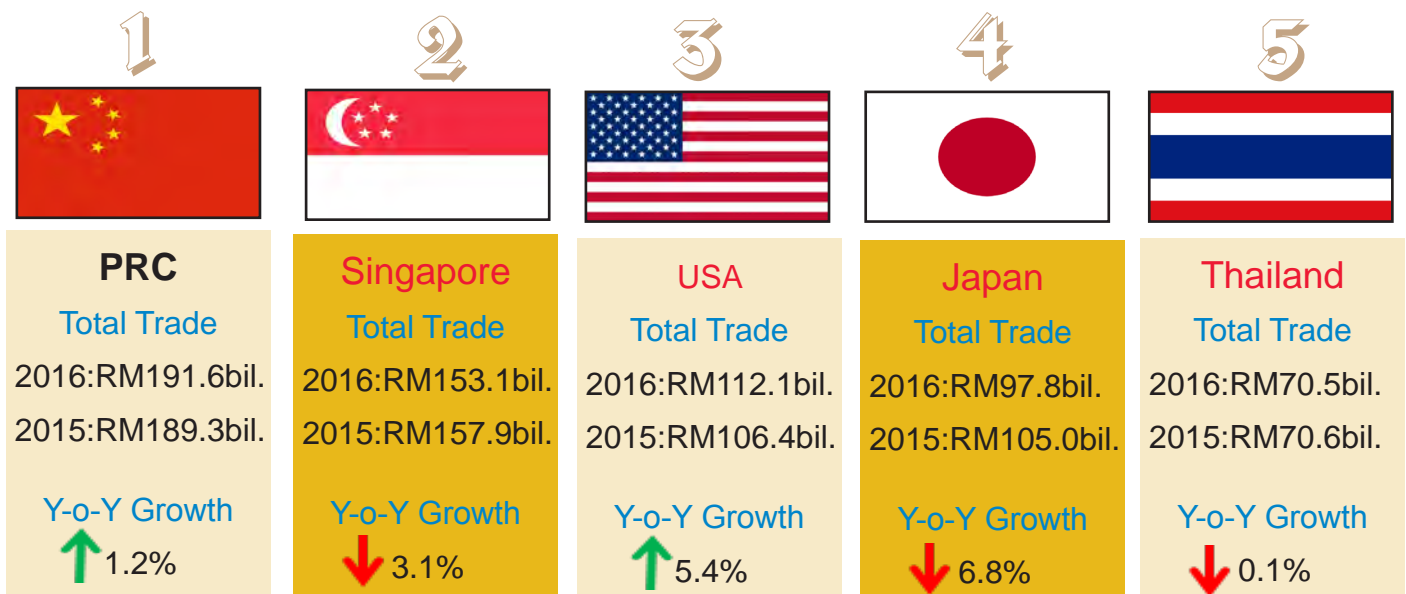
Ministry of International Trade and Industry  
7<sup>th</sup> December 2016

# Malaysia

## Trade Performance, Jan - Oct 2016



## Malaysia's Top Five Trading Partners, Jan-Oct 2016



Source : Department of Statistics, Malaysia

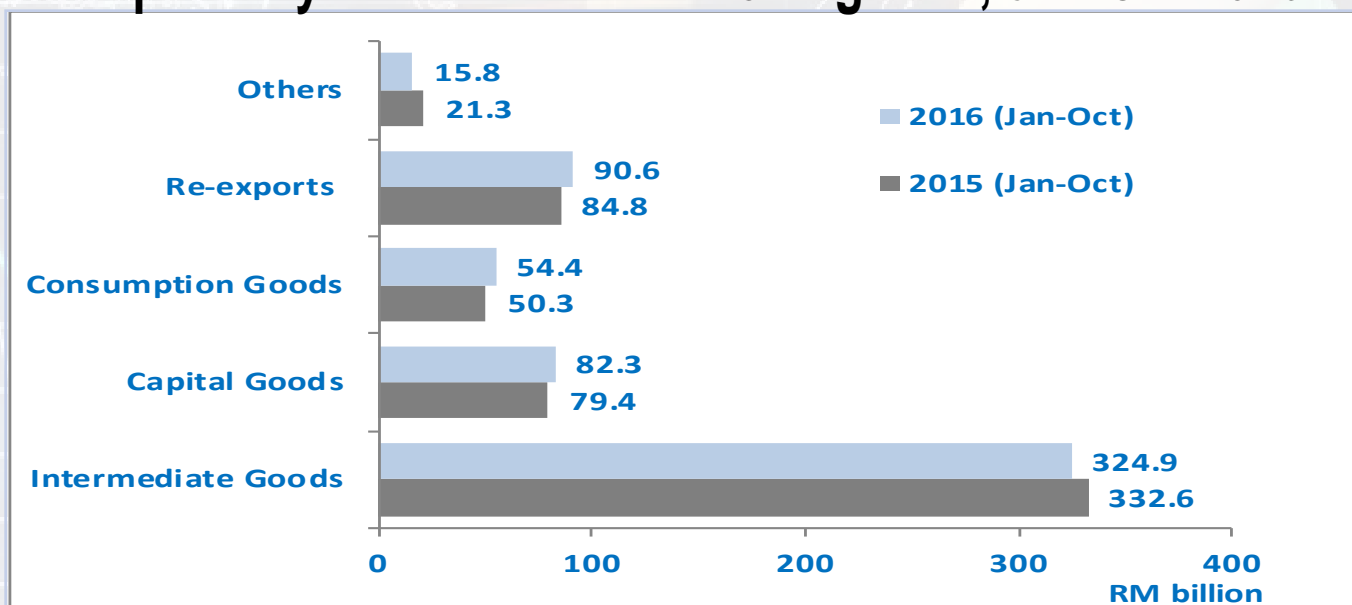
## Export by Sectors, Jan - Oct 2016

Sector	2015(Jan-Oct) (RM billion)	2016(Jan-Oct) (RM billion)	Y-o-Y Growth %
Agriculture Goods	56.1	56.9	1.6
Manufactured Goods	515.8	526.2	2.0
Mining Goods	65.9	50.1	-24.0
Others	3.8	4.3	14.0

## Import by Sectors, Jan - Oct 2016

Sector	2015 (Jan-Oct) (RM billion)	2016 (Jan-Oct) (RM billion)	Y-o-Y Growth %
Agriculture Goods	33.1	32.5	-2.1
Manufactured Goods	497.6	502.3	0.9
Mining Goods	25.4	22.8	-10.3
Others	12.3	10.4	-15.0

## Imports by Broad Economic Categories, Jan-Oct 2016



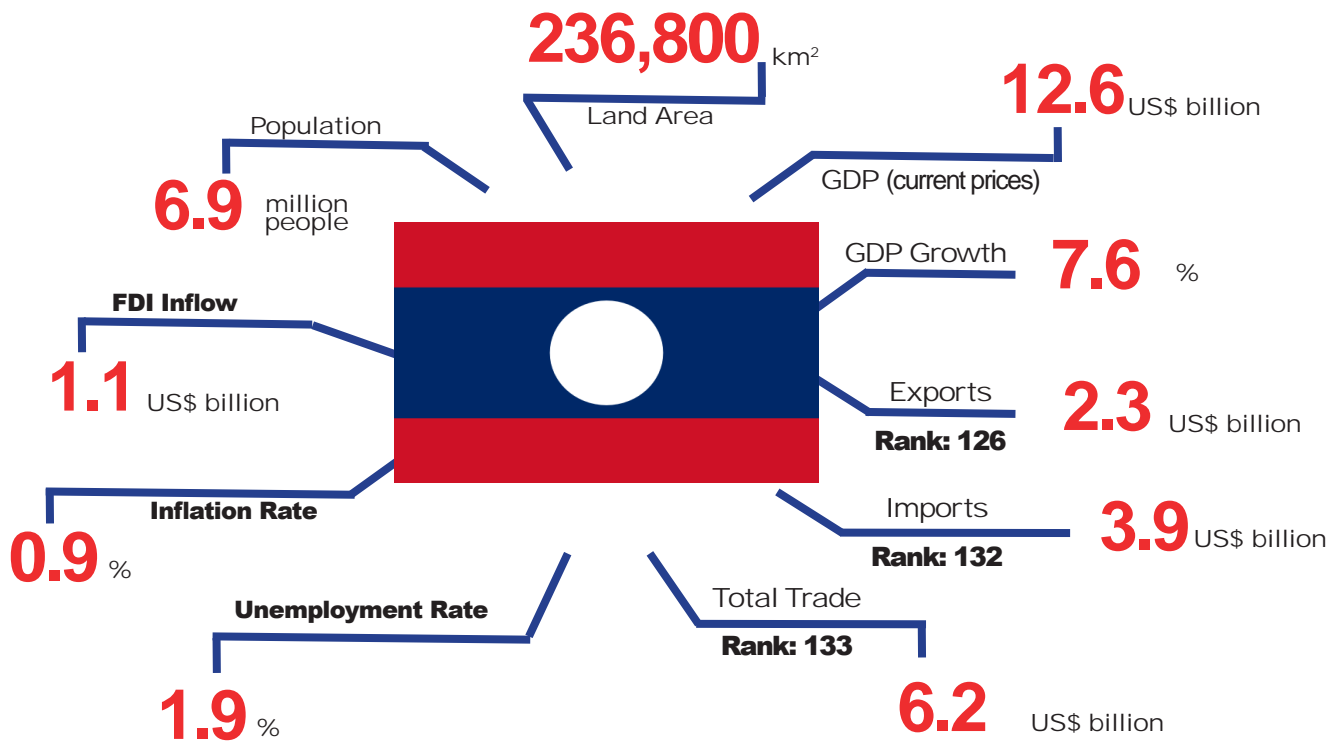
Note : % (Year-on-Year Growth)  
Others include Dual Goods, Goods nes and Transaction below RM5,000

