

Joint Communique of the 40th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (AMM) "One Caring and Sharing Community"

Manila, 29-30 July 2007

INTRODUCTION

1. We, the Foreign Ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), met at the 40th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on 29-30 July 2007 in Manila. His Excellency Alberto G. Romulo, Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines and Chairman of the 40th ASEAN Standing Committee, chaired the Meeting.
2. The Representatives of Timor-Leste and Papua New Guinea attended the Opening Ceremony of the 40th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting as Guest of the Chairman of the 40th ASEAN Standing Committee and as Special Observer in ASEAN, respectively.

OPENING ADDRESS

3. Her Excellency President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, President of the Republic of the Philippines, addressed the Opening Ceremony of the 40th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting.
4. President Arroyo stated that ASEAN relations have never been stronger and recalled ASEAN achievements in cooperation, solidarity, fighting poverty and winning collective security. She called on ASEAN to carry forward the landmark commitments made at the 12th ASEAN Summit to create "one caring and sharing" community by 2015. She said such a community should be anchored on economic integration with a focus on social justice and raising the standards of living in the region.
5. To achieve that objective, President Arroyo urged ASEAN to build upon its bold decision to draft an ASEAN Charter that will strengthen ASEAN and deepen collaboration among its Member Countries. She said the ASEAN Charter should be a testament to ASEAN's commitment to become one, single united front.
6. President Arroyo said, furthermore, that developing ASEAN is more than creating a regional community and should also be a dynamic force in Asia that would maximize the benefits of globalization. For ASEAN to become a true expanding union, the President said ASEAN should continue nurturing its relations with key partners through, among other things, forging free trade agreements and engaging all parties that have a stake in the region to establish an East Asia community.
7. President Arroyo also called on ASEAN to point the way ahead in regional security cooperation. In this regard, she said that ASEAN welcomed the recent positive developments on the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue, including the shutdown of the Yongbyon reactor, and commended all parties for the progress they have made thus far. She said ASEAN must stand ready to advance regional security and stability and, in this connection, to strengthen our collective stake in a stable Korean Peninsula.
8. The President emphasized the achievements ASEAN has made in regional security, from

the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) to the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). The President said ASEAN has been a force for regional peace and progress for forty years and must find the means to sustain this role for the next forty years.

9. In conclusion, President Arroyo said ASEAN must be a community where all can grow and prosper together. If ASEAN succeeds in this respect, then future generations will look back on ASEAN's fortieth year, on the 12th ASEAN Summit and on the 40th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, as the point where the region's effort to attain this aspiration was begun.

THE ASEAN COMMUNITY

10. We welcomed the progress achieved in the implementation of the Leaders' decisions at the 12th ASEAN Summit on 13 January 2007 in Cebu, Philippines, in accelerating the establishment of an ASEAN Community to 2015 and in building a people-centred ASEAN, consistent with our commitment to establish "One Caring and Sharing Community". We reaffirmed our resolve to pursuing region-wide programmes and activities that would truly make ASEAN relevant, beneficial and meaningful to peoples of ASEAN.

11. We are encouraged by the advancement we have made in ASEAN regional integration, and agreed to further intensify our efforts to accelerate the narrowing of the development gap to ensure the realization of the ASEAN Community.

12. We recognized the need for synergy in enhancing our efforts and pooling our resources, as well as achieving effective coordination, so that ASEAN can be more responsive to and consistent with the stated goals and objectives of an ASEAN Community.

13. To ensure that all three pillars of the ASEAN Community move in the same pace, we agreed to give particular attention to developing blueprints for each of the ASEAN Security Community and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community, similar to those of the ASEAN Economic Community.

14. We agreed in a Joint Statement issued on 30 July 2007 to recommend to our Leaders the endorsement of the proposal to observe ASEAN Day (8 August) as a special day in each of the ASEAN Member Countries with the objective of increasing ASEAN awareness among our people.

40th Anniversary of ASEAN

15. We highlighted that the 40th anniversary of ASEAN on 8 August 2007 will be an historic milestone for our regional organization. We supported the various initiatives and activities carried out by Member Countries to commemorate this auspicious occasion, which would highlight ASEAN's achievements and develop ASEAN consciousness. We welcomed Malaysia's initiatives to convene an ASEAN Integrity Dialogue.

