



**THE AEM-USTR CONSULTATIONS
9 September 2017, Pasay City, Philippines**

JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT

1. Consultations between the ten ASEAN Economic Ministers (AEM) and the United States Trade Representative (“the Ministers”) were held on 9 September 2017 in Pasay City, Philippines. The Consultations were co-chaired by H.E. Ramon M. Lopez, Secretary of Trade and Industry of the Philippines, and Ms. Barbara Weisel, Assistant United States Trade Representative (AUSTR) for Southeast Asia and the Pacific, Office of the United States Trade Representative, representing H.E. Robert E. Lighthizer, United States Trade Representative (USTR).

2. The USTR congratulated the ASEAN Ministers on the 50th Founding Anniversary of ASEAN, which marked a historic milestone in ASEAN’s deepening regional integration. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen economic cooperation towards shared prosperity and inclusive growth.

3. The Ministers were pleased to note another historic milestone, which is the commemoration of the 40th Anniversary of ASEAN-U.S. relations. For the last 40 years, the partnership between the two sides has progressed on many fronts, particularly on the area of economic cooperation between ASEAN and the U.S. The ASEAN Ministers looked forward to further enhancing ASEAN’s economic relationship with the U.S. under the new U.S. Administration.

4. The Ministers noted that two-way merchandise trade between ASEAN and the U.S. continues to grow. In 2016, merchandise trade reached USD 211.8 billion, which accounted for 9.5 per cent of ASEAN’s total trade making the United States the third largest trading partner of ASEAN, according to ASEAN statistics. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows from the U.S. to ASEAN amounted to USD 11.7 billion in 2016, placing the U.S. as ASEAN’s third largest external source of FDI. For the United States, ASEAN is the fourth largest trading partner.

5. The Ministers noted the progress in the implementation of the 2016-2017 ASEAN-U.S. Trade and Investment Framework Arrangement (TIFA) and the Expanded Economic Engagement (E3) Initiatives Work Plan. The Ministers endorsed the 2017-2018 ASEAN-U.S. Trade and Investment Framework Arrangement (TIFA) and the Expanded Economic Engagement (E3) Initiatives Work Plan, and encouraged officials to focus on developing concrete initiatives that will expand free and fair trade, and increase jobs and economic growth in the United States and ASEAN. Ministers also supported the conclusion of the ASEAN-U.S. Cooperation in Fostering Trade in Telecommunications and Information Technology Services.

6. The Ministers welcomed the launch of the U.S.-ASEAN Connect framework in September 2016 through the four areas of energy, innovation, policy and business, and the establishment of the U.S.-ASEAN Connect Center in Jakarta. U.S.-ASEAN Connect has been providing opportunities for ASEAN and the United States to stay connected through better access to expertise, information and resources of the U.S. government and private sector. The Ministers also noted the progress in the implementation of activities under the U.S.-ASEAN Connect framework in 2017, including activities undertaken under the theme of “digital economy”.

7. ASEAN Ministers expressed their appreciation to the U.S. for its continued assistance through the ASEAN Connectivity Through Trade and Investment (ACTI) project, which supports ASEAN in the areas of ASEAN Single Window, trade facilitation, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), as well as information and communication technology (ICT) development.

8. The U.S. and ASEAN Ministers welcomed the ratification of the Protocol on the Legal Framework to Implement the ASEAN Single Window (ASW) which enables the exchange-ready Member States to transition to Live Operation. The U.S. also congratulated ASEAN on establishing the ASW Project Management office which has assumed full responsibility for managing the ASW Regional Service Operation.

9. The Ministers conducted a Dialogue with the U.S.-ASEAN Business Council (USABC) to discuss USABC’s recent activities to further promote mutually beneficial trade and investment relationships between the U.S and ASEAN. The Ministers expressed appreciation to the USABC for its support to ASEAN Member States and their business activities, and encouraged further contribution of USABC to enhance ASEAN-U.S. economic relations.

LIST OF MINISTERS

1. **H.E. Dato Paduka Lim Jock Hoi**, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Brunei Darussalam (representing The Hon. Pehin Dato Lim Jock Seng, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Brunei Darussalam);
2. **H.E. Sok Sopheak**, Under Secretary of State of the Ministry of Commerce, Cambodia (representing H.E. Pan Sorasak, Minister of Commerce, Cambodia);
3. **Dr. Donna Gultom**, Director of ASEAN Negotiations, Ministry of Trade, Indonesia (representing H.E. Enggartiasto Lukita, Minister of Trade, Indonesia);
4. **Dr. Laohoua Cheuching**, Director General of Foreign Trade Policy, Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Lao PDR (representing H.E. Mrs. Khemmani Pholsena, Minister of Industry and Commerce, Lao PDR);
5. **Datuk Seri J. Jayasiri**, Secretary General of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry, Malaysia (representing H.E. Dato' Sri Mustapa Mohamed, Minister of International Trade and Industry, Malaysia);
6. **H.E. Kyaw Win**, Union Minister for Planning and Finance, Myanmar;
7. **H.E. Ramon M. Lopez**, Secretary of Trade and Industry, the Philippines;
8. **Ms. Alpana Roy**, Director (ASEAN), Ministry of Trade and Industry, Singapore (representing H.E. Lim Hng Kiang, Minister for Trade and Industry (Trade), Singapore);
9. **H.E. Mrs. Apiradi Tantraporn**, Minister of Commerce, Thailand;
10. **Ms. Barbara Weisel**, Assistant United States Trade Representative (AUSTR) for Southeast Asia and the Pacific, Office of the United States Trade Representative (representing H.E. Robert E. Lighthizer, United States Trade Representative (USTR)).
11. **H.E. Tran Quoc Khanh**, Vice Minister of Industry and Trade, Viet Nam (representing H.E. Tran Tuan Anh, Minister of Industry and Trade, Viet Nam);
12. **H.E. Le Luong Minh**, Secretary-General of ASEAN.