



**THE TWENTY-SECOND AEM-CER CONSULTATIONS
9 September 2017, Pasay City, Philippines**

JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT

1. Economic Ministers from the ten ASEAN Member States, Australia and New Zealand (Closer Economic Relations – CER) met on 9 September 2017 in Pasay City, Philippines, for the Twenty-Second AEM-CER Consultations. The Consultations were co-chaired by H.E. Ramon M. Lopez, Secretary of Trade and Industry of the Philippines; the Honourable Steven Ciobo, Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment of Australia; and Hon. Chester Borrows, Member of Parliament, representing New Zealand.

2. Australia and New Zealand congratulated ASEAN on its 50th Anniversary, a historic milestone for ASEAN regional integration. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen economic cooperation towards shared prosperity and inclusive growth, and stressed the importance of ongoing regional trade liberalisation and closer economic engagement.

3. The Ministers noted that ASEAN’s total two-way trade with Australia and New Zealand increased from AUD 80.0 billion (in 2010) to AUD 93.2 billion (2016) and NZD 10.5 billion (2010) to NZD 14.5 billion (2016) respectively. ASEAN’s two-way investment (Foreign Direct Investment stocks) with Australia and New Zealand also increased from AUD 42.6 billion (in 2010) to AUD 81.6 billion (2016) and NZD 3.4 billion (2010) to NZD 7.8 billion (2016) respectively.

4. The Ministers welcomed the implementation of the First Protocol to Amend the Agreement Establishing the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA) by most Parties. They noted efforts being made by the remaining Party to ratify the protocol promptly. They tasked Senior Officials to ensure that the implementation achieves the underlying objectives of promoting and facilitating trade and investment amongst Parties.

5. The Ministers welcomed the adoption of Guidelines for Transposing Tariff Reduction Schedules under AANZFTA to streamline the transposition process and improve transparency. The Ministers reiterated the importance of timely implementation of the transposed Tariff Reduction Schedules and Product Specific Rules in HS 2017 nomenclature, and welcomed the finalization of the Product Specific Rules Schedule in HS 2017. They tasked Senior Officials to work towards the implementation of the HS 2017 Product Specific Rules Schedule in early 2018, and to ensure this was trade facilitating and coordinated with completion and implementation of the Tariff Reduction Schedules in HS 2017.

6. The Ministers noted with appreciation the capacity building activities for Parties to be able to monitor the utilisation of AANZFTA tariff preferences. The Ministers underlined the importance of having such data available to generate quantitative evidence on the benefits of AANZFTA and help identify specific sectors or issues for follow-up actions, and looked forward to early implementation of the project by more Parties.

7. The Ministers welcomed the report on progress on the review of non-tariff measures (NTMs) provided for in AANZFTA. They tasked Senior Officials to implement the recommendations to make NTMs an ongoing part of AANZFTA's work programme, including by making AANZFTA more business-friendly, giving stronger attention to the interests and concerns of small and medium sized enterprises, and encouraging good regulatory practice. Ministers emphasised the importance of enhanced engagement with business in working to address NTMs.

8. ASEAN Ministers expressed appreciation to Australia and New Zealand for the extension of the AANZFTA Economic Cooperation Support Programme (AECSP) until 31 December 2019. The Ministers noted the effectiveness of the AECSP in enhancing economic relations among the AANZFTA Parties and in promoting closer regional economic integration among the Parties, and tasked officials to continue to exchange ideas on the design of a new program to replace the AECSP after 2019.

9. The Ministers noted the progress the Parties had made on the AANZFTA General Review. The Ministers welcomed the Report for Stage One of the General Review, which included a stocktake of the operation and implementation of the Agreement and a frank assessment of the performance of the Parties in implementing the Agreement to date. Ministers looked forward to considering the recommendations from Stage Two of the General Review at the Twenty-Third AEM-CER Consultations in 2018 and affirmed the importance of Parties further unlocking the Agreement's potential, in particular in the context of evolving regional economic architecture. Ministers also acknowledged the contributions of the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) on Stage One of the General Review.

10. In light of the ongoing AANZFTA General Review, Ministers welcomed the opportunity to be briefed by the Australia-ASEAN Chamber of Commerce (AustCham ASEAN) and the ASEAN New Zealand Business Council (ANZBC) at the AEM-CER Business Dialogue. The Ministers affirmed the importance of AANZFTA remaining relevant to business and of Parties continuing to engage with business on ASEAN-CER trade and investment issues.

11. Regarding the ongoing Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership negotiations, the Ministers reiterated that political commitments now urgently needed to be translated into action, with renewed mandates where necessary, to enable the negotiations swiftly to deliver a modern, comprehensive, high quality Agreement with significant improvements on existing ASEAN+1 Free Trade Agreements to which all RCEP Leaders had committed in launching the negotiations in 2012. They requested all participating countries to undertake the necessary domestic consultations as a

matter of urgency.

12. The Ministers were pleased to note the outcomes of the 6th ASEAN-CER Integration Partnership Forum in Auckland in May 2016, with the theme “Economic Integration in Challenging Times”. The Ministers welcomed New Zealand’s proposal for Parties in the future to enhance two-way information-sharing on how CER and ASEAN are pursuing their respective integration processes, in view of the significant developments in ASEAN integration since the Integration Partnership Forum began in 2011.

13. The Ministers commended the discussions at the Philippines-Australia Forum on *Women’s Economic Empowerment: The Next Driver of ASEAN’s Success*, which was held on 29 August 2017 in Manila, Philippines. The Ministers underscored the vital role that improving gender equality and removing barriers to women’s full workforce participation could play in lifting the performance of regional economies, and welcomed Australia’s proposal that ASEAN, Australia and New Zealand explore working together to promote these issues within ASEAN’s economic pillar.

14. ASEAN Ministers welcomed Australia’s briefing on preparations for the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit, to be held on 17–18 March 2018 in Sydney, with the theme “*Enhancing Regional Security and Prosperity*”. The ASEAN-Australia Business Summit will be held immediately prior to the Special Summit (on 16–17 March).

LIST OF MINISTERS

1. **The Hon. Steven Ciobo**, Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment, Australia;
2. **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);
3. **H.E. Pan Sorasak**, Minister of Commerce, Cambodia;
4. **H.E. Enggartiasto Lukita**, Minister of Trade, Indonesia;
5. **H.E. Mrs. Khemmani Pholsena**, Minister of Industry and Commerce, Lao PDR;
6. **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);
7. **H.E. Kyaw Win**, Union Minister for Planning and Finance, Myanmar;
8. **Hon. Chester Borrows**, Member of Parliament, representing New Zealand;
9. **H.E. Ramon M. Lopez**, Secretary of Trade and Industry, the Philippines;
10. **H.E. Lim Hng Kiang**, Minister for Trade and Industry (Trade), Singapore;
11. **H.E. Mrs. Apiradi Tantraporn**, Minister of Commerce, Thailand;
12. **Mr Luong Hoang Thai**, Director General, Multilateral Trade Policy Department, Ministry of Industry and Trade, Viet Nam (representing H.E. Tran Tuan Anh, Minister of Industry and Trade, Viet Nam);
13. **H.E. Le Luong Minh**, Secretary-General of ASEAN.