Vientiane Action Programme (VAP)

16. We took note of the progress in the implementation of the Vientiane Action Programme (VAP). Reaffirming our commitment to the completion of the VAP by 2010, we agreed to mobilize financial resources for the remaining VAP programs, projects and activities. We resolved to strengthen coordination among the various ASEAN sectoral bodies carrying out the VAP and reiterated the importance of undertaking coordination among the three pillars of

ASEAN Community.

Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI)

17. We agreed to exert greater efforts on narrowing the development gap to enhance ASEAN integration and ensure equitable economic development for the well-being of the peoples of ASEAN.

18. We expressed support for the recommendations made at the Second Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) Development Cooperation Forum in Ha Noi, Viet Nam, on 12-13 June 2007 on new and innovative strategies to narrow the development gap among the ASEAN Member Countries, including the proposed formulation of the Second IAI Work Plan for 2008-2015. To realize the full ASEAN integration in compliance with ASEAN Community by 2015, we recognized the need to also address the “pockets of poverty and underdevelopment” in ASEAN Member Countries. The programmes for IAI should also be aligned with ASEAN’s larger efforts to become an ASEAN Community by 2015.

19. We expressed appreciation to our Dialogue Partners and other international institutions for their support and contributions to the IAI. We are committed to sustain and accelerate our efforts to narrow the development gap in the region to make ASEAN more economically competitive and socially cohesive.

The ASEAN Charter

20. We stressed the importance of codifying the principles, values and norms of ASEAN into a Charter and in sustaining the momentum towards transforming ASEAN into a rules-based organization with a legal personality, capable of performing a greater role in regional and international affairs.

21. We welcomed the submission of the first draft of the ASEAN Charter by the High Level Task Force on the Drafting of the ASEAN Charter (HLTF) and conveyed our appreciation for the HLTF’s excellent work. We thoroughly discussed the draft ASEAN Charter and gave our views to the HLTF on the important aspects of the ASEAN Charter. We looked forward to the completion of the work of the HLTF and its submission of the final draft of the ASEAN Charter at the 13th ASEAN Summit in November 2007 in Singapore.

ASEAN SECURITY COMMUNITY (ASC)

22. We stressed the importance of building the ASC as a backbone of the ASEAN Community. We noted the convening of the 2nd ASC Plan of Action Coordinating Conference (ASCCO) on 10-11 July 2007 and underscored the importance of coordination in the implementation of the Programme Areas and Measures of the ASC Plan of Action in the process of ASEAN Community building.

23. We agreed to undertake all efforts to ensure early ratification and entry into force of the ASEAN Convention on Counter-Terrorism (ACCT) and to intensify cooperation to ensure a peaceful and stable ASEAN. We took note of the progress achieved at the recent 7th Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) Meeting in Lao PDR, which endorsed the institutionalization of the SOMTC Working Group on Counter Terrorism. We also welcomed the recommendations of the ASEAN Ad Hoc Meeting on Anti-Corruption. We took note of the process to develop a model ASEAN Extradition Treaty as part of our concerted efforts to establish an ASEAN Extradition Treaty. We also encouraged signatory countries to ratify the Regional Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance on Criminal Matters so as

to ensure its effective implementation.

24. Consistent with our goal to build One Caring and Sharing Community, we are committed to the timely implementation of the provisions of the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers. We agreed to establish the ASEAN Committee on the Implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers that will lead and oversee the implementation of various activities under this Declaration. We recognized that this Committee shall report to ASEAN Senior Labor Officials.

25. We reaffirmed our commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights under the Vientiane Action Programme (VAP). We also noted the convening of the 6th Workshop on ASEAN Regional Human Rights Mechanism in Manila on 16-17 July 2007 and the Working Session of National Human Rights Institutions Consultations Mechanism in Bali on 28 June 2007. We further noted the work carried out by the non-governmental Working Group for an ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism, including the meeting between the open-ended SOM Troika and the Working Group on the sidelines of the 40th AMM with the objective of facilitating the implementation of the activities under the promotion of human rights component of the VAP.

Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ)

26. We noted the results of the Meeting of the Commission on SEANWFZ in Manila on 30 July 2007 which reviewed the progress of the implementation of the Treaty since it came into force in 1997 and discussed ways for the Treaty to effectively contribute to ASEAN Security Community-building efforts.

