

**MEDIA PRESS BRIEFING/PRESS CONFERENCE OF THE
26TH AEC COUNCIL MEETING [AND THE 2ND SPECIAL
AEC COUNCIL MEETING ON ASEAN DEFA]**

TALKING POINTS FOR THE AEC COUNCIL CHAIR

24 October 2025, 1420-1450

**International Media Centre (IMC),
Exhibition Hall 1, Ground Floor. KLCC**

Media Friends and Colleagues

Ladies and Gentlemen

A very good afternoon and thank you for being here.

1. Under the leadership of Malaysia's ASEAN Chairmanship 2025, we successfully convened **the 26th ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Council** this morning.
2. The Meeting was **attended by the AEC Council Ministers** from the **ten ASEAN Member States**, Timor-Leste as an **observer** and the **Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN** for the ASEAN Economic Community. Today's meeting is significant not only for Malaysia, but also for the entire ASEAN community.

3. We are at a **pivotal juncture**, marking the **culmination of the AEC Blueprint 2025** and preparing for **our next journey: the post-2025 agenda**, as set out in the ASEAN Community Vision 2045, particularly the **AEC Strategic Plan 2026-2030**.
4. Under Malaysia's leadership this year, we have **significantly strengthened the ASEAN foundation** and **ensured continuity** to advance our **economic integration** efforts. All these are key towards realising ASEAN's goal of being a **prosperous, stable and resilient economic bloc** - and becoming the **4th largest economy globally by 2030**.
5. I am pleased to highlight the key discussion points and outcomes of our Ministerial meeting.
6. Let me begin by sharing **Malaysia's scorecard** on the implementation of our **18 Priority Economic Deliverables (PEDs)**. As of this meeting, **seven (7) PEDs have been fully completed**, with **another five (5) expected** to be **delivered by the 47th ASEAN Summit** and Related Summits — bringing the total to **twelve (12) completed PEDs**. We are encouraged by this strong progress and remain **confident** that the **remaining six (6) PEDs** will be **successfully delivered by end-2025**.

7. The PEDs to be delivered by the Summits include **two major economic agreements**: the signing of the 2nd Protocol to Amend the **ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (ATIGA)**, and the **ASEAN-China Free Trade Area 3.0** Upgrade Protocol. These are key to **deepening ASEAN regional economic integration**, and ASEAN's engagement with external partners. With provisions that are forward looking, we expect these agreements to future-proof ASEAN's trade architecture. They also reaffirm our commitment to an **open, inclusive, and rules-based trading system**.
8. Next, we are pleased with the signing of the **enhanced ASEAN Power Grid MoU** and the **ASEAN Framework Agreement on Petroleum Security**. These are critical in **building a resilient and sustainable energy future** for the region. In addition, we **welcome the APG Financing Initiative** that is supported by multilateral banks, i.e., the **World Bank and the Asian Development Bank**. This will facilitate and accelerate development of cross-border energy infrastructure in the region.
9. In line with our **commitment to the ASEAN sustainability agenda**, we adopted the **ASEAN Sustainable Investment Guidelines** to reinforce and complement our initiatives on **carbon neutrality and circular economy**. These

Guidelines will create a **responsible and inclusive investment landscape** in the region.

10. We also adopted the **ASEAN Framework for Integrated Semi-Conductor Supply-Chain** to position ASEAN in the global value chain for semi-conductor. With this Framework, we aim to **build on our existing strengths** and **ride on the tech-AI momentum** to capture a **bigger share of the global semiconductor market**, projected to reach **USD1 trillion by 2029**.
11. Related to this, we are very pleased to share that we have substantially concluded the **ASEAN Digital Economy Framework Agreement (DEFA)** negotiations. The DEFA, as the **first regional-wide digital economy arrangement**, is a concrete step towards developing a **comprehensive and coherent digital transformation strategy** towards an ASEAN Digital Economy. DEFA aims to facilitate the **seamless and secure flow of goods, services**, with **data security at its core**, underpinned by **enabling regulation, infrastructure, and talent**. We look forward to concluding the negotiations and signing the DEFA next year.

12. On the **sectoral front**, we have endorsed for adoption by the Leaders for **several declarations on minerals development, quality tourism, food, agriculture and forestry**, and on establishment of AI safety network.
13. The Declaration on the **ASEAN Minerals Development Vision** outlines ASEAN's ambition to become a **leading destination for minerals investment, including critical minerals**. The Vision aims to **strengthen production and trade** through technological advancement, sound governance, and sustainable best practice.
14. **ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Quality Tourism** provides a landmark framework to position ASEAN as a single destination, foster human capital development, promote digital transformation and inclusive marketing.
15. **ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on the Vision for Food, Agriculture and Forestry Towards 2045** articulates a long-term aspiration to establish a sustainable, inclusive, and resilient sector that enhances farmer livelihoods, advances climate action and innovation, as well as reinforces ASEAN's position as a key trading partner.

16. The **Declaration on the Establishment of an ASEAN Safety Network (ASEAN AI SAFE)** will set up a regional hub for AI safety to promote the responsible and ethical use of AI across ASEAN. The hub will also build international partnerships and raise public awareness about AI and its impacts.
17. As we are in the **final phase of the AEC Blueprint 2025**, we also discussed its overall implementation. We are pleased to share that ASEAN is expected to achieve a **substantive completion rate of nearly 90% by December 2025**. We have instructed the sectoral bodies to **ensure delivery of all on-going activities**.
18. We have considered the **recommendations** of the overall end-term reviews of the **AEC Blueprint 2025**. We **support and concur with the measures to address the strategic imperatives** and improve our institutional mechanisms.

19. Moving forward, to ensure effective and practical implementation of the **AEC initiatives** and the successor **AEC Strategic Plan 2026-2030**, we are working towards establishing a robust **results-oriented M&E framework and system, strengthening our strategic foresight capabilities, and developing a well-functioning coordination mechanism.**
20. In terms of the implementation of the **AEC Strategic Plan 2026-2030**, we have further **adopted** its attendant documents, **the Key Outcome Indicators (KOIs) and the Consolidated List of Activities**, apart from the **List of Quick Wins** adopted earlier this year. We also welcomed the **finalisation/endorsement of several sectoral plans**, and noted the progress of the remaining, on-going plans.
21. We also noted the continuing efforts on the **ASEAN Community Statistical System** in enhancing ASEAN Statistics, particularly to enhance the support the implementation and monitoring of the AEC Strategic Plan.
22. Today's AECC Meeting reaffirmed ASEAN's commitment towards a resilient, sustainable, and inclusive regional economy. We look forward to a successful 47th ASEAN

Summit and a shared, prosperous future. I will now take questions from the floor.

Thank you.