



**FIRST ASEAN ECONOMIC MINISTERS PLUS ASEAN FTA PARTNERS CONSULTATIONS
30 August 2012, Siem Reap, Cambodia**

JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT

1. ASEAN Economic Ministers (AEM) and their counterparts from ASEAN's FTA Partners today made an important first step towards establishing a new regional free trade area in the form of a Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). Ministers recognized the significance of RCEP in strengthening the region's economic architecture, and committed to making RCEP a modern, high quality agreement, which will underpin and promote future growth, development and integration in the participating countries.
2. Economic Ministers from ASEAN, Australia, China, India, Japan, Republic of Korea and New Zealand participated in the First AEM Plus FTA Partners Consultations, which were chaired by H.E. Dr. Cham Prasidh, Senior Minister and Minister of Commerce of Cambodia.
3. The Ministers welcomed the first meeting among the Economic Ministers of ASEAN and its FTA Partners as a key step towards launching the RCEP negotiations, which could potentially transform the region into an integrated market comprising over 3 billion people with a combined GDP of about US\$ 17.23 trillion (based on 2010 figures).
4. The Ministers were pleased with the progress that is being made by Senior Economic Officials in paving the way for the launch of RCEP negotiations in November 2012. The Ministers also noted the progress made in the RCEP Working Group on Trade in Goods and instructed officials to commence parallel work in the areas of trade in services and investment at the Working Group level as soon as possible. On the basis of this preparatory work by officials, the Ministers agreed to submit recommendations to their governments on the launch of RCEP negotiations.
5. The Ministers agreed to recommend to the Leaders the Guiding Principles and Objectives for Negotiating the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership for their consideration and endorsement in November 2012. The Ministers expressed confidence that this good momentum in the preparatory stage of the RCEP process augurs well for RCEP's contribution to strengthening the region's economic architecture.

LIST OF MINISTERS

1. **Hon. Craig Emerson MP**, Minister for Trade and Competitiveness, Australia
2. **H.E. Pehin Dato Lim Jock Seng**, Second Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Brunei Darussalam
3. **H.E. Cham Prasidh**, Senior Minister and Minister of Commerce, Cambodia
4. **H.E. Chen Deming**, Minister of Commerce, China
5. **H.E. Anand Sharma**, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Textile, India
6. **Mr. Iman Pambagyo**, Director-General of International Trade Cooperation, Ministry of Trade, Indonesia
7. **H.E. Yukio Edano**, Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, Japan
8. **H.E. Bark Taeho**, Minister for Trade, Republic of Korea
9. **H.E. Nam Viyaketh**, Minister of Industry and Commerce, Lao PDR
10. **H.E. Dato' Sri Mustapa Mohamed**, Minister of International Trade and Industry, Malaysia
11. **H.E. U Tin Naing Thein**, Minister for National Planning and Economic Development, Myanmar
12. **Hon. Tim Groser**, Minister of Trade, New Zealand
13. **H.E. Gregory L. Domingo**, Secretary of Trade and Industry, the Philippines
14. **H.E. Lim Hng Kiang**, Minister for Trade and Industry, Singapore
15. **H.E. Boonsong Teriyapirom**, Minister of Commerce, Thailand
16. **H.E. Nguyen Cam Tu**, Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade, Viet Nam
17. **H.E. Surin Pitsuwan**, Secretary-General of ASEAN