Source : Department of Statistics, Malaysia



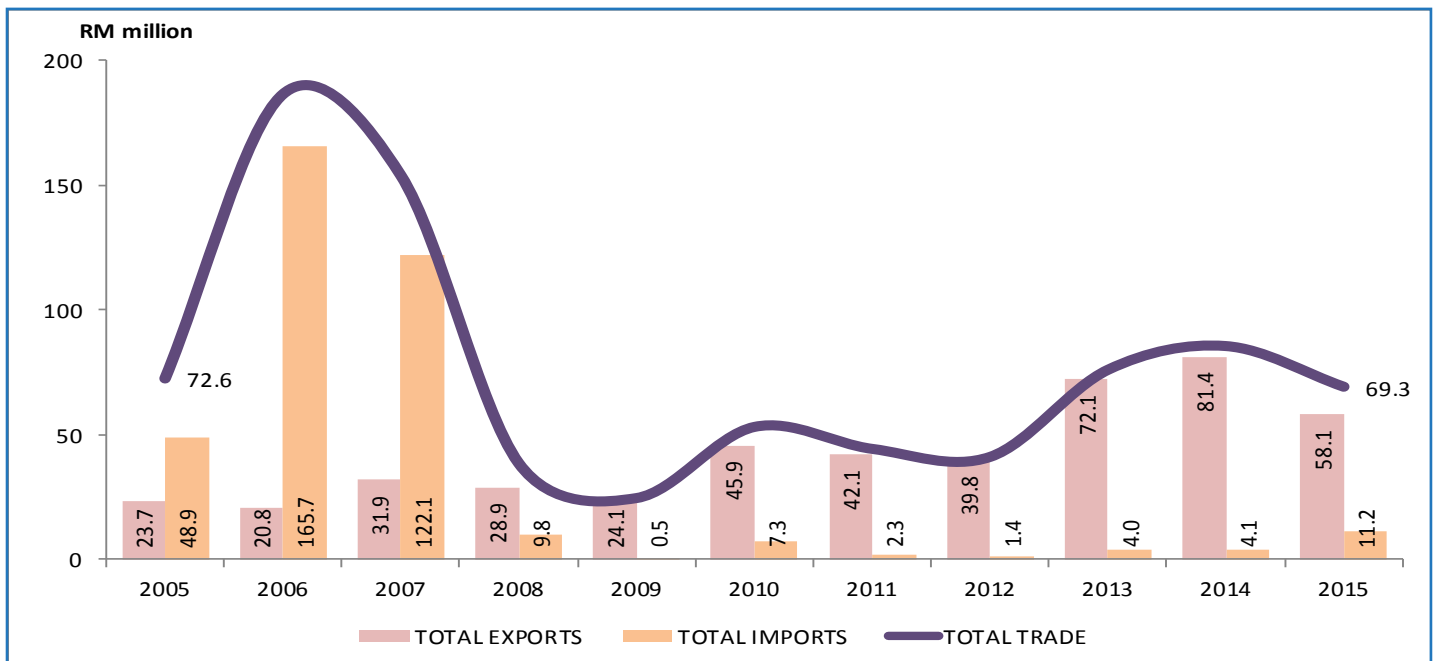
# 'ASEAN and You...'

## Lao PDR Economic Indicators 2015



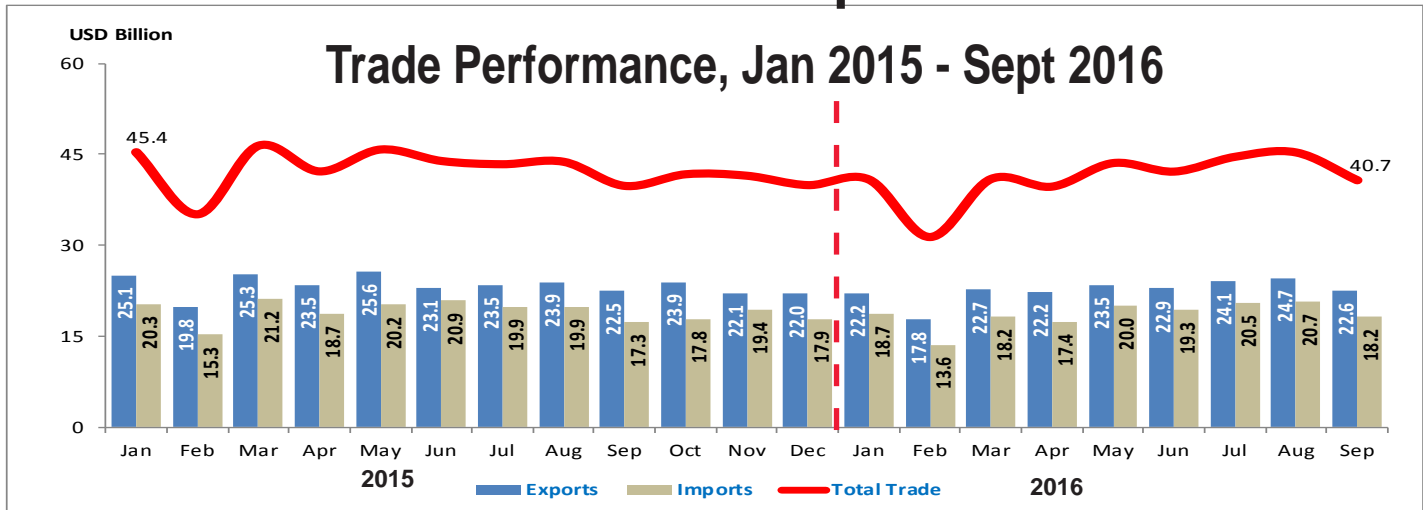
Sources: ASEAN Statistics, IMF, and WTO

## Malaysia's Trade with Lao PDR, 2005 - 2015



Source : Department of Statistics, Malaysia

## Chinese Taipei

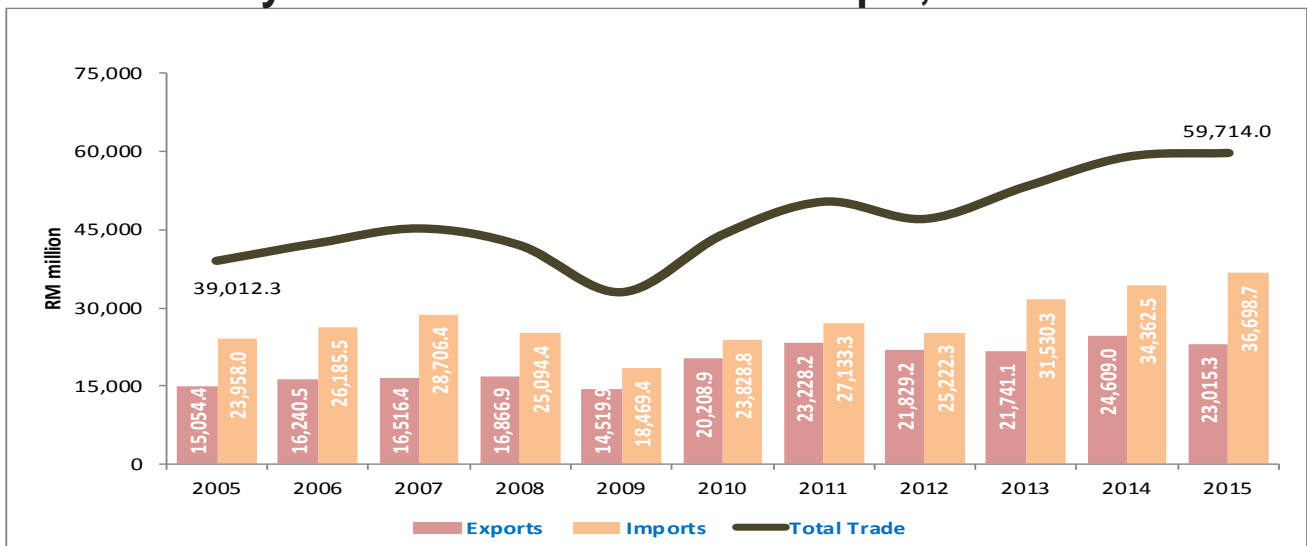


### Top Ten Trading Partners, Sept 2016

Ranking	Country	Total Trade ( USD Million)
1	PRC	9,562.89
2	Japan	5,015.40
3	USA	4,795.64
4	Hong Kong	3,411.88
5	ROK	2,259.91
6	Singapore	1,983.72
7	Malaysia	1,189.52
8	Germany	1,189.08
9	Viet Nam	956.27
10	Philippines	842.10

