



**14th AEM-CER CONSULTATION
15 August 2009, Bangkok, Thailand**

JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT

Joint Media Statement of the 14th AEM-CER Consultations, Bangkok, 15 August 2009

1. The 14th Consultation between the ASEAN Economic Ministers (AEM) and the Ministers of Australia and New Zealand (Closer Economic Relations – CER) was held in Bangkok, Thailand on 15 August 2009. The Consultation was co-chaired by H.E. Mrs. Porntiva Nakasai, Minister of Commerce of Thailand; the Honorable Mr. Simon Crean, Minister for Trade of Australia; and the Honorable Mr. Tim Groser, Minister of Trade of New Zealand.

ASEAN-Australia and New Zealand Trade and Investment Relations

2. The Ministers noted that, despite the global financial/economic crisis that intensified in September 2008, trade between ASEAN and Australia-New Zealand maintained the upward trend. The Ministers noted that ASEAN's total merchandise trade on goods with Australia-New Zealand rose by 23.6 percent from US\$ 47.8 billion in 2007 to US\$ 59.0 billion in 2008. ASEAN exports and imports to and from Australia-New Zealand both registered significant growth in 2008. ASEAN exports grew by 22.1 percent from US\$ 31.0 billion in 2007 to US\$ 37.0 billion in 2008; while ASEAN imports rose by 26.2 percent increasing from US\$ 16.8 billion in 2007 to US\$ 21.2 billion in 2008, which surpassed the 13.4 percent growth recorded in 2007.

3. The Ministers noted that total flows of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) from Australia-New Zealand into ASEAN have maintained at the US\$ 1.0 billion level despite the decrease of 6.1 percent in 2008.

ASEAN-Australia and New Zealand FTA

4. The Ministers noted that the Parties to the Agreement Establishing the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area are in various stages of completing their internal procedures for the entry into force of the Agreement. The Ministers welcomed the early ratification of the Agreement by Singapore and New Zealand, and re-affirmed their commitment to completing their internal processes to enable the Agreement to enter into force on 1 January 2010.

5. The Ministers noted that in preparation for the entry into force of the Agreement, the Parties are also working on the transposition of their tariff reduction and elimination schedules under the Agreement based on the 2007 Harmonized System, as well as the issuance of national legislations or legal enactments to implement the tariff concessions under the Agreement. The Ministers agreed to re-double their efforts to complete the HS 2007 tariff schedules by mid-October so that countries will be administratively ready to implement the Agreement from 1 January 2010.

6. The Ministers welcomed the support "capacity" for the implementation of the Agreement through the Economic Cooperation Work Programme (ECWP) under which co-operation initiatives will be undertaken to assist in the implementation of the various components of the Agreement. The ASEAN Ministers also thanked the Australian and New Zealand Governments for the economic co-operation assistance that they have pledged to provide to ensure the effective implementation of the Agreement as well as the on-going assistance in the lead-up to the entry into force of the Agreement.

7. The Ministers, noting the important role of the ASEAN Secretariat in the implementation of the Agreement and the ECWP, welcomed the establishment of a support unit at the ASEAN Secretariat that will provide technical assistance and secretariat support to the AANZFTA Joint Committee and the Parties in implementing the Agreement.

8. The Ministers recognised the importance of government-to-business dialogue and business-to-business contributions to the full realisation of the opportunities offered by the AANZFTA. In this regard, they tasked the senior officials to look into this matter, including the revitalisation of the ASEAN-CER Business Council and some specific meetings at sectoral level, at an earliest opportunity.

9. The Ministers also called on the early convening of the AANZFTA Joint Committee to attend to the immediate priorities in the built-in-agendas of the Agreement such as the development of the first annual implementation plan of the ECWP.

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LIST OF MINISTERS

1. **Hon. Simon Crean**, Minister for Trade, Australia
2. **H.E. Pehin Dato Lim Jock Seng**, Second Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Brunei Darussalam
3. **H.E. Cham Prasidh**, Senior Minister and Minister of Commerce, Cambodia
4. **H.E. Mari Elka Pangestu**, Minister of Trade, Indonesia
5. **H.E. Nam Viyaketh**, Minister of Industry and Commerce, Lao PDR
6. **H.E. Dato' Mustapa Mohamed**, Minister of International Trade and Industry, Malaysia
7. **H.E. U Soe Tha**, Minister for National Planning and Economic Development, Myanmar
8. **Hon. Tim Groser**, Minister of Trade, New Zealand
9. **H.E. Peter B. Favila**, Secretary of Trade and Industry, the Philippines
10. **H.E. Lim Hng Kiang**, Minister for Trade and Industry, Singapore
11. **H.E. Porntiva Nakasai**, Minister of Commerce, Thailand
12. **H.E. Vu Huy Hoang**, Minister of Industry and Trade, Viet Nam
13. **H.E. Surin Pitsuwan**, Secretary-General of ASEAN

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