



**JOINT STATEMENT
EIGHTH BRUNEI DARUSSALAM – INDONESIA – MALAYSIA – THE PHILIPPINES
EAST ASEAN GROWTH AREA SUMMIT
(8TH BIMP-EAGA SUMMIT)
PHNOM PENH, CAMBODIA, 4 APRIL 2012**

1. We, the Leaders of Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines had extensive, open and fruitful discussions on developments in the sub-region. We reiterated the importance of sub-regional economic cooperation in BIMP-EAGA as a strategy for complementing ASEAN initiatives to achieve the ASEAN Community by 2015. We noted the encouraging gains achieved towards realizing the strategic thrusts of establishing BIMP-EAGA as a regional food basket and ecotourism destination, as well as enhancing connectivity and managing the environment. We reaffirmed our commitment and support to the BIMP-EAGA cooperation initiatives and we agreed to step-up our individual and collective actions to more effectively address the issues and challenges that continue to impede the realization of BIMP-EAGA's vision and goals.
2. We adopted the BIMP-EAGA Implementation Blueprint (IB) 2012 – 2016 which would serve as guide for timely and effective achievement of these strategic thrusts. To ensure the successful implementation of the strategies and policies as well as projects identified in the Implementation Blueprint, we called upon all stakeholders at the local and national levels particularly the private sector to expedite the implementation of the projects identified in the IB, including the strengthening of the operational and institutional mechanism.
3. We reaffirmed the significant contribution of the BIMP-EAGA sub-regional cooperation in the development of ASEAN Connectivity as a whole and reiterated the importance of connectivity advancements to the economic development and to the narrowing of the development divide within the BIMP-EAGA countries. We commended the transport sector for moving the connectivity agenda forward and for the accomplishments thus far in improving transport and logistics in the subregion. We noted with encouragement the commencement of the inaugural flight of Kalstar, MASwings and Mid Sea Express to serve BIMP-EAGA routes, and support the initiative to identify additional points outside of BIMP-EAGA as part of expanding co-terminalization operations to sustain air services on existing routes and encourage the entry of new sub-regional air connections. We also support the transport sector for its efforts to pave the way for the formalization of non-convention sized ships' operation in the sub-region. Towards this end, we urge relevant Ministries to extend special regulatory arrangements to entice entry of players in the air and shipping services within the sub-region. We are also pleased with the progress on the Priority Infrastructure Projects (PIPs) and continue to urge our officials to take proactive measures in accelerating the implementation of these PIPs as well as identifying and prioritizing additional infrastructure projects to support and promote overall connectivity in the subregion.

4. We have declared, at the ASEAN level that food security is one of our main priorities in our regional development programmes and, therefore, reaffirm the potential contribution of the food basket strategy of BIMP-EAGA to achieving food security, not only in BIMP-EAGA, but in ASEAN as a whole. We were encouraged by the progress in the formulation of the action and investment plans under the food basket strategy. We supported the initiatives to jointly enhance our production capacity and strengthen cross-border trade of raw materials as the initial building blocks towards enhancing long-term cooperation. We urged our agriculture and fisheries officials to work more closely with the private sector in forging joint venture projects related to food production and product/resource consolidation; establishing a policy and incentive environment, particularly on trade facilitation measures. In this regard, we look forward to the conduct of the “BIMP-EAGA and IMT-GT High Value Agriculture Business Conference and Expo” in Melaka in 2012 and its recommendations, which will further strengthen the food basket strategy.
5. We were encouraged with the continued initiatives to promote the “Equator Asia” tourism brand and applauded the tourism sector for the launching of the Equator Asia “Hop On Hop Off” bus service linking Pontianak, Indonesia, through Kuching, Malaysia and Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam to Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia. We welcomed the collaboration between the transport and tourism sector in promoting sustainability of intra-EAGA connectivity and thus supported the conduct of the 1st “Equator Asia Air Access Forum and Airline Summit in the Philippines on 18 – 19 April 2012. We urge the Tourism Ministers to strongly support and include in their national tourism campaigns the marketing and promotion programs of Equator Asia, especially the needed support for the development of the priority community-based ecotourism sites with the end view of increasing tourist arrivals in the sub-region.
6. Recognizing that BIMP-EAGA’s long-term economic development is anchored on the efficient and sustainable use of its natural resources, we encouraged relevant sectoral ministries to actively involve local governments and the private sector in developing a strategic plan of action to protect and conserve the sub-region’s forest and marine resources and biodiversity. Consistent with our commitment to actively engage in addressing climate change issues both at the global and regional levels; and recognizing its significant implications to connectivity, food basket and tourism initiatives, we also directed our relevant sectoral ministers to start discussions at the BIMP-EAGA level towards addressing sub-regional climate change issues both in terms of mitigation and adaptation.
7. We noted the progress undertaken to formalize the establishment of BIMP-EAGA Facilitation Center (BIMP-EAGA FC) as the central secretariat for our sub-regional cooperation, and look forward to the conclusion of this agreement as soon as possible. We welcomed the initiatives to strengthen the BIMP-EAGA FC, including through technical assistance from the Asian Development Bank (ADB). We also look forward to the recommendation on the strategy in strengthening the collaboration among regional secretariats and other sub-regional institutions to achieve a more coordinated approach to BIMP-EAGA development particularly in the context of supporting the implementation of the projects in the IB.

8. We continue to urge the private sector to play a more pro-active role in implementing initiatives that would encourage public-private partnerships as well as introducing innovations in project development. We, therefore, affirmed our support to various business initiatives of the private sector in BIMP-EAGA and encourage to BIMP-EAGA Business Council (BEBC) to actively engage private sector individuals, groups and industry associations into business interactions within and across the sub-region, as well as sourcing out funds to implement their projects, programs and activities.
9. We are grateful to the ADB, our Regional Development Advisor, for its unwavering support, which now spans over a decade, in the areas of strategy formulation, sector studies and capacity building. We are particularly appreciative of ADB's contribution in the completion of the BIMP-EAGA IB 2012-2016, a landmark document signifying our collective stance for a more focused and results-based cooperation in the coming years. We requested ADB to assist in taking forward the Implementation Blueprint and strengthening the BIMP-EAGA Facilitation Center.
10. We appreciated the ASEAN Secretariat's increasing engagement with BIMP-EAGA and urged them to strengthen their support in high-profiling the sub-regional cooperation to ASEAN's dialogue and external partners; provide advice and guidance in aligning the BIMP-EAGA development agenda with the ASEAN Economic Community Initiatives and help mobilize knowledge, technical and financial resources. We welcomed the growing recognition of this sub-regional program to ASEAN community building, including its contributions in the implementation of some priority projects in the Masterplan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC). We looked forward to BIMP-EAGA priority infrastructure projects to be financed by the ASEAN Infrastructure Fund.
11. We looked forward to a more dynamic engagement by all stakeholders to establish joint venture undertakings to move forward the sub-region's existing relations with China and Japan. We also appreciated the support of the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) especially in transport and logistics development.
12. We expressed our sincere appreciation and gratitude to the Governments of Brunei Darussalam and the Kingdom of Cambodia for the successful organization of the Eighth BIMP-EAGA Summit.