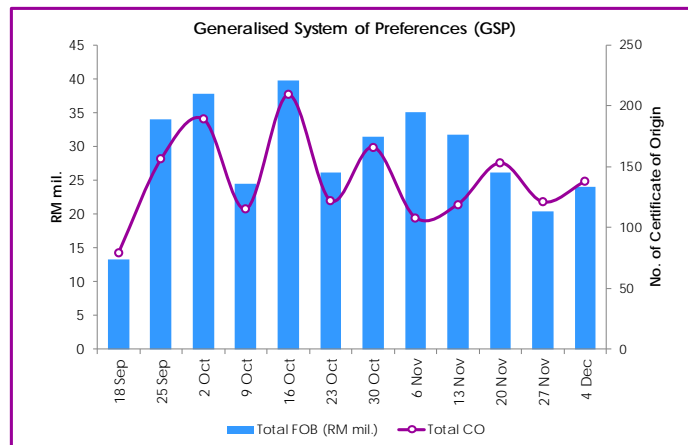
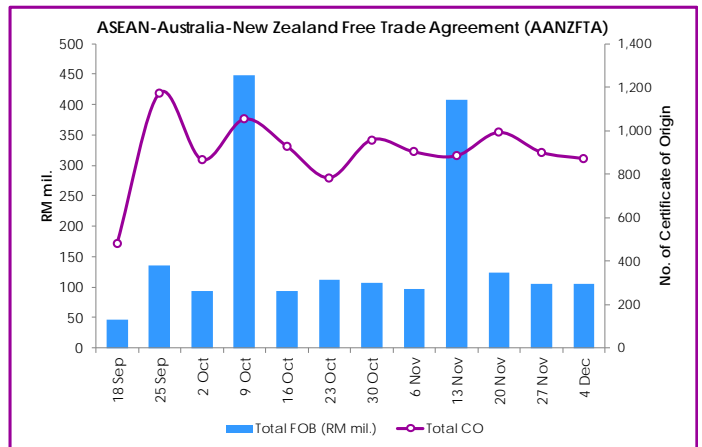
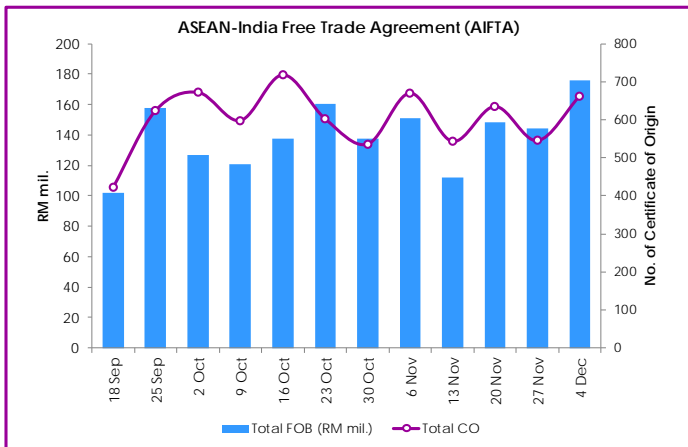
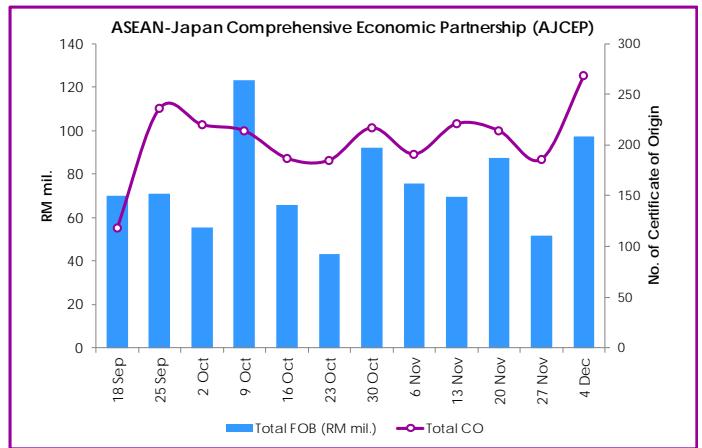
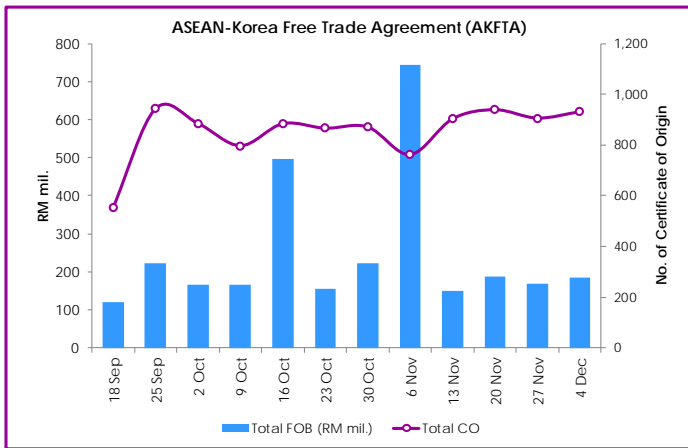
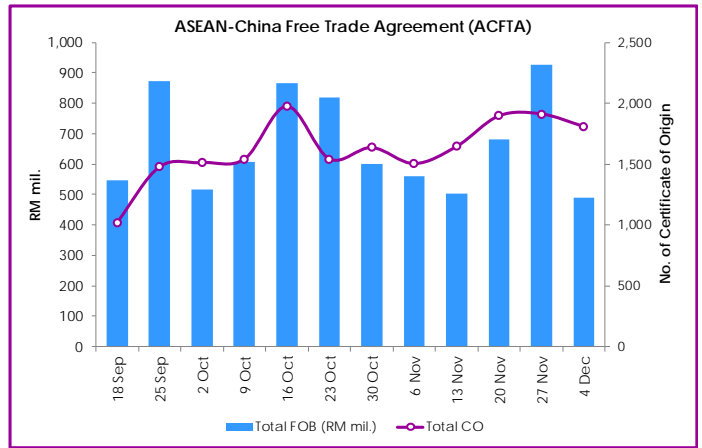
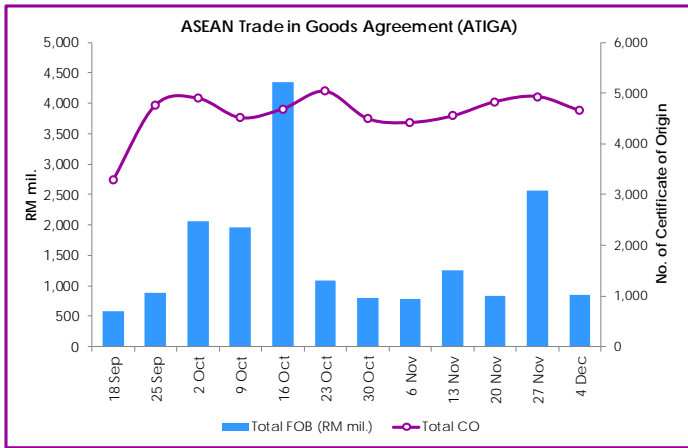
Source: The Bureau of Foreign Trade, Chinese Taipei

### Malaysia's Trade with Chinese Taipei, 2005 -2015



Source : Department of Statistics, Malaysia

# Number and Value of Preferential Certificates of Origin (PCOs)

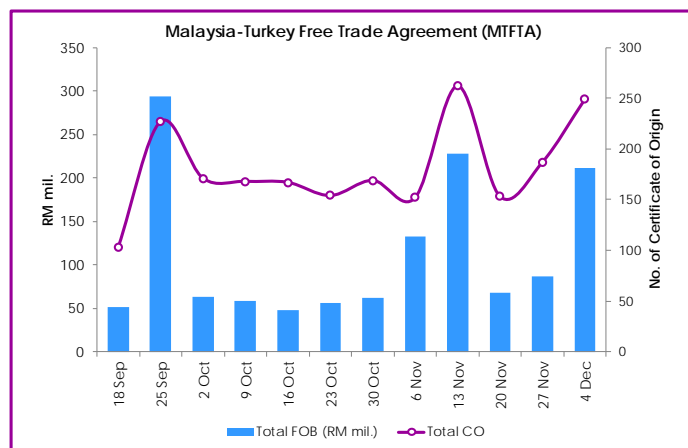
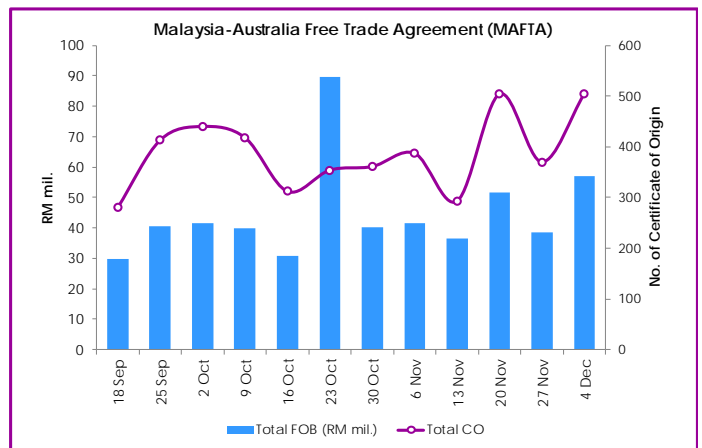
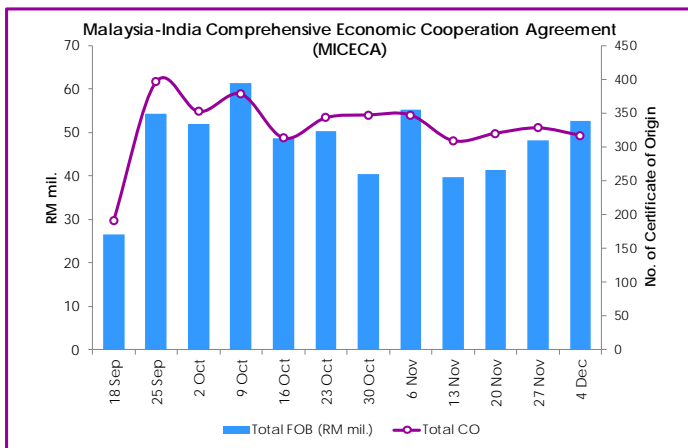
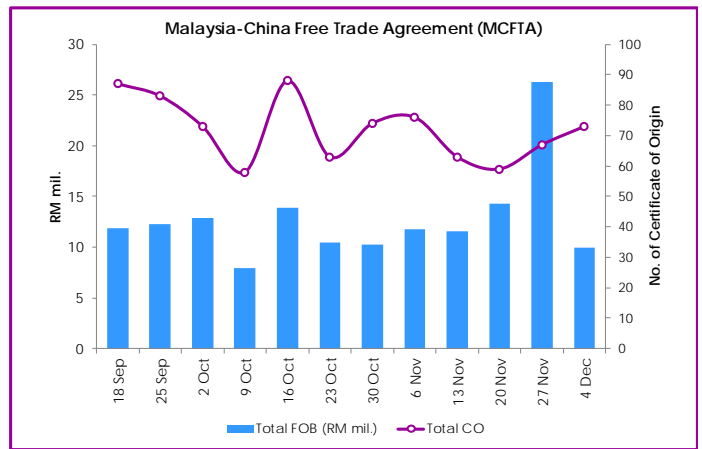
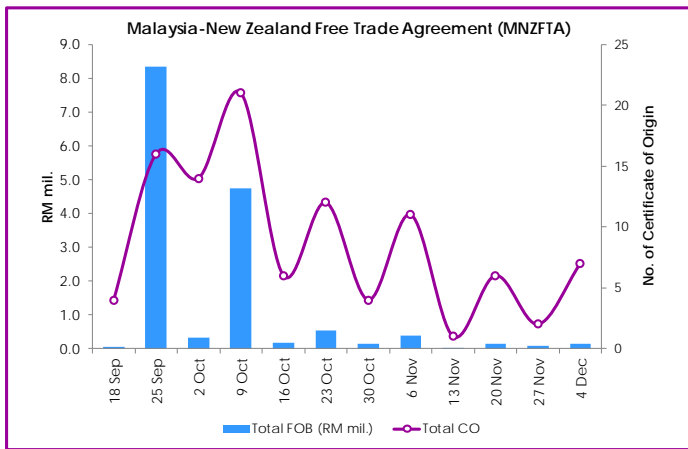
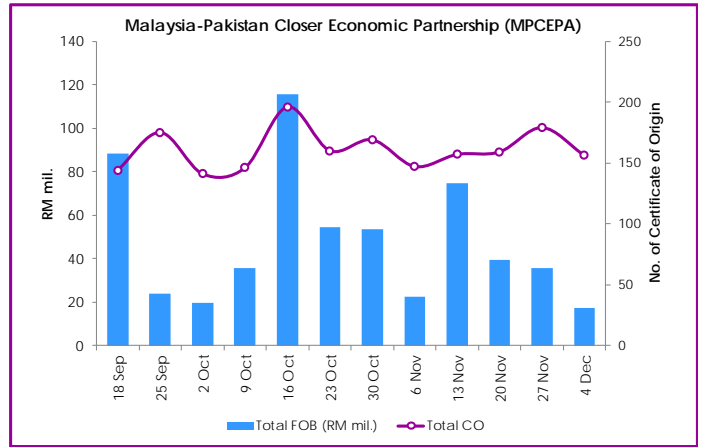
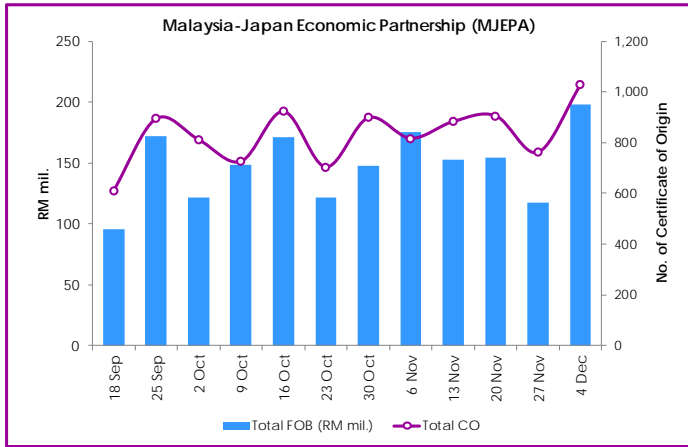


Note: The preference giving countries under the GSP scheme are Liechtenstein, the Russian Federation, Japan, Switzerland, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Norway.

