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**THE 12TH ASEAN-EU MINISTERIAL MEETING (AEMM)
SINGAPORE
13-14 FEBRUARY 1997**

JOINT DECLARATION

1. We, the Foreign Ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the European Union (EU), met in Singapore from 13-14 February 1997 for the 12th ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting under the co-chairmanship of Singapore and the Netherlands, acting also as Presidency of the Council of the EU. We had a productive and wide-ranging exchange of views on a number of political, security, economic and other issues. The discussion took place in an atmosphere of mutual confidence and understanding, following the spirit of our previous meeting in Karlsruhe on 22-23 September 1994. We reiterated that ASEAN remains a cornerstone of the EU's dialogue with the Asian region.
2. We noted the significant progress and accomplishments of both ASEAN and the EU, and how both have been instrumental in the forging of close ties between the two regions. The economic dynamism of the two regional groupings, their growing importance in the global trading system and their regional political stature, together provide a strong rationale for intensified cooperation in all fields between the two sides.
3. While we recognise the existence of internal and external challenges, we believe that our determination to enhance cooperation, peace and prosperity in our two regions will enable us to create a substantive and mutually beneficial relationship. We welcome the launching of the ASEM process in Bangkok on 1-2 March 1996. As the ASEAN-EU relationship enters its third decade, it is timely to launch a new dynamic in this partnership, which will run parallel with ASEM.

4. We recognise the central role of the ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting as the policy-formulating and coordinating organ of the ASEAN-EU Dialogue relations.
5. We renewed our commitment to reinvigorate and to intensify our longstanding dialogue and cooperation on issues of peace and security, the environment and sustainable development, trade and investment, human rights, based on partnership, shared responsibility and mutual benefit.
6. We expressed our appreciation of the recent progress in implementing the ASEAN Free Trade Area, for example the acceleration of agreed tariff reductions, and recognised that it could create new opportunities for trading partners. In this context, we agreed that cooperation between their two regions could be enhanced with a view to sharing experience - taking into account the unique knowledge the EU had acquired in completing the Single Market and ASEAN had acquired in implementing AFTA - and promoting their respective regional markets.
7. We believe that stronger economic flows between the two regions will drive the dynamo in ASEAN-EU relations. As economic links strengthen, the role of the private sector will become more vital. ASEAN and EU are committed to working towards the encouragement of private sector initiatives which will facilitate greater cooperation. In particular, our Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) can pool their resources and experience to embark on joint ventures, both within and beyond our two regions. Our economic links must be supported and facilitated by stronger people-to-people linkages. We believe intensifying cooperation in these areas will enhance networking at all levels of our society, and foster greater understanding between our people. We support exchanges between the two regions in areas such as our institutions of higher learning, parliamentarians, civil servants, and the media.
8. We welcome the participation for the first time of Vietnam from the ASEAN side and Austria, Finland and Sweden from the EU side at this 12th AEMM in Singapore. In this connection, we have signed the Protocol on the Extension of the Cooperation Agreement between the European Community and the Member Countries of ASEAN to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

MECHANISMS

9. Since 1977, ASEAN and EU have established a strong network of mechanisms to drive ASEAN-EU cooperation. These mechanisms include the ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting, the Post-Ministerial Conference, the ASEAN Regional Forum, the ASEAN-EU Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) and the Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC). In this respect, we note with satisfaction that since the Karlsruhe Meeting in September 1994, there have been two SOMs and one JCC. We will strengthen and build on these mechanisms where necessary, particularly to pursue the enhancing of economic links between ASEAN and the EU, and we will also encourage the private sector to cooperate to this end.

POLITICAL AND SECURITY COOPERATION

10. In the field of political and security cooperation, we reiterated our commitments made at our last Meeting in Karlsruhe, Germany on 22-23 September 1994. We also agreed on the following:
- (i) **Share Perspectives and Information**
ASEAN and the EU play important roles in the security and stability of our respective regions as well as at the global level. We resolve to share with each other our knowledge of and perspective on regional and global political and security issues;
 - (ii) **Deepen Political Dialogue through Frank Discussions of Sensitive Issues of Common Concern**
The ASEAN-EU political dialogue will sensitise both sides to the security and political considerations and concerns of the regions on the basis of equality and mutual respect for each others' sovereignty. Frank and candid discussions on issues of common concern to both sides will increase the mutual understanding and comfort level between our two sides;
 - (iii) Where differences exist, the spirit of dialogue and cooperation between ASEAN and EU should continue, as agreed in Karlsruhe, keeping in mind that the aim of the dialogue is to enhance mutual understanding and foster greater cooperation and friendship;
 - (iv) **Cooperate in International Fora**
ASEAN and the EU share common perspectives on many global issues. We will therefore explore the scope for bringing closer together the positions of our two regions and cooperate on matters of mutual interest in the international fora. We reiterated our commitment to the strengthening of international cooperation, in particular in the framework of the United Nations (UN). We fully support the new Secretary-General of the UN and his agenda to reform the organisation and his call to members to pay in full their contributions;

