

Press Release

The People's Republic of China Appoints its Ambassador to ASEAN

ASEAN Secretariat, 31 December 2008

The Secretary-General of ASEAN, Dr Surin Pitsuwan, welcomed the appointment of Xue Hanqin as the People's Republic of China's first Ambassador to ASEAN.

Expressing delight with the news, Dr Surin said, "Over the years since the start of the ASEAN-China dialogue relations in 1991 and its formalisation in 1996, we have cultivated an extensive and strategic partnership spanning from political and security, trade and economic to social and cultural cooperation. With this appointment, China once again demonstrates its strong commitment and enthusiasm to strengthen ties and work more closely with ASEAN."

China is currently ASEAN's fourth largest trading partner and both enjoy close economic ties. "The ASEAN-China Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and the Trade in Goods Agreement were signed in 2002 and 2004 respectively. Both are currently negotiating on the further liberalisation of their services markets under the Trade in Services Agreement which was signed in January 2007. Negotiations on an Investment Agreement have also just been concluded," said Dr Surin.

In recent months, ASEAN has forged closer relations with China's provinces, specifically the provinces of Guangdong, Hubei and Shaanxi, to cooperate in areas of mutual interest. "Now, with Ambassador Xue's appointment to ASEAN, I am confident that the ASEAN-China relationship will be further deepened and widened," Dr Surin added.

China becomes the sixth ASEAN Dialogue Partner to appoint its Ambassador to ASEAN, after the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Japan and the Republic of Korea.