Source: Ministry of International Trade and Industry, Malaysia



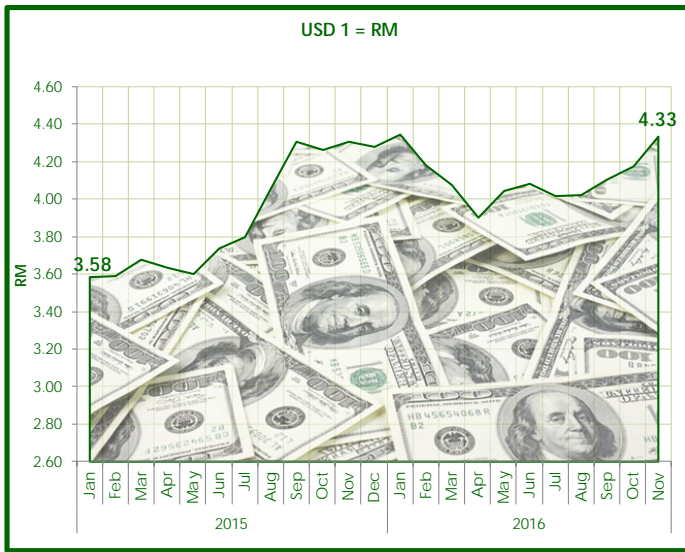
# Number and Value of Preferential Certificates of Origin (PCOs)



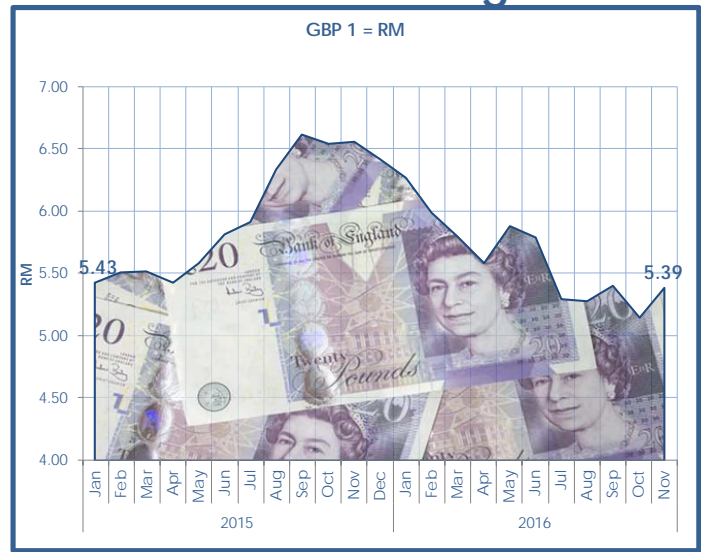
Source: Ministry of International Trade and Industry, Malaysia

# Malaysian Ringgit Exchange Rate with Selected Countries, January 2015 - November 2016

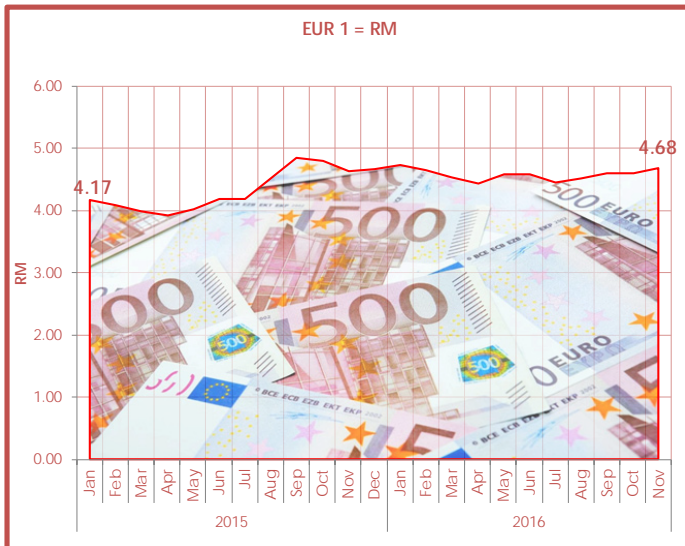
## US Dollar



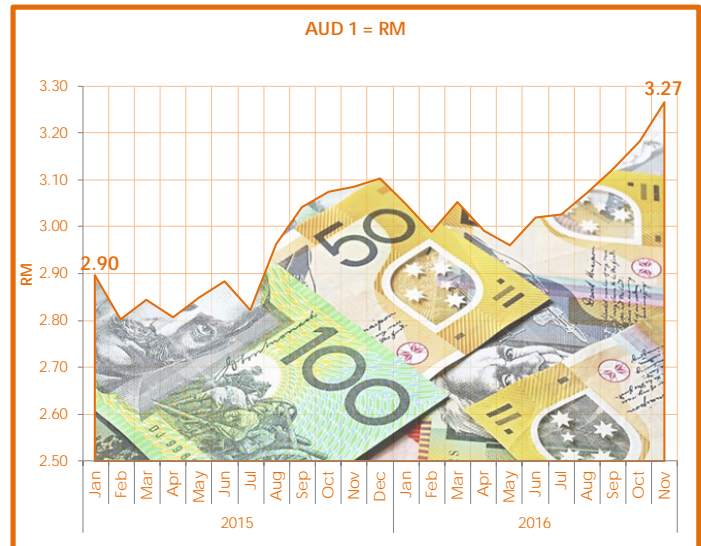
## Pound Sterling



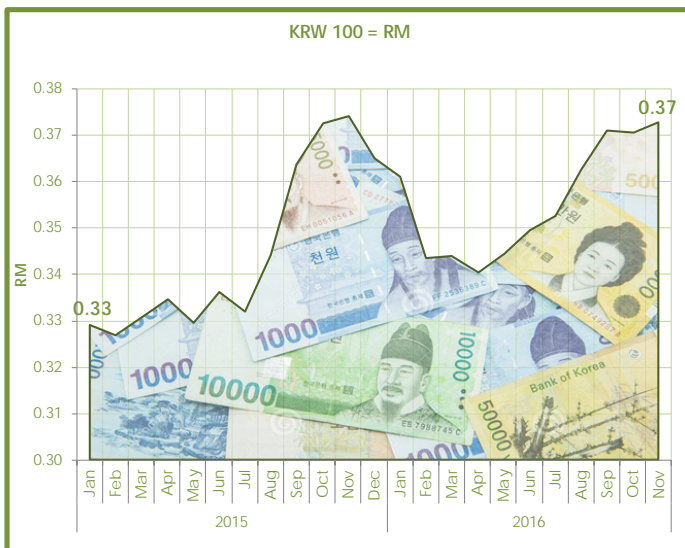
## Euro



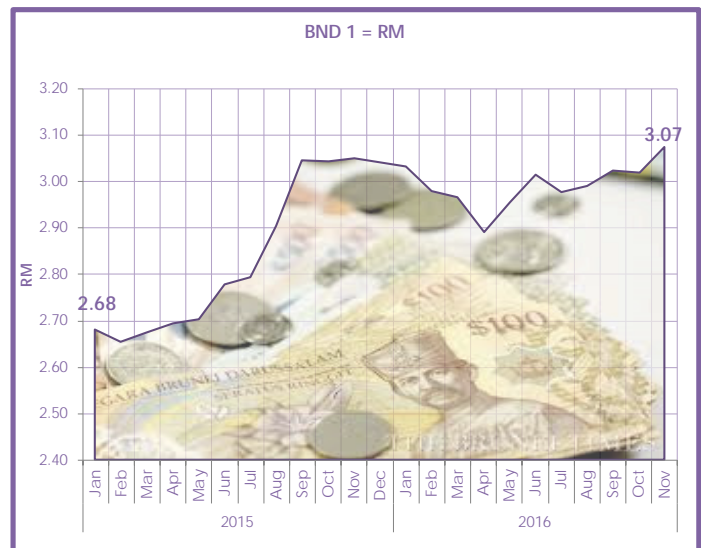
## Australian Dollar



## South Korean Won



## Brunei Dollar



Source : Bank Negara, Malaysia

# Commodity Prices



## CRUDE PETROLEUM (BRENT) -per bbl-

9 Dec 2016 : US\$54.3, ▼ 0.2%\*  
Average Price<sup>i</sup> : 2015: US\$53.6  
2014: US\$99.5



## CRUDE PALM OIL -per MT-

9 Dec 2016 : US\$776.0, ▲ 0.8%\*  
Average Price<sup>i</sup> : 2015: US\$616.9  
2014: US\$823.3



## SUGAR -per lbs-

9 Dec 2016 : US¢ 19.2, ▲ 0.6%\*  
Average Price<sup>i</sup> : 2015: US¢13.2  
2014: US¢16.6

## RUBBER SMR 20 -per MT-

9 Dec 2016 : US\$1,800.5, ▲ 5.2%\*  
Average Price<sup>i</sup> : 2015: US\$1,364.3  
2014: US\$1,718.3



## COCOA SMC 2 -per MT-

9 Dec 2016 : US\$1,729.0, ▼ 2.3%\*  
Average Price<sup>i</sup> : 2015: US\$2,077.0  
2014: US\$2,615.8



## COAL -per MT-

9 Dec 2016 : US\$44.1, unchanged  
Average Price<sup>i</sup> : 2015: US\$49.9  
2014: US\$59.8

## SCRAP IRON HMS -per MT-

2 Dec 2016 : US\$300.0 (high), unchanged  
US\$285.0 (low), unchanged  
Average Price<sup>i</sup> : 2015: US\$239.6  
2014: US\$370.0



