

**Joint Media Statement of the First ASEAN Telecommunications & IT Ministers
(TELMIN)
Kuala Lumpur, 13-14 July 2001**

1. The First ASEAN Telecommunications Ministers Meeting (TELMIN) was held on 13-14 July 2001 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The Meeting was preceded by the Second ASEAN Telecommunications Senior Officials Meeting (TELSOM) held on 11-12 July 2001.

2. H.E. Datuk Amar Leo Moggie, Minister of Energy, Communications and Multimedia of Malaysia, chaired the First TELMIN, with H.E. Mr. Pantaleon D. Alvarez, Secretary of Transportation and Communications of the Philippines, as Vice-Chairman.

Opening Ceremony

3. The Honorable Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, Prime Minister of Malaysia, represented by H.E. Datuk Amar Leo Moggie, Minister of Energy, Communications and Multimedia, Malaysia, officially opened the First TELMIN.

4. In his Keynote Address, Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir highlighted the timely establishment of the First TELMIN given the dynamism and rapid developments of the communications and ICT sector worldwide, which is responsible for shaping a new kind of economy, where knowledge and information is the prime mover of productivity and economic performance. The Prime Minister expressed his view that the shift to a knowledge-based economy offers significant potential for the ASEAN region to achieve and maintain sustainable economic growth and competitiveness in the medium and long-term. In the context of transforming ASEAN into a knowledge-based economy, the Prime Minister urged the First TELMIN to give particular attention to key areas of concerns, namely, accessibility by narrowing the digital divide, development of skills and expertise promote and enhance the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), development of local and regional content for the ASEAN region and ensuring a well-coordinated network security. The Prime Minister also expressed his view that cyber-crimes and the increasing use of the Internet for misinformation are two rising incidence concerning network security that need to be given greater attention.

Strategies for Enhanced Cooperation in the ASEAN Telecommunications and ICT Sector

5. At their inaugural meeting, the Ministers exchanged views on the current state of telecommunications and ICT cooperation in ASEAN. The Ministers recognized ICT as growth enabler for economies of ASEAN member countries and as a potential tool to compete in the increasingly global economy. They emphasized the need for cooperation and collaboration for a “more wired” and “more interconnected” ASEAN to draw a fair share of global investments and boost sustainable growth in the region.

6. The Ministers underscored the importance of the e-ASEAN Framework Agreement signed by the ASEAN Leaders in November 2000 at the 4th ASEAN Informal Summit, to provide greater momentum to collectively address the digital divide issue and enhance the connectivity of the member countries by improving their national information infrastructures. The Ministers reiterated the pivotal role that TELMIN could play in realizing the e-ASEAN vision.

7. The Ministers acknowledged that e-ASEAN can effectively promote economic growth, social development and better governance; enhance access to information and news; enlarge employment opportunities; increase economic output; provide more efficient access to a range of governmental services; make distance education and training more effective; improve delivery of health services, including the application of tele-medicine, among others. They also acknowledged that ICT allows access to information sources worldwide; promote business and networks transcending borders; and help spread knowledge about best practices and experience.

8. The Ministers emphasized the need to intensify collaborative efforts in advancing e-ASEAN particularly in facilitating the early realization of the ASEAN Information Infrastructure (AII), promoting universal and affordable access to information and communication services, including the Internet, and the building up of human resources capacity. They urged an industry led-resolution of the problems posed by the current international charging arrangements for Internet services and called for fairer and more sustainable arrangements, including cost-sharing. They urged member countries to set a culture of partnerships, competitiveness, innovation and entrepreneurship to support and sustain the development and growth of the telecommunication and ICT sector in ASEAN. They also urged member countries to create responsive policy and regulatory environment for investment, infrastructure development and technology development and to continue working collaboratively in promoting capacity for ASEAN citizens to communicate in the information age. They reinforced the importance of developing ASEAN content on the Internet. They agreed to work towards bridging the capacity gap between the old and newer ASEAN member countries, with the more advanced members sharing their expertise, training and educational resources with the less advanced members.

9. The Ministers collectively shared the view that the AII's successful implementation depends on the strong commitment and cooperation of the member countries. The Ministers agreed that member countries should assist one another in the AII's development, including network infrastructure, applications and services and in regulatory and investment policies. They stressed that member countries work towards accelerating the development and implementation of their respective national information infrastructures, remove barriers that impede the growth of Electronic Commerce, and encourage private sector investment and participation in telecommunications and ICT development.

