



**THE TWELFTH AEM-MOFCOM CONSULTATIONS
20 August 2013, Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam**

JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT

1. The Economic Ministers from the ten ASEAN Member States and the Minister of Commerce of the People's Republic of China met on 20 August 2013 for the 12th AEM-MOFCOM Consultations. The Consultations were co-chaired by The Hon. Pehin Dato Lim Jock Seng, Second Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Brunei Darussalam and H.E. Gao Hucheng, Minister of Commerce of China.

2. The Ministers noted the general performance of ASEAN-China bilateral trade and investments and were pleased that, despite the uncertainty in the global economy, China maintained its position as ASEAN's largest trading partner. ASEAN-China bilateral trade, based on ASEAN statistics, expanded at an annual growth rate of 21.6% from 2009 to 2012. By the end of 2012, ASEAN total trade with China reached US\$ 318.6 billion, increasing by 13.6% from US\$ 280.4 billion in 2011. The Ministers were confident that the goal set by the Leaders to bring bilateral trade to US\$ 500 billion by 2015 would be achieved, if the trend continues up to 2015.

ASEAN-China Free Trade Area

3. The Ministers noted the progress made in implementing the ASEAN-China Free Trade Area (ACFTA) and were pleased with the ACFTA Joint Committee's ongoing efforts in upgrading the ACFTA agreements to ensure that the ACFTA remains dynamic and commercially relevant. The Ministers underscored that, with the liberalisation objectives of the ACFTA almost realised, at least for ASEAN-6 (Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand) and China, efforts should now be directed towards facilitating ASEAN-China bilateral trade and improving the ACFTA through the ongoing review of the Sensitive Track and Rules of Origin.

4. In this context, China briefed the ASEAN Economic Ministers its proposal on building an upgraded version of ACFTA by improving the liberalisation level and expanding the scope and coverage of the agreement. The ASEAN Economic Ministers noted with appreciation this proposal and welcomed the intent for the overall enhancement of the ACFTA.

5. The Ministers noted that the Protocol to Incorporate Technical Barriers to Trade and Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures into the ASEAN-China TIG Agreement (Protocol on TBT/SPS), signed on 18 November 2012, has entered into force on 1 January 2013 for Brunei Darussalam, China, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam. Also noted was the progress made in finalising the draft Chapter text for Customs Procedures and Trade

Facilitation (CPTF), which would subsequently be incorporated into the ASEAN-China Trade in Goods (TIG) Agreement.

6. Stressing the importance of facilitating ASEAN-China bilateral trade, the Ministers urged officials to expedite the conclusion of CPTF negotiations and the review of the Sensitive Track and Rules of Origin, prior to the next AEM-MOFCOM Consultations in 2014.

7. The Ministers also encouraged the ACFTA Joint Committee in its efforts to review the ASEAN-China Trade in Services Agreement, Investment Agreement and the Agreement on Dispute Settlement Mechanism on a regular basis.

ASEAN Roadshow to China

8. The Ministers looked forward to the AEM Roadshow to China scheduled on 23-25 October 2013. The Ministers anticipated that the Roadshow – which would cover the cities of Beijing, Chengdu and Shanghai – would boost the confidence level of the Chinese people, including central and local government officials and business people, in taking advantage of the opportunities arising from the various initiatives not only under the robust ASEAN-China economic relations but also from ASEAN's economic integration efforts.

Other Areas of Cooperation

7. The Ministers were pleased with the success of the 9th China-ASEAN Expo (CAEXPO) held on 21-25 September 2012 in Nanning, China and looked forward to the convening of the 10th CAEXPO scheduled on 3-6 September 2013.

8. The Minister noted the outcomes of the first meeting of the ASEAN Connectivity Coordinating Committee (ACCC) and the Chinese Working Committee of China-ASEAN Connectivity Cooperation Committee (ACWC-ACCC) which was held on 7 November 2012. The Ministers viewed that the outcomes of this Meeting would be very important for the future cooperation between ASEAN and China to support Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity. The Ministers requested the ACCC and CWC-CACCC to continue working closely and effectively to ensure a better connectivity between ASEAN and China.

9. The Ministers were pleased with the preliminary work undertaken by ASEAN and Hong Kong to realise the ASEAN-Hong Kong Free Trade Agreement and looked forward to the commencement of the negotiations in early 2014.

10. The Ministers noted the progress made to finalise the roadmap for Pan-Beibu Gulf Economic Cooperation. In this regard, the Ministers encouraged relevant officials to undertake practical approach in advancing the initiative and also to identify concrete and feasible projects.

LIST OF MINISTERS

1. **The Hon. Pehin Dato Lim Jock Seng**, Second Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Brunei Darussalam
2. **H.E. Cham Prasidh**, Senior Minister and Minister of Commerce, Cambodia
3. **H.E. Gao Hucheng**, Minister of Commerce, China
4. **H.E. Bayu Krisnamurthi**, Vice Minister of Trade, Indonesia
5. **H.E. Nam Viyaketh**, Minister of Industry and Commerce, Lao PDR
6. **H.E. Dato' Sri Mustapa Mohamed**, Minister of International Trade and Industry, Malaysia
7. **H.E. Kan Zaw**, Union Minister for National Planning and Economic Development, Myanmar
8. **H.E. Gregory L. Domingo**, Secretary of Trade and Industry, the Philippines
9. **H.E. Lim Hng Kiang**, Minister for Trade and Industry, Singapore
10. **H.E. Niwattumrong Boonsongpaisan**, Minister of Commerce, Thailand
11. **H.E. Vu Huy Hoang**, Minister of Industry and Trade, Viet Nam
12. **H.E. Le Luong Minh**, Secretary-General of ASEAN