## HIGHEST and LOWEST 2015/2016

### Crude Petroleum (Brent) -per bbl-



#### Highest

2 Dec 2016 : US\$54.5  
15 May 2015 : US\$66.8

#### Lowest

15 January 2016 : US\$28.9  
18 December 2015 : US\$36.9

### Crude Palm Oil -per MT-



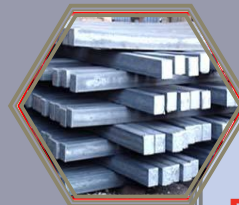
#### Highest

15 Sept. 2016 : US\$785.5  
16 January 2015 : US\$701.0

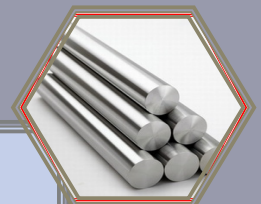
#### Lowest

15 January 2016 : US\$545.5  
4 September 2015 : US\$500.5

## Domestic Prices 2 December 2016



Billets  
(per MT)  
RM1,900 – RM1,950



Steel Bars  
(per MT)  
RM2,050 – RM2,200

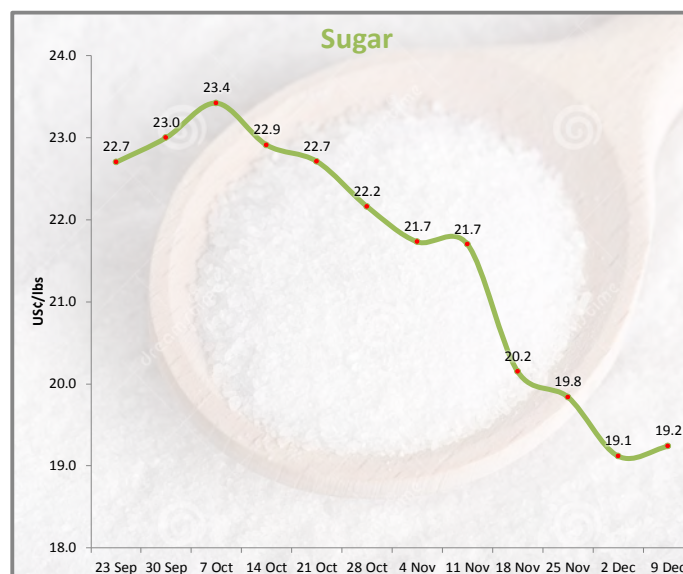
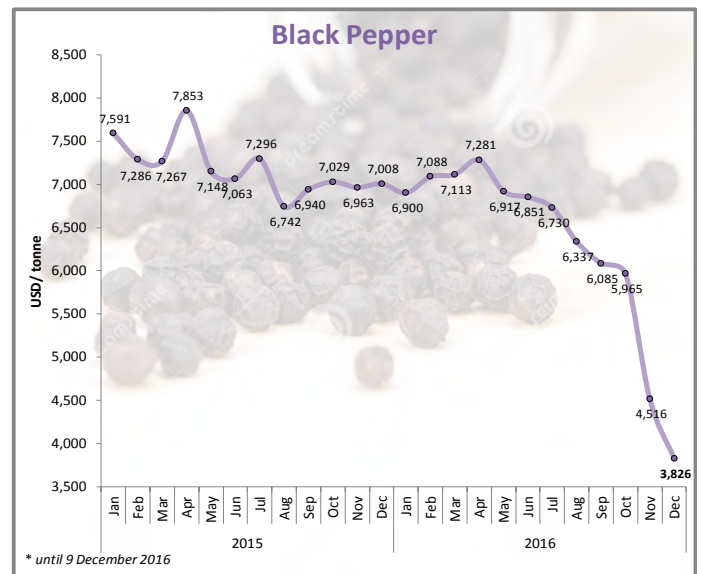
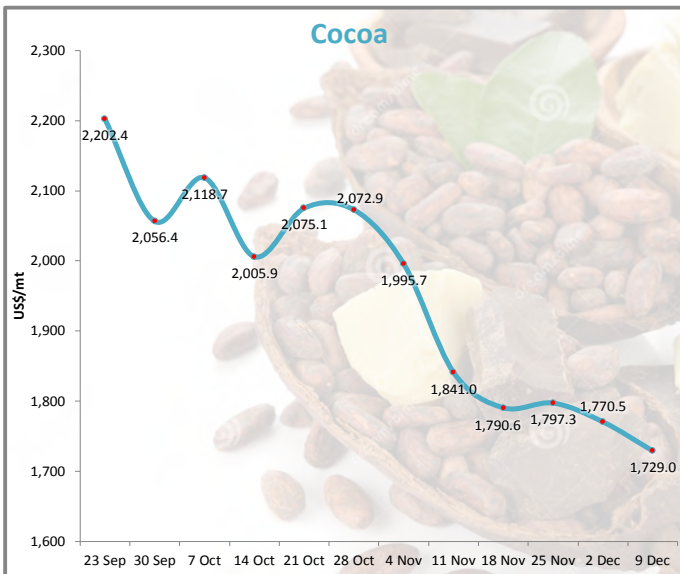
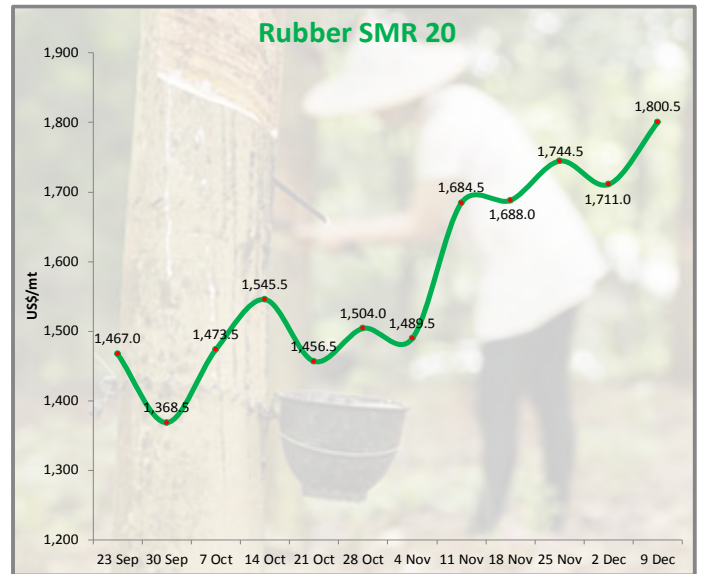
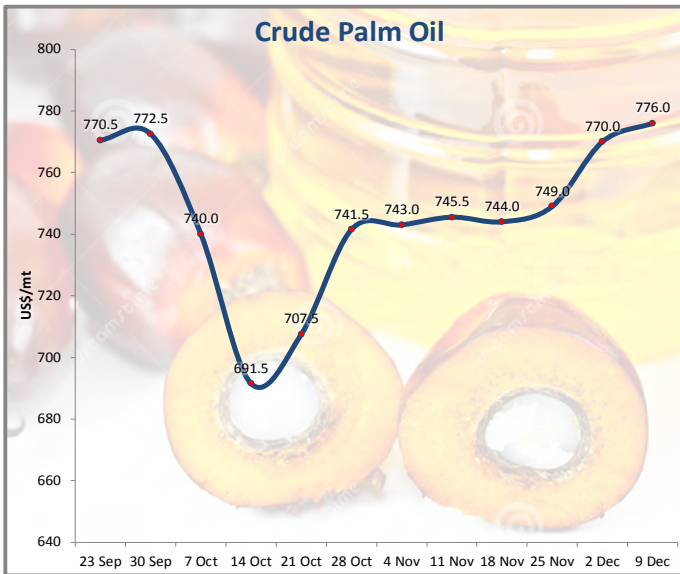
Notes: All figures have been rounded to the nearest decimal point