10. The Ministers expressed support to the Prime Minister Mahathir's call to address issues on narrowing the digital divide, enhancing human capacity through the establishment of Regional Centres of Excellence in ICT, and promoting network security through a proposed ASEAN Network Security Coordinating Centre, and agreed to further explore the proposals. .

Signing of the Ministerial Understanding on ASEAN Cooperation in Telecommunications and Information Technology

11. The Ministers signed the Ministerial Understanding on ASEAN Cooperation in Telecommunications and Information Technology. This Ministerial Understanding formalizes the ASEAN's resolve to, among others, move forward ASEAN cooperation in the telecommunications and IT sector by establishing the ASEAN Information Infrastructure and further advancing the e-ASEAN initiative, bridging the digital divide through capacity building and human resource development programs, and facilitating intra-ASEAN trade and investments in the telecommunications and IT.

12. To advance ASEAN cooperation in the Telecommunications and IT sector, the Ministers agreed to the formation of Working Groups under TELSOM, with designated coordinating countries, as follows:

- a) ASEAN Information Infrastructure – Philippines/Singapore
- b) Capacity Building – Thailand / CLMV countries
- c) Universal Access and Digital Divide – Malaysia/Viet Nam and Indonesia
- d) Trade and Investment Facilitation – Indonesia / Singapore
- e) Positive Use of the Internet – Malaysia/Thailand.

Fostering Collaborative Actions in e-ASEAN's Implementation

13. In the implementation of the e-ASEAN Framework Agreement, the Ministers agreed that TELSOM and its Working Groups will accelerate the following deliverables:

- a) Technical and policy framework for ASEAN Information Infrastructure (AII) to cover among others regional interconnectivity and interoperability
- b) Development of high speed direct connection/broadband services for the AII backbone network
- c) Improving universal access and narrowing digital divide in the "least connected" ASEAN members
- d) Capacity building and human resource development programs

Sectoral MRA for Facilitating Intra-ASEAN Trade for Telecommunications Equipment

14. The Ministers noted that the e-ASEAN Framework Agreement provides for the implementation of the ASEAN Sectoral MRA. In this regard, the Ministers strongly supported and urged the speedy implementation Sectoral MRA for Telecommunications Equipment adopted at the Sixth ASEAN Telecommunication Regulators Council (ATRC) Meeting in Brunei Darussalam in October 2000. It will put in place the region-wide acceptance or recognition of conformity assessment procedures for telecommunications equipment, thereby facilitating market access and suppliers in another's market.

Building Cooperative Partnership with the Private Sector and ASEAN Dialogue Partners

15. The Ministers recognized the importance of the private sector and the ASEAN dialogue partners in ASEAN cooperation in the telecommunications and IT sector. In this regard, the Ministers agreed to the formation of an ASEAN telecommunications business forum, as well as to build cooperative partnership with the ASEAN dialogue partners. They noted that TELSOM will have future consultation / dialogue with their counterparts from China, Japan and the Republic of Korea, as well as the US-ASEAN Business Council.

Second TELMIN

16. The Second TELMIN will be held in Manila, Philippines in July/August 2002.

17. The First TELMIN was held in the traditional spirit of ASEAN cordiality and solidarity.

LIST OF ASEAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS MINISTERS

The Meeting was attended by the following:

H.E. PEHIN DATO ZAKARIA SULAIMAN
Minister of Communications, Brunei Darussalam

H.E. MR. LAM PHU AN
Secretary of State
Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications, Cambodia

DR. DJAMHARI SIRAT, Director General of Posts and Telecommunications on behalf
of DR. IR. BUDHI MULYAWAN SUYITNO
Minister of Communications, Indonesia

H.E. MR. BOUATHONG VONGLOKHAM
Minister of Communication, Transport, Post and Construction, Lao PDR

H.E. DATUK AMAR LEO MOGGIE
Minister of Energy, Communications and Multimedia, Malaysia

H.E. BRIG. GEN. THEIN ZAW
Minister of Communications, Posts and Telegraphs, Myanmar

H.E. MR. PANTALEON D. ALVAREZ
Secretary of Transportation and Communications, Philippines

H.E. MR. YEO CHEOW TONG
Minister for Communications and Information Technology, Singapore

H.E. MR. WANMUHAMADNOOR MATHA
Minister of Transport and Communications, Thailand

H.E. DR. MAI LIEM TRUC
Secretary, Department General of Posts and Telecommunications, Viet Nam

and

H.E. MR. RODOLFO C. SEVERINO, JR
ASEAN Secretary-General