



THE THIRTEENTH AEM-CER CONSULTATIONS Singapore, 28 August 2008

JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT

1. The Thirteenth Consultations between the ASEAN Economic Ministers (AEM) and the Ministers of Australia and New Zealand (Closer Economic Relations – CER) (13th AEM-CER Consultations) was held in Singapore on 28 August 2008. The Consultations was chaired by H.E. Lim Hng Kiang, Minister for Trade and Industry, Singapore; the Honorable Simon Crean, Minister for Trade of Australia; and the Honorable Phil Goff, Minister of Trade of New Zealand.

ASEAN-Australia and New Zealand FTA

2. The Ministers welcomed the conclusion of the negotiations between ASEAN, Australia and New Zealand for the AANZFTA Agreement, which started in March 2005. They commended the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Trade Negotiating Committee (AANZTNC) and its Working Groups for completing the negotiations and forging a comprehensive single undertaking FTA Agreement between ASEAN and CER. Commitments were given to resolve a small number of bilateral market access issues between certain parties.

3. The Ministers noted that the Agreement is an important milestone in the long-standing ASEAN-CER comprehensive partnership. As a living document, the



Agreement brings to a new height the level of cooperation and relationship between the governments of ASEAN, Australia and New Zealand as well as its peoples.

4. The Ministers see the Agreement as paving the way to enhancing the region's economic integration and acting as an impetus to deepen and broaden the trade and investment among the twelve participating countries. The Ministers noted that the Agreement is comprehensive in scope covering trade in goods, investment, trade in services, financial services, telecommunications, electronic commerce, movement of natural persons, intellectual property, competition policy and economic cooperation.

5. The Ministers noted that further steps have to be taken by the participating countries leading to the signing of the Agreement by December 2008. As a next step, the Ministers noted that participating countries have to collectively undertake the legal verification of the final Agreement, and thereafter, commence their respective domestic approval process for signing.

ASEAN-CER Trade and Investment Relations

6. The Ministers noted the continuing growth in trade and investment in 2007 between ASEAN and CER. The Ministers noted that ASEAN's total merchandise trade on goods with CER increased from USD 41.0 billion in 2006 to USD 47.8 billion in 2007. The year-on-year growth of 16.6 percent is attributed to the strong performance of exports. ASEAN exports grew from USD 26.2 billion in 2006 to USD 31.0 billion in 2007, representing a growth from 17.5 percent to 18.4 percent. ASEAN imports from CER have consistently maintained its growth rate of 13.4 percent in the last two years, increasing from USD 14.8 billion in 2006 to USD 16.8 billion in 2007. These developments resulted to a wider ASEAN trade surplus with CER, which reached USD 14.2 billion in 2007 from USD 11.4 billion in 2006.



7. The Ministers noted that CER's total flows of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to ASEAN also surged to USD 1.1 billion in 2007 – the highest recorded value of investment inflows from CER since 1995.

World Trade Organization

8. The Ministers noted the developments in the Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations following the WTO Mini-Ministerial Meeting held in Geneva in July 2008. The Ministers shared a common view to preserving the progress so far achieved in the negotiations, and expressed that the Members of the WTO should continue and engage in dialogues to find a way forward to completing the negotiations.

Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation

9. The Ministers were pleased to note the outcome of the Meeting of APEC Ministers Responsible for Trade held in Arequipa, Peru on 31 May to 1 June 2008 and looked forward to a successful APEC Leaders' Week scheduled to be held in Lima, Peru on 16-23 November 2008.

Recognition of Full Market Economy Status of Viet Nam

10. The Ministers welcomed the announcement by Australia and New Zealand of the substantive conclusion of the process for recognizing Viet Nam's Market Economy Status and confirmation of the required domestic approval processes. This would strengthen economic and trade relations between all parties. The ASEAN Ministers encouraged the early confirmation by other countries of Viet Nam's full market economy status.