\* Refer to % change from the previous week's price

i Average price in the year except otherwise indicated

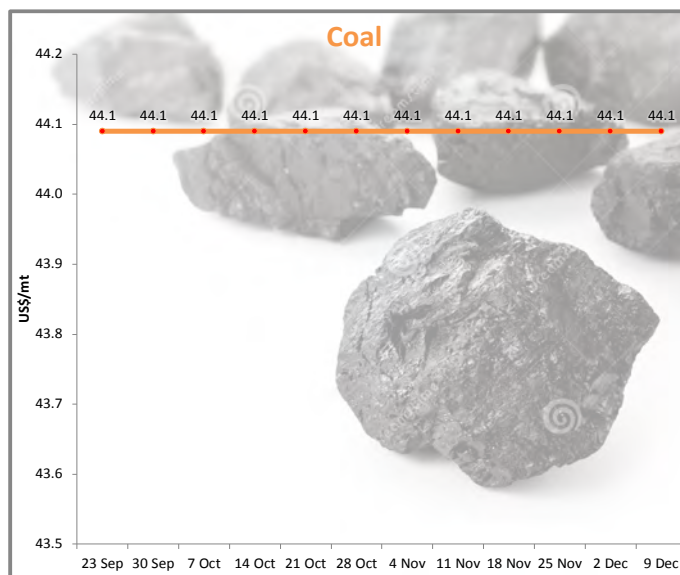
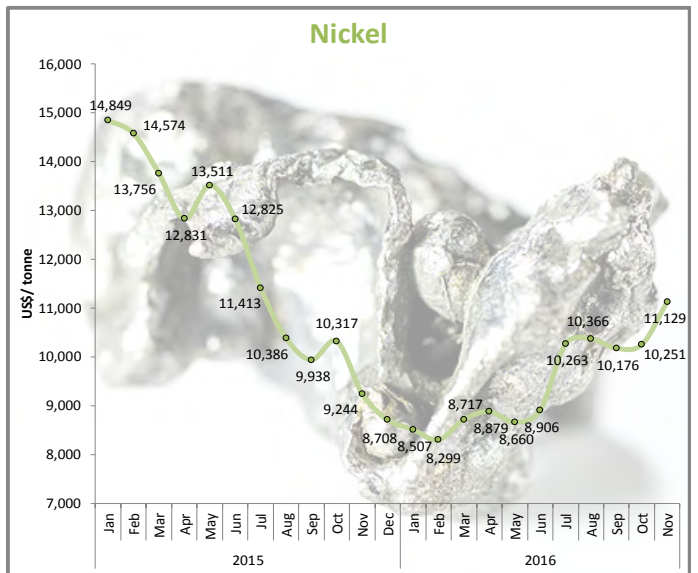
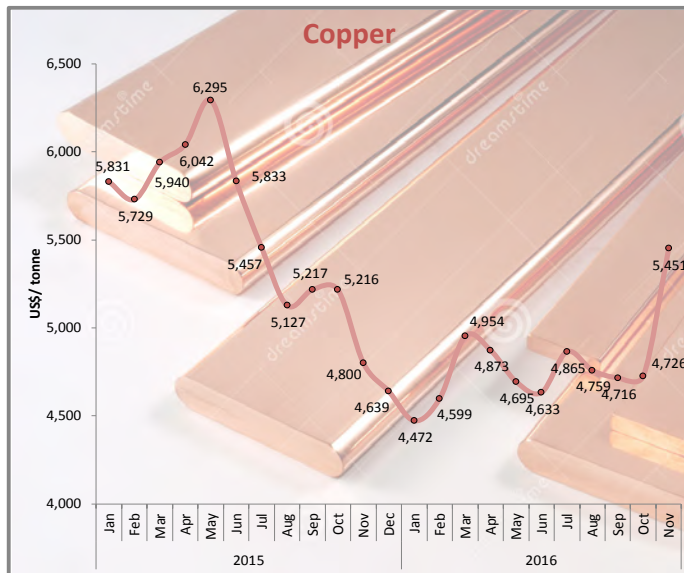
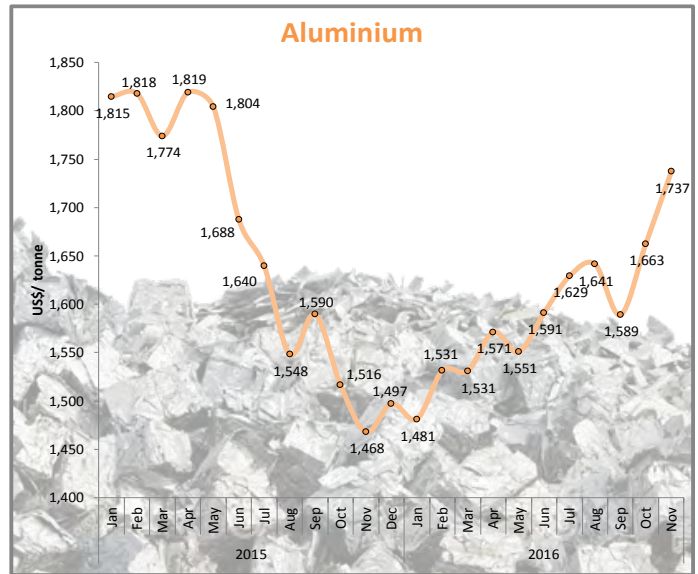
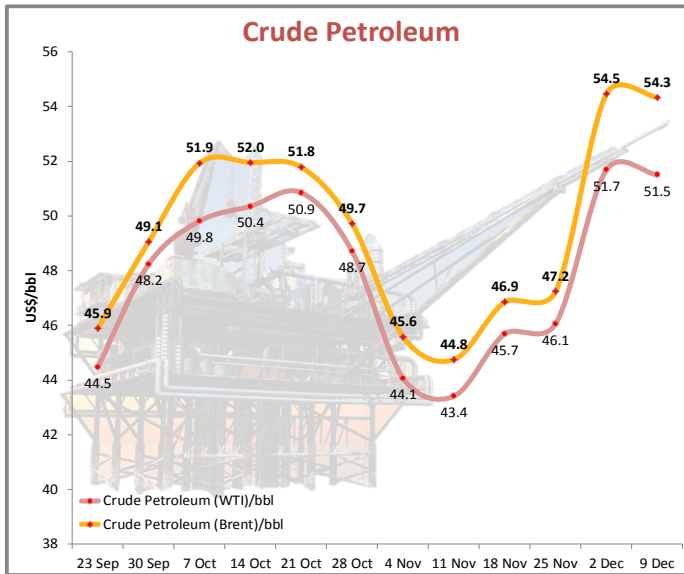
Sources: Ministry of International Trade and Industry Malaysia, Malaysian Palm Oil Board, Malaysian Rubber Board, Malaysian Cocoa Board, Malaysian Iron and Steel Industry Federation, Bloomberg and Czarnikow Group.

# Commodity Price Trends



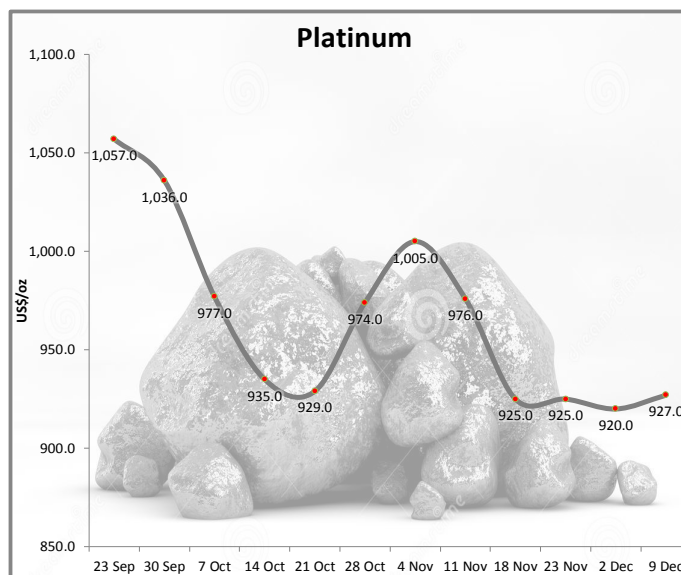
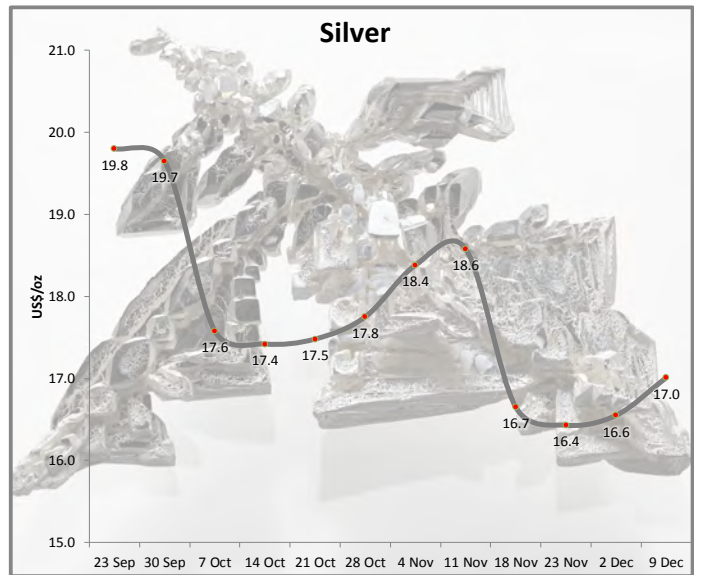
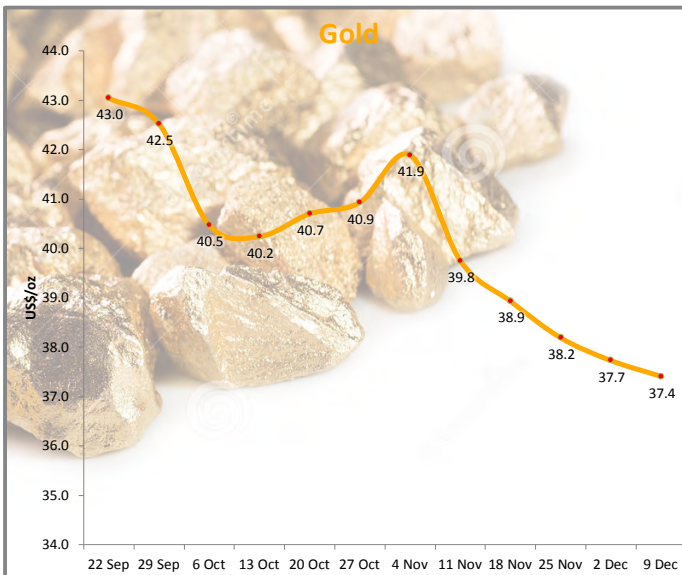
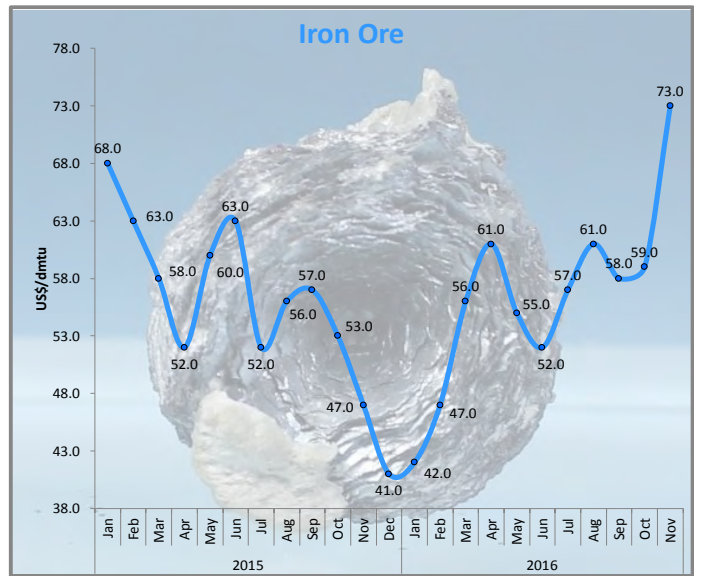
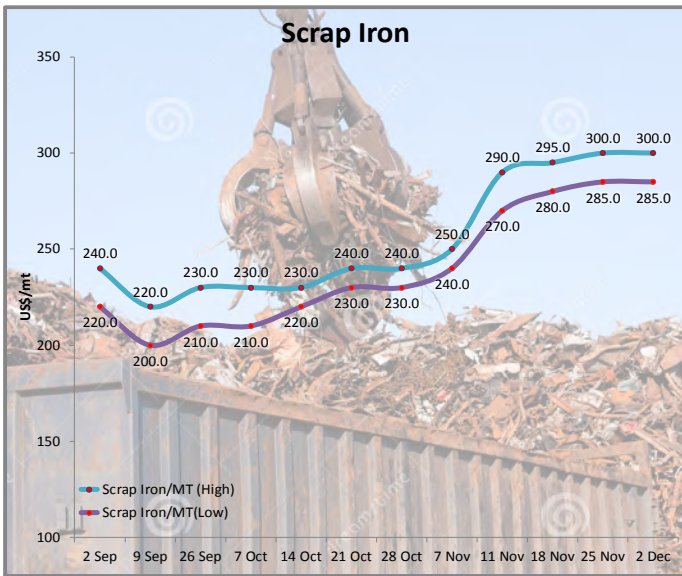
Sources: Ministry of International Trade and Industry Malaysia, Malaysian Palm Oil Board, Malaysian Rubber Board, Malaysian Cocoa Board, Malaysian Pepper Board, Bloomberg and Czarnikow Group, World Bank, World Gold Council, The Wall Street Journal.