- (v) We agreed to coordinate our efforts in responding to new global challenges, such as the environment, international terrorism, transnational organised crime, trafficking in people, especially in women, and the sexual exploitation of children, drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking, money laundering and diversion of chemical precursors;
- (vi) We had an exchange of views on Myanmar.

11. In addition we had a full and constructive discussion on the following:

- (i) We recognised the success of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) which had proven to be an excellent framework for the discussion of political and security issues in the Asia-Pacific Region. The innovative "two-track approach" of the ARF was recognised as offering opportunities for both formal and informal exchange of views between ARF-participants on a wide range of issues. ASEAN Ministers noted with appreciation the sponsorship of ARF "track two" events by the EU.
- (ii) We welcomed the signing in Bangkok in December 1995 of the Treaty establishing a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone in Southeast Asia and the recent conclusion and signing of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and called on all states to sign and ratify this document as soon as possible. We also welcomed the conclusion of the Fourth Review Conference of the Biological and the Toxin Weapon Convention that the ad hoc group, which is considering a legally binding instrument to strengthen the Convention, should intensify its work and conclude negotiations as soon as possible. We agreed to attach a high priority to efforts to deal with the suffering and destruction caused by the indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines (APLs), and called on states to work towards an international agreement banning the use, stockpile, production and transfer of APLs;
- (iii) We emphasised our common commitment to the promotion of and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms on the basis of the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action of 1993. We expressed our strong support for the successful implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. In our discussions, references were made to the work of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights;
- (iv) We recalled the ASEAN Declaration on the South China Sea and welcomed the efforts by countries concerned to seek solutions by peaceful means in accordance with international law in general and with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea in particular. We noted the positive contributions made by the series of Informal Workshops on Managing Potential Conflicts in the South China Sea;

- (v) Bearing in mind the importance of peace and security on the Korean Peninsula, we stressed the need to establish a peace mechanism and also emphasised that the 1953 Armistice Agreement until then should remain valid. We reiterated the importance of the resumption of dialogue between the Republic of Korea and the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea. We noted the importance of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organisation (KEDO) and encouraged other countries to consider giving financial and political support to KEDO.
- (vi) We welcomed the efforts of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia in various areas, including in their political, economic and social reform process, thus enhancing prosperity and stability in the region. The EU Ministers explained that the associated countries in Eastern Europe now have a clear perspective for membership in the European Union. We noted that structural reform in the region continued to give rise to new opportunities for economic engagement which all countries should take advantage of;
- (vii) We welcomed the progress which has been achieved in the implementation of the Peace Agreement for Bosnia-Herzegovina signed in Paris in December 1995 and in the broader peace process in former Yugoslavia. We reaffirmed our strong support for this implementation and for the economic reconstruction effort throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina, including making financial contribution where appropriate, in accordance with the obligations undertaken by the authorities in Bosnia-Herzegovina. We appealed to the international community to mobilise all necessary resources for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Bosnia-Herzegovina;
- (viii) We voiced support for the fundamental principles of a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement in the Middle East, notably "land for peace" and self-determination for the Palestinians, with all that this implies. We called on all parties to implement existing agreements, avoid provocative acts that would undermine the peace process, and continue or resume negotiations on all tracks and in accordance with the principles of Madrid and the Oslo Declaration;
- (ix) We noted that Palestinian social and economic development is an essential element of a just and durable settlement. Consequently, we appealed to the international community to make resources available to assist in the development of the Palestinian territories.

