

JOINT PRESS STATEMENT THE SIXTH AFTA COUNCIL MEETING Thailand, 27 April 1995

1. The Sixth Meeting of the AFTA Council was held in Phuket, Thailand, on 27 April 1995.
2. The Meeting was attended by H.E. Pehin Dato Abdul Rahman Taib, Minister of Industry and Primary Resources, Brunei Darussalam; H.E. Prof. Dr. S. B. Joedono, Minister of Trade, Republic of Indonesia; H.E. Mr. Asmat Kamaludin, Secretary-General, Ministry of International Trade and Industry, Malaysia; H.E. Cesar B. Bautista, Undersecretary, Department of Trade and Industry, the Philippines; H.E. Mr. Yeo Cheow Tong, Minister of Trade and Industry, Singapore; H.E. Mr. Tarrin Nimmanahaeminda, Minister of Finance, Thailand; H.E. Mr. Amnuay Patise, Deputy Minister of Finance, Thailand; H.E. Mr. Chaoyot Sasomsub, Deputy Minister of Commerce, Thailand; and H.E. Dato' Ajit Singh, Secretary-General of ASEAN.
3. The Meeting was held in plenary and was preceded by a preparatory meeting of the Senior Economic Officials on 26 April 1995 in Phuket.
4. The Sixth AFTA Council met to discuss and review, among other things, the progress made in the implementation of the CEPT Scheme for AFTA, new tariff reduction schedule for realising AFTA by the year 2003, establishment of AFTA Units, status on the inclusion of Temporary Exclusion List, the inclusion of Unprocessed Agricultural Products into the CEPT Scheme and the accession of Vietnam to the CEPT Agreement.
5. It was agreed that the new package of tariff reduction, for realising AFTA by the year 2003, will be implemented by 1 January 1996. All Member Countries have submitted their preliminary schedules for the tariff reduction. These lists are to be finalised at the Seventh AFTA Council Meeting in September 1995.
6. The Council noted that the inclusion of the products in the Temporary Exclusion List is currently being worked out by Member Countries. The lists for the first installment will be finalised by the Seventh AFTA Council in September 1995.
7. The Council noted with appreciation the progress of the work of the Joint SEOM-SOM AMAF Working Group on the inclusion of Unprocessed Agricultural products in the CEPT Scheme for AFTA. Member Countries have submitted their tentative lists of Unprocessed Agricultural Products in the Inclusion, Temporary Exclusion and Sensitive Lists. 68% of the Unprocessed Agricultural Products will be in the Inclusion List, 21 % will be in the Temporary Exclusion List and 11 % will be in the Sensitive List. The Council agreed that the Inclusion List should be expanded and that the products in Temporary Exclusion List should be phased-in gradually by the year 2003. The Council agreed that the Sensitive List should be kept to a minimum. The Council further agreed that the special arrangement for sensitive products should be more favourable than what Member Countries offered under WTO. The Council agreed that a viable mechanism for dealing with unprocessed agricultural products in the Sensitive List be established soon.
8. The Council was pleased to note that the AFTA Unit at the ASEAN Secretariat and National AFTA Units in the respective Member Countries have been established and are in operation. These Units are focal points for handling AFTA and AFTA-related matters. The contact points of the various AFTA Units appear in Appendix A. These units will play active roles in promoting, supporting and facilitating greater private sector participation in the AFTA process and in enhancing greater trading activities in the region.
9. The Council was also appraised of the progress made by Member Countries on the elimination of non-tariff barriers (NTBs) in ASEAN.
10. The Council also noted the progress that the Senior Economic Officials had made towards establishing a

mechanism for the settlement of disputes in implementing the CEPT Agreement.

11. The Council welcomed Vietnam's impending membership of ASEAN in July 1995. The Council also noted that Vietnam had agreed to accede to the CEPT Agreement upon joining ASEAN. The Council agreed that certain flexibility should be given to Vietnam in her implementation of the CEPT Scheme in view of her transition from a central planning to a market economy. In this respect, the Council noted that the Senior Economic Officials were discussing with Vietnam the details of the implementation of the CEPT Agreement.

12. Based on the trade statistics submitted by Member Countries, a preliminary analysis by the ASEAN Secretariat on the submitted data reveals that intra-ASEAN trade had increased significantly again for the period between 1993 and 1994.