# Commodity Price Trends



Sources: Ministry of International Trade and Industry Malaysia, Malaysian Iron and Steel Industry Federation, Bloomberg and Czarnikow Group, World Bank, World Gold Council, The Wall Street Journal.

# Commodity Price Trends



Sources: Ministry of International Trade and Industry Malaysia, Malaysian Iron and Steel Industry Federation, Bloomberg and Czarnikow Group, World Bank.

# MITI Programme

## MITI PAVILION @MAHA 2016 , 1 - 11 December 2016



# Happy Retirement!



## YBhg Datuk Ravidran Palaniappan Former Senior Director, ASEAN Economic Integration Division, MITI

Y.Bhg Datuk P. Ravidran is the Senior Director of ASEAN Economic Integration, Ministry of International Trade and Industry. He has been with the Ministry since 1983 serving in various positions, except for a brief period of 1 year at the Ministry of Agriculture in 1996. He was MITI Economic Counselor in Thailand from 2000-2004. He has been actively involved in negotiations on various ASEAN economic initiatives, bilateral and regional Free Trade Agreements.

When asked about his rather wanting 70 word CV, Datuk Ravi responded in his off-the-cuff tone;

“Why? It covers what needs to covered”

That was Datuk Ravi being modest about his achievements, just as he was about every other aspect of himself throughout this interview. Whenever the questions zoomed in on his personal achievements, he steered the conversation away towards the bigger picture. To him he was just another civil servant doing his job. When he did speak of himself, it was with some reluctance, and only because he needed to give an example; to clarify what he meant. The focus always remained on the responsibilities of an officer in the civil service; on MITI; and on the country.

Datuk Ravi is certainly one of the more recognisable faces of MITI both, in and out of the country. Yet, he is also that Senior Director who strikes up a conversation with you about your work and on the latest developments even if you are just a few days old in MITI; and even if it is the first time he is meeting you. It is his unique way of welcoming you to MITI and acknowledging your presence in the MITI family.

Vocal but not loud, he is the Senior Director who has a viewpoint on most if not all pertinent issues. When he starts speaking, usually at a decibel which is a notch or two lower than the rest in the meeting, everyone feels compelled to listen, even if they have to strain their ears.

Back when we were still in MITI's old office, it was a common sight to see him between blocks 8 and 10, documents in hand, and flanked by his officers, who responded to him while they kept up with his long quick strides.

Datuk Ravi was a key factor in ensuring not only MITI's success but Malaysia's success as Chair of ASEAN in 2015. But he attributes this entirely to his solid, effective team and valuable support from colleagues in MITI.

As passionate as he is about work, he has also been active in sports and social work. Although he continues to make meaningful contributions through his involvement in various social welfare activities out there, he did not want those things to be published in this interview. Just like how he, as proud as he is, feels it unnecessary to boast [sic] of his children's outstanding achievements.

In the interview that follows he speaks briefly on what is special about MITI and what is not; what is working in MITI and what could be working better. In a nutshell, he speaks about MITI the organisation that is unmistakably very close to his heart; and he speaks about MITI the institution that has also shaped him into an institution in his own right.

**Tell us about your early years in the civil service and in MITI and about your first bosses and colleagues. What are the most pleasant memories that you cherish till today when you reminisce about the past?**

Frankly speaking, I never expected to be posted to MITI in 1983 after completing my DPA. However, I have no regrets coming to MITI. I started out at MITI in the Bilateral Unit of the International Trade Division. Back then, ASEAN, WTO, APEC and Bilateral were just units under the International Trade Division.

So I was the desk officer for South America and



Africa. It was a very interesting and challenging time for me because at that time, the emphasis was on South-South Cooperation; and this essentially meant Latin America and Africa. So as the desk officer for those countries, I was involved in coordinating a big delegation to South America led by the then PM, Tun Dr M. The delegation involved 250 people and comprised several other Ministers including MITI Minister as well. And the entire programme was coordinated by MITI. This was during the time when we had to struggle with telex machines and telephone. Very unlike the advanced technology we have now. But it was quite memorable, going to South America on a chartered flight from KL to Fiji, Fiji to Tahiti, Tahiti to Chile, Chile to Argentina, then to Brazil and finally to Mexico if I remember correctly.

Then, we had to organise missions to Africa. Back then we did not have an outfit such as MATRADE. We only had a small office, a unit under the International Trade Division known as MEXPO or Malaysian Export Promotion Office. All promotional activities were undertaken by this office. And I remember, I also had to coordinate 'Malaysia Week' in Mauritius. This was again another challenge as we had no mission or office in Mauritius. We had to undertake recce visits to Mauritius prior to the event and take care of specific details for our companies such as arranging suitable ways to transport their exhibits to Mauritius. We also did recce visits to many African countries, including Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Sudan. So during my initial years, my trade promotion activities were quite adventurous. I had very good senior officers who provided guidance. So all this kept me going, and really there was no incentive for me to leave the Ministry. I found the work enjoyable and my bosses were very good. Therefore, the level of satisfaction was very high.

After that, I was transferred to work on GSP (Generalised System of Preference). GSP was quite popular with companies at that time and we were doing processing work. It was still under the International Trade Division, but certainly a different area of work for me. Following that, I got the opportunity to do my Masters. After my Masters, somehow I ended up for a year at the Ministry of Agriculture.

After which, I returned to MITI in 1996.

### Did you ask to come back to MITI?

Well actually Tan Sri Razak called me and asked me to come back to MITI. (Note: Tan Sri Abdul Razak Ramli became MITI's Secretary General in January 2001, a post he held until October 2004).

So I came back and joined ASEAN, which was becoming increasingly active at that point, because of CEPT (Common Effective Preferential Tariff Scheme) for the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA). AFTA was initiated in 1992 and when I returned to

MITI in 1996 I was heavily involved in the tariff reduction programme for AFTA. At that time the duties were very high and we had to determine the stages for reduction. And in 1997, we had to ask for a tariff reduction waiver for automotive products. And there was a lot of pressure from other countries, Thailand in particular. So from 1997 till the year 2000, I would say it was extremely challenging because of the deferment that we were requesting from ASEAN for Chapter 87 which was the entire motor vehicle chapter! So it was not easy.

So AFTA gave us the much needed on-the-job training. And this on-the-job training kept us going. We had a lot of guidance from senior officers who were themselves, learning too.

FTA is actually a relatively new invention, so the initial years in AFTA was a very good learning experience for me.

That has been very useful to me, because it has made it easier for me to negotiate (for goods) now.

After that I was posted to Bangkok (in 2000), not that I wanted to go to Bangkok, please get that very clear (laughs). That was another whole different experience for me. Working as the Minister Counsellor in Bangkok, was a one man show, because there was no MIDA or MATRADE there. So for three and a half years, I had to do a 3 in 1 job, doing the work of MITI, MIDA and MATRADE. And there were so many missions to Bangkok. I clearly remember Minister Rafidah visiting Thailand a couple of times, and we used to organise trade and investment seminars involving 600-700 people. Then we also had APEC meetings in 2003 when Thailand was the host country. There was lots of coordination to be done by MITI Bangkok for that too. So it was a different challenge there.

But if I could pin point one major achievement in Bangkok, it would be the establishment of the Malaysia-Thai Chamber of Commerce. It was an initiative I spearheaded with a few Malaysian businesses there. It was eventually launched by our former PM, Tun Dr M when he came for the APEC Summit in 2003.

Your name is synonymous to ASEAN; in fact we can safely say that 'ASEAN' is a suffix to your name. You are a reservoir of knowledge on all things ASEAN and MITI of course. How did this strong connection between ASEAN and you come about?

When I came back to the capital after my Bangkok posting, I was made the Director of ASEAN Division (in 2004). Somehow ASEAN became very active, it became the core of what we were doing because of the move to include services. You see, during the initial years of ASEAN, we focused on goods, only later we started to look at services investments. And then in 2007, we had the AEC Blueprint.. And that is it! I have been actively involved since then.

Somehow, I have also been directly involved in three ASEAN Summits hosted by Malaysia; in 1997 (ASEAN Informal Summit), 2005 and 2015. Not to mention the ASEAN Economic Ministers Meeting that we hosted in 1997 as well.

I would say that the last 10 years were very critical for ASEAN because we were deepening our economic integration. So there were plenty of activities related to ASEAN. ASEAN was engaged with FTAs, with China, Japan, Korea, Australia, New Zealand so there were so many things. I can't claim credit for some of those FTAs which I was not directly involved in, nevertheless it still came under SEOM (Senior Economic Officials Meeting), under the purview of the ASEAN division. So there were many agreements and Cabinet Papers to do.

**The year 2015, was indeed a meaningful year for Malaysia with the ASEAN Economic Community being created under Malaysia's chairmanship. Can you outline the major personal strides you made while preparing for 2015 and throughout ASEAN 2015?**

The year 2015 was challenging, given the task to increase AEC awareness, numerous outreach sessions were conducted on ASEAN and AEC. The AEC Blueprint 2025 was a major achievement for Malaysia. Personally I was also involved in the taskforce for drafting the ASEAN charter as well as in the feasibility studies for ASEAN India and ASEAN-EU FTAs.

In all this, I would like to stress here the importance of engaging our stakeholders. Now engagement with stakeholders has become even more comprehensive and inclusive, we simply cannot ignore any stakeholder. Of course the private sector has always been our main stakeholder, but now we need to reach out to students, ordinary people, civil societies as well as the private sector of course. I see this engagement as one of the more important part of MITI work. You cannot do things without feedback, and the only way to get feedback is through engagement.

In ASEAN with the AEC and numerous FTAs we have embarked on, engagement has been indispensable. We consulted everyone, including the NGOs and civil societies, hostile or otherwise. Because, our work is to go out and explain, whether they accept or not is a different matter.