ECONOMIC COOPERATION

A. TRADE

12. We reaffirm the importance of mutually beneficial economic cooperation:

(i) **World Trade Organisation (WTO)**

We stressed the central importance of the WTO for a fair, equitable and more open rule-based international trading system and for the progressive liberalisation of international trade. We reaffirmed our commitment to implement the Uruguay Round agreements, and to bring to a satisfactory conclusion the remaining negotiations;

(ii) We recognised the satisfactory and balanced results of the Singapore WTO Ministerial Conference (MC). We expressed satisfaction on the conclusions reached at that meeting and indicated our willingness to work together to achieve the objectives defined at that meeting. We underlined the good cooperation between ASEAN and the EU and the importance of the active contribution of developed and developing countries to achieving the objectives of the WTO MC;

(iii) We welcomed in particular the Conference conclusions regarding the least developed countries;

(iv) **Potential for Stronger Links**

The developments taking place in the two regions, give us optimism that there is a great potential for a further strengthening of our economic links. ASEAN and EU are among the most dynamic economic regions in the world today. The EU is the world's largest trading entity, while ASEAN is one of the fastest growing regions in the world. This provides a sound basis for dynamic economic cooperation between ASEAN and EU;

(v) **Increase in Trade Flows and AFTA-EU Cooperation**

ASEAN-EU trade has increased significantly. In 1995, the value of trade between ASEAN and the EU reached US\$86 billion - nearly four times that in 1980. As the potential to further increase this is tremendous, we agreed that there should be mutual efforts to improve market access and promote and facilitate the free flow of goods and services between our two regions;

(vi) The above cooperation will be in the area of trade facilitation and aims to be trade creating and without being trade diversionary;

(vii) To facilitate this, we agreed that AFTA-EU cooperation should be pursued. This would include measures to increase awareness of business opportunities and business environments in both regions and minimise impediments to inter-regional trade;

(viii) **Customs Cooperation**

We agreed to initiate ASEAN-EU cooperation in customs matters;

(ix) **Sharing of Information**

Cooperation between the two regions could be enhanced by sharing our particular regional experiences - the EU in implementing the Single Market and ASEAN in implementing the ASEAN Free Trade Area. These regional trading arrangements should complement the multilateral trade system and be consistent with WTO;

(x) We expressed support for the extension of the EU-ASEAN Patents and Trademarks Programme;

(xi) **Standards and Conformance**

Following the success of the Industrial Standards and Quality Assurance Programme, a second phase of this scheme has been launched. The aim is to strengthen ASEAN-EU trade flows through the adoption of compatible structures, standards and conformity assessment procedures.

B. Business and Investment Cooperation

(i) **Investment Opportunities in EU and ASEAN**

The establishment of AFTA and the expansion of ASEAN present greater investment opportunities for EU companies. As ASEAN economies grow and mature, ASEAN investors will be in a better position to invest within the EU. We expressed our conviction that further liberalisation of investment conditions would lead to increased investment flows;

(ii) We also welcomed the developing role of the European Investment Bank in ASEAN countries. We take note of the role of European Business Information Centres (EBIC). We noted that in regard to the European Community Investment Partners Programme (ECIP) that financing for approved actions in ASEAN countries exceeded 36 million ECUs in 1996. All these play an important role in facilitating investment flows and promoting joint ventures between the two regions.

(iii) We recognised the efforts made to establish an Asia-Invest programme which aims to encourage growth in two-way trade and investment flows between Europe and South and South East Asia;

(iv) **Business Networking and Joint Ventures**

While investment should by and large be a business sector effort, governments can assist by facilitating business networking and the dissemination of information. ASEAN and EU will promote programmes aimed at stimulating broader and deeper business ties between the two regions;

- (v) **ASEAN-EU Partenariat**
We consider that the holding of the ASEAN-EU Partenariat in Singapore later this year is a significant event for small and medium-sized enterprises and for business-to-business cooperation in a broader context;
 - (vi) **ASEAN-EU Industrialist Roundtable**
We also noted with interest the forthcoming ASEAN-EU Industrialist Roundtable whose goal is to initiate an informal dialogue between the leaders of industry and further a propitious climate for trade and investment between the two regions while avoiding duplication with other activities in this field;
 - (vii) **Junior EU-ASEAN Managers Exchange Programme**
The launch of the Junior EU-ASEAN Managers Exchange Programme in November 1996 represents a significant event. We fully support this programme which aims to place 675 junior managers from ASEAN countries in European companies and 300 European junior managers in ASEAN companies by 1999;
 - (viii) **Business Associations**
We encourage the different business associations of the two regions to cooperate.
13. We encourage the private sector to cooperate for the development of trade and investment in areas of particular importance to the ASEAN and EU.

DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

14. We discussed ASEAN-EU cooperation and reaffirmed our commitment to give priority to the alleviation of poverty, human resource development, health and family planning, the role of women, respect for human rights, environment and sustainable development, taking into account the individual ASEAN countries' needs.
15. We acknowledge that the EU has played an important role over the last two decades in assisting the development of ASEAN member states, ASEAN and the EU, as equal partners, can continue to work together for the economic development of ASEAN in this new dynamic partnership. We will undertake the following:
- (i) **Development assistance**
We reaffirm our commitment to assist the economic growth and social welfare of the poor with a notable effort accorded to the development of rural areas and primary education. As the region develops, it will not only be an attractive location for EU investments, but will in turn be a dynamic and growing market for EU products;

- (ii) **Cooperate on the eradication of illiteracy** and work towards developing better informed and educated societies, through cooperation in educational development on an inter-disciplinary basis;
- (iii) **Public Sector**
Intensify our cooperation in the field of training for the civil service in ASEAN and the EU to further enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of our individual civil services;
- (iv) **Cooperation on the Environment**
Stressing the importance of sustainable development, we welcome the decision to establish an ASEAN Regional Centre for Biodiversity Conservation (ARCBC) in Manila in the near future with the support of the EU. We also noted with satisfaction the Joint Cooperation Committee decision to establish an informal working group on the environment. We agree to cooperate on matters of sustainable development in tourism development through preservation of cultural and environmental resources.

OTHER AREAS OF COOPERATION

16. We also agreed to cooperate in the following areas:

- (i) **Science and Technology**
We will strive towards technological competitiveness by building on the strengths and cooperation between ASEAN and the EU in science and technology that is self-sustaining and demand driven. We welcome the establishment of the JCC Sub-Committee on Science and Technology and the significant number of proposals received from ASEAN participants under the EU's Fourth Framework Programme for Research and Technology For Development;
- (ii) **Drugs**
We noted that the individual ASEAN countries and the EC were working towards entering into bilateral agreements on Drugs Precursors Control;
- (iii) **Transfer of Technology and Know-how**
We agree to embark on new initiatives to ensure greater security and sustainability of energy supply through diversification, development and conservation of resources, the efficient use of energy and the wider application of environmentally sound technologies.

PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE INTERACTION

17. Both ASEAN and the EU are rich in culture and history. However there is still a lack of familiarity about each other's cultures. We therefore recognise the need to promote greater understanding between our peoples through the following:

- (i) **Cooperation Between Institutions**
With the ASEAN University Network already established, cooperation between ASEAN and EU universities and institutions of higher learning in all areas especially European and ASEAN studies, engineering and language training shall be developed and strengthened;
- (ii) **Enhance Media Understanding/Cooperation**
Establish exchange programmes between ASEAN and the EU to enhance media cooperation, including exchanges of visits between ASEAN and the EU to increase mutual understanding of each other's interests and sensitivities;
- (iii) **Cultural Exchanges**
To encourage frequent exchanges of cultural performances, exhibitions of works of art and cultural relics, inter-visits of cultural officials and artists;
- (iv) **Human Resource Development**
We shall work together to upgrade our human resources by investing in building institutional capacities for education, training and research, furthering of contacts between middle management ASEAN and EU officials, science and technology and technology transfer, as well as strengthening the networking of HRD institutions.

18. We express appreciation to the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) for the report which had been prepared at the request of the AEMM at Karlsruhe. We noted this report and recalled that the Commission has taken account of the Eminent Persons general conclusions in preparing its recent communication on a new dynamic in ASEAN-EU relations. This important communication has been actively studied within the Union bodies.

CONCLUSION

19. We agreed to take action to consolidate, deepen and diversify EU-ASEAN relations in a dynamic manner in particular regarding economic relations. Possible actions in this regard are in the area of trade in goods and services, investment, economic and development cooperation and interregional strategy. We invite our appropriate officials to discuss how best to implement this declaration, in particular by strengthening and building on the strong network of mechanisms which drive ASEAN-EU cooperation, so as to strengthen the ASEAN-EU dialogue and work towards a productive relationship into the 21st century.