

**Joint Press Release of the 34th Meeting of the ASEAN Committee on Science and  
Technology  
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 17-21 November 1997**

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1. The 34th Meeting of the ASEAN Committee on Science and Technology (COST) was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 17 to 21 November 1997, attended delegates from all ASEAN Member Countries and the ASEAN Secretariat. The Meeting welcomed the delegates from Laos and Myanmar who are attending the COST Meeting for the first time.

2. The Honourable Datuk Abu Bakar Daud, Deputy Minister of Science, Technology and the Environment, Malaysia, officially opened the 34th Meeting of ASEAN COST. The Deputy Minister in his opening statement cited the challenges to ASEAN S&T cooperation within the context of the current economic slowdown in the region including the need to strengthen each country's S&T capacities and human resources, enhance public-private collaboration and promote commercialisation of R&D results to sharpen ASEAN's technological competitiveness. He also emphasised the development of infrastructure and facilities to boost competence in information technology.

3. Mr. Gong Wee Lik, the ASEAN COST Chairman, delivered the Welcome Address. Mr. Gong cited that with the growth of the Southeast Asian economies, development is moving to the forefront as an area which collectively ASEAN will need to focus on to enhance ASEAN competitive edge. He also highlighted two significant events of ASEAN COST that would be taking place, namely the 6th ASEAN Food Conference 24-27 November 1997 in Singapore and the 5th ASEAN S&T Week on 6-15 October 1998 in Hanoi.

4. The Meeting discussed the preparations for the Fifth ASEAN Science Technology Week (FASTW) which will be held in Hanoi, Vietnam on 6-15 October with the theme "Science and Technology: A Dynamic Force Towards Sustainable Development in ASEAN". The FASTW will feature scientific conferences and exhibition on food science and technology, meteorology and geophysics, microelectronics information technology, materials science and technology, biotechnology, conventional energy research, marine sciences, and science and technology infrastructure and resource development. The following awards will also be given during the event: ASEAN Young Scientist and Technologist Award, ASEAN Outstanding Scientist and Technologist Award, and ASEAN Science and Technology Meritorious Award. The event is open to the public and invitations will be extended to ASEAN Dialogue and Sectoral dialogue Partners as well as to the private sector.

5. The Meeting also reviewed the preparations for the Sixth ASEAN Food Conference (SAFC) which will be held on 24-27 November 1997 in Singapore with the theme "Food Science and Technology: Opportunities and Challenges". The SAFC is organised by the Singapore Institute of Food Science and Technology (SIFST) and supported by the National Science and Technology Board (NSTB), in cooperation with ASEAN COST and the Federation of Institutes of Food Science and Technology in ASEAN (FIFSTA). The event will feature a series of presentations and discussions in plenary, scientific and poster

sessions, informal gatherings, and an exhibition to highlight the various achievements of food science and technology in the region and around the world, The Best Product Award from ASEAN member countries will also be displayed la d at the exhibition.

6. The Meeting agreed to provide allocations from the ASEAN Science Fund support publication of the ASEAN Journal on Science and Technology for Development and for the development of the Journal Web pages. The Meeting expressed support for the forthcoming seminar on ASEAN S&T Vision Into the New Millennium to be held on 8-11 December 1997 in Kuala Lumpur.

7. With regard to the three ASEAN Science and Technology Awards conferred COST triennially, the Meeting agreed in principle to increase the frequency and to number of awards given and to have more categories of awards to recognise not only scientific achievements but also teaching, technology and innovation, and S&T policy and management.

8. The Meeting noted the completion of the S&T Indicators project and publication of the First Report. The First ASEAN Science and Technology indicators Report presents general observations about the state of scientific research technology development in the ASEAN region and gives recommendations to the ASEAN COST on assisting ASEAN countries in national and regional economic, industrial human resource planning, by giving information required for self-measurement as well as benchmarking against other regional groupings.

9. The Meeting reviewed the progress of 56 COST projects in food science technology, meteorology and geophysics, microelectronics and information technology materials science and technology, biotechnology, non-conventional energy research marine sciences, and science and technology infrastructure and resource development. It also reviewed the development of cooperation programmes with ASEAN Dial Partners, namely, Australia, Canada, China, European Union, India, Japan, Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Russia, United States and UNDP.

10. The Meeting agreed that the next Meeting of ASEAN COST will be held in the Philippines in the first week of April 1998.