So in summary, MITI has seen to the realisation of the AEC. We are not lagging behind anybody. We have now got the document for the next ten years in place. Some of the FTAs have been concluded, I wish RCEP was one of it, unfortunately it is not. I have a very good team of officials. They worked very hard and contributed to the success of Malaysia as Chair of ASEAN in 2015. I thank them all for their hard work and contribution.

**Malaysia being a founding member of ASEAN is a critical driving force in ASEAN. What are Malaysia's challenges in pushing ASEAN forward as a successful economic community?**

Well, there are many challenges for Malaysia.

For one, we need to make changes to our domestic laws to fulfill our regional obligations. There are still areas where we need to fulfill our commitment. As everyone knows, AEC has KPIs and getting ministries to come on board to implement some of these measures is not easy, particularly because we have different stakeholders. Especially now in the current economic environment, it is difficult to talk about liberalisation.

Secondly, ASEAN is a big market for Malaysia, a third of our trade is with ASEAN. Our exporters are expecting other countries to come on board to fulfill their AEC Commitments. These are promises that we made as a region; as a group. So we cannot blame the private sector if they are getting impatient, because we had indicated we will do it within a certain period and year. And if we fail to comply with the timeline we have set, then it becomes meaningless.

So essentially, the challenges of increasing market access and facilitating Malaysian companies to expand into the region remain.

**Is it right to say that you are passionate about ASEAN?**

Yes I am. I like the work. But I was not only involved in ASEAN work. There are other FTAs I was involved in also.

But you know that is only one part of my life in MITI! I was also an active hockey player. I played for MITI and PTD and we were in the hockey Wilayah League. I was also the Captain of MITI's hockey team. We had a strong hockey team in MITI for 10 years if I am not mistaken. And we used to have inter-division games back then. We had four teams; Pasukan Menteri, Pasukan Timbalan Menteri, Pasukan KSU and Pasukan TKSU. So there were a lot of extra-curricular activities that I was involved in as well.

**At work we are all faced with the increasing demand for immediate responses and feedback brought on by the inundation of information and data. This is further aggravated by the smartphone. There simply is no time to digest and think through. We are fighting fires every day and running around like headless chickens. In the midst of this chaos, we seemed to have lost the ability to think, and along with it our main role as advisors to the political masters. What is your comment?**

Today the technology we use is way advanced compared to what we had back when we started.

I think because of that, we actually can be much more efficient nowadays. And we should maximise the use of technology, and equally important is a hands-on approach at work. No hierarchy in MITI. Everyone must do their part, everyone, including directors and senior directors. It doesn't mean that when you become a director or senior director you don't have to do much.

Perhaps, this approach that I have adopted since day one, is what sets me apart. It has given me the strength and ability to do my work to the best of my ability.

People say that I am the ASEAN man, well, I think it is just that I am hands-on. There were many directors before me and there will be many more after me.

To me the most important thing is to be hands-on and not just pass the buck down to your colleagues.

You see how we organise ourselves is very important. In my opinion, at MITI we are very clear about what we need to do, but there are certain challenges. The high turnover rate of officers is one. For example some officers from the 'states' may not be familiar with the federal system, and may need some time to familiarise his/herself to the way things are done. And so the adjustment required by new officers in general, makes it challenging for us to sustain the momentum at times.

### Would you say that MITI is leading this good development?

I would not say that MITI is leading but I will say this though; MITI has always been engaging other ministries. We have always made it a point to do this. Granted, in some areas MITI is only a coordinator, but we do not merely coordinate. It is important to give our perspective and views on issues as well. I believe that is what MITI does consistently and should certainly continue doing moving forward.

### So based on MITI's work culture that you have described above, what is your advice to officers?

My advice to officers is very simple; officers have to read and understand the scope of their job so that they can anticipate what is in the cards and work a few steps ahead.

And by reading, I do not mean reading just anything or a story book. I specifically mean to read about their work and try to understand the new developments taking place in the international trade environment, including international trade agreements. These are the things that young officers should be mindful of.

So many different perspectives to FTAs are

being churned out by developed countries. Their demands are very high.

Therefore, our officers cannot say MITI is special if they do not read. You are not special if you do not read and if you do not keep yourself updated with the relevant developments.

And you have to make a difference. As far as I am concerned, I have made that difference in the Ministry as a senior director. I am not the type who leaves it to my subordinates. I am with them and together we get whatever needs to be done, done. It is not a one-man job- it is teamwork. The team can only function if everyone participates, right from the top where the most senior is, all the way down to where the most junior is. In that way I think I have made a difference.

I believe everyone should strive to work as a team, always.

I also believe that everyone should strive to be competitive and strive to excel.

I do not see anything wrong in being competitive and in wanting to excel. If there are people who do not want to excel it is their issue.

This is how I see it; I have a job and not only do I have to do my job to the best of my ability, but also to the extent that it is most impactful in serving the interests of my country.

I need be mindful of how my work will serve to positively change or bring maximum benefits to Malaysia. And in international trade, within ASEAN for example, we need to strive for the most inclusive win-win approach.

### You have quite a few junior officers in your division, so how do you mobilise them so effectively?

I have always wanted all my officers to be familiar with all aspects of ASEAN. That is a challenge for me. For example if they are doing ASEAN-Australia, it doesn't mean they are to be familiar only with ASEAN-Australia. I encourage them to know everything. At SEOM meetings, all aspects will be covered. So I bring different officers with me each time I attend SEOM meetings. They learn through such exposure. I don't really promote specialisation at the junior levels. I would like them to know every other aspect about ASEAN at least in general, while knowing that much more in the area they are assigned to work on.

And in the same vein, a MITI officer should also be familiar with all aspects of MITI and that really requires you to interact with your colleagues, subordinates, so that you have a feel of what everyone is doing.

I also like to encourage officers to go for functions,

such as embassy functions and other events. I would like to see more MITI officers attending such functions. Informal interactions with stakeholders, within the ambit of good corporate governance of course, is quite integral to our work here in MITI.

**Some discontent seems to be surrounding the fast-track promotions taking place in the civil service. What is your view on fast-track promotions? Are the younger officers in the civil service well prepared to take the helm?**

I do not think that there should be discontent if a promotion is based on merits or capability. We do what we are entrusted to do, and allow the management decide on your promotion. If you do something in anticipation of a promotion, then you will only do what is visible! And the work which is challenging but invisible will be left unattended. That is wrong and such attitude should not be encouraged.

As for me, I try to be competitive, and I try to excel. And I do not worry about my promotion. Promotion is the last thing on my mind when I work. I think your promotion will come. That has been my philosophy.

**You have a strong presence in MITI, and by that we mean your feedback on major happenings or issues in MITI is a staple. Now, while contributing to solutions, this undoubtedly would have also rubbed up many people, your superiors included, the wrong way. How important do you think it is to voice out one's opinions, especially when one thinks one can contribute positively in addressing an issue at work? And how best to do it?**

Like I said, I am very passionate about what I do.

I think when you have a position on a matter; position based on the relevant knowledge you possess about the matter; relevant knowledge gained through thorough research and consultation of various stakeholders; you should speak up. I think it is the most important aspect of one's career.

So I strongly encourage MITI officers to express their views, because they are the technical people. Whether the management accepts your views or not is irrelevant. The management may want to take a different course of action based on extraordinary circumstances that you may not be privy to. But, you still have to do your part. And doing your part includes consulting the various stakeholders so that you can arrive at a well-informed position. Again I would like to stress here, our stakeholders are not only among the private sector. They include civil societies, NGOs and academia.

I hate to be like a river meandering aimlessly and

then by chance, arrive at some stream; So I am not shy to consult anyone, at any level, including my juniors.

I think pretending to know all, is very dangerous in an organisation.

The organisation's interest should always prevail. To me the organisation is important and not, any individual.

We should be careful not to confuse organisational goals with the goals of individuals.

We are all team players, and team spirit is what we should encourage.

But all in all, MITI is a very good organization. Officers who are working in the Ministry have good opportunities to advance their career. MITI provides a good training ground. You gain lots of experience; you start to be involved in negotiations very early on.

We have been doing well all this while, and I wish this culture of excellence will continue in MITI.

And lastly, hard work and discipline are two very critical traits that will see you through in your career, unlike anything else.

**What are your plans after retirement?**

Honestly, I do not have a plan. But I will continue to contribute, but in a different capacity. Apart from this I will increase my involvement in social activities. So basically I will continue working and contributing and I will increase my involvement in social work.

**Datuk P. Ravidran officially retired  
on 4 December 2016 as  
the Senior Director of the ASEAN Economic  
Integration Division, MITI.**

*We thank Datuk Ravi for making a difference  
in MITI and for setting the standards so high!*

Extracted from;  
MITI QU4RTET Digest  
Issue #7

# Announcements

## Six Strategic Reform Initiatives

### Boosting the Nation's Competitiveness

The Malaysian Government announced six Strategic Reform Initiatives (SRIs), the second critical component of the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) in addition to the 12 National Key Economic Areas (NKEAs), to boost Malaysia's global competitiveness. The ETP was conceptualised with two key thrusts of focus, through the 12 NKEAs and competitiveness, to be delivered by the SRIs.



Source: [http://etp.pemandu.gov.my/annualreport2011/SRI\\_Overview-@-6\\_Strategic\\_Reform\\_Initiatives.aspx](http://etp.pemandu.gov.my/annualreport2011/SRI_Overview-@-6_Strategic_Reform_Initiatives.aspx)

## China, ASEAN launch cross-border e-commerce platform 9 December 2016

China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) launched a cross-border e-commerce platform on Saturday during the 12th China-ASEAN Business and Investment Summit in Nanning, capital of south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.

Representatives of ASEAN members and the secretariat of the summit signed a memorandum of understanding on the platform to boost cross-border commercial cooperation and services.

The platform will provide information on business matching, overseas financing, logistics, customs inspections and legal advice for bilateral enterprises, according to the secretariat.

China and ASEAN proposed a new age of cross-border trade centered on e-commerce last year.

Source: [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-09/19/content\\_21926152.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-09/19/content_21926152.htm)

# Our Deepest Condolences.....

## MITI Weekly Bulletin

conveys its deepest condolences  
to the victims, their families,  
the Government and the people of  
Indonesia on the recent earthquake  
in Aceh

7 December 2016

### MITI Weekly Bulletin (MWB) Mobile Apps



MITI MWB APPs is now available for IOS, Android and Windows platforms. MWB APPs can be download from **Gallery of Malaysian Government Mobile APPs (GAMMA)** at the link: <http://gamma.malaysia.gov.my/#/appDetails/85>



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<http://www.miti.gov.my/index.php/forms/form/13>