27. We welcomed the adoption of the Plan of Action that would guide the future implementation of the SEANWFZ Treaty to ensure that we are able to respond to the evolving internal and external challenges and opportunities.
Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia

28. We welcomed the accessions to the TAC of the Republic of France and the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste at the margins of the 12th ASEAN Summit on 13 January 2007 in Cebu, Philippines. We looked forward to the accessions of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and the People's Republic of Bangladesh to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) on 1 August 2007 in Manila. We acknowledged the declarations of the United Kingdom and the European Union of their intent to accede to the TAC. We noted that the continuing interest in the TAC underscores its important role as a key code of conduct governing inter-state relations in Southeast Asia and its value as a major diplomatic instrument for the promotion of peace, security and stability in the region.

29. We called upon the other countries, particularly our Dialogue Partners and friends in the ARF, sharing ASEAN's aspirations for peace, security, stability and development in the region, to also accede to the TAC.

South China Sea

30. We reaffirmed the continuing importance of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea of 2002 (DOC) as a milestone document between ASEAN and China, embodying their collective commitment to ensure the peaceful resolution of disputes in the area. We believed that the Declaration had been effective in building mutual trust and confidence among the claimants in the area and in maintaining peace and stability in the

region. We underscored the need to intensify efforts to move forward the implementation of the Declaration and eventually conclude a Regional Code of Conduct in the South China Sea.

31. We encouraged the continued exercise of self-restraint by all the parties concerned and the promotion of confidence building measures in this area and welcomed their commitment to resolving disputes in the South China Sea by peaceful means in conformity with the spirit of the DOC and recognized principles of international law including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)

32. We reaffirmed the role of ASEAN as the primary driving force of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) process and the ARF as the primary forum in enhancing political and security dialogue and cooperation as well as the fulcrum for building peace and security in the wider Asia-Pacific region.

33. We welcomed the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka as the 27th participating country in the ARF and we looked forward to its attendance at the 14th ARF on 2 August 2007. We expressed confidence that the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka would be able to contribute to the further enhancement of political and security dialogue and cooperation in the region.

34. We commended the steady progress and growing momentum generated in the implementation of ARF activities. We encouraged the forging of more concrete and practical cooperation among ARF countries in building capacity and capabilities in order to better cope with numerous challenges, including in counter-terrorism, disaster relief, maritime security, non-proliferation and disarmament of weapons of mass destruction and energy security, among others. We would discuss at the 14th ARF Meeting the elevation of the ARF to a premier forum for discussion of security issues of common concern affecting the region in the future.

35. While emphasising that confidence building would continue to play a vital role in the ARF process, we welcomed the ARF's progress towards Preventive Diplomacy (PD). We also commended the activities undertaken to enhance links between Track I and Track II in the ARF, and between the ARF and other regional and international security organisations. We noted with satisfaction the progress made in the implementation of the agreed ARF activities for the Inter-Sessional year 2006-2007.

ASEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY (AEC)

36. We underscored ASEAN's commitment to establish a Single Market and Production Base characterized by a competitive economic region with equitable economic development and one that is fully integrated into the global economy.

37. We noted the finalisation of the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint and Strategic Schedule, which will serve as an integrated and coherent master plan with clearly defined measures and actions, milestones and timelines to establish the ASEAN Economic Community by 2015, for the consideration and signing by the ASEAN Leaders at the 13th ASEAN Summit in November 2007 in Singapore. This would reaffirm and reinforce ASEAN's collective will to deepen the economic integration of the region.

38. We supported the decision of the ASEAN Economic Ministers to recognise Viet Nam as

a full market economy, taking into consideration its rate of economic progress and integration with the regional and global economies, and we encouraged our Dialogue Partners to make similar recognitions.

Energy Cooperation

39. We agreed to implement projects and activities in line with the Cebu Declaration on East Asian Energy Security within ASEAN and the East Asia Summit (EAS). In particular, we welcomed the upcoming inaugural meeting of the EAS Energy Ministers in Singapore on 23 August 2007 as an important step towards fulfilling the Cebu Declaration and following-up on the Leaders' discussions during the 2nd EAS in Cebu. We are committed to improving energy efficiency and conservation, increasing the use of alternative and renewable sources of energy, expanding biofuel production/utilization, developing open and competitive energy markets, and encouraging greater private sector involvement in energy resource and infrastructure investment within the region.

Sub-regional Cooperation

40. We recognised the positive contributions of sub-regional cooperation within ASEAN to the growth and development of the whole region. We supported the initiatives and programmes currently being undertaken under these sub-regional arrangements within ASEAN: Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS), Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA), Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT), Cambodia-Laos-Myanmar-Viet Nam (CLMV), and Cambodia-Lao-Vietnam Development Triangle (CLV-DT).

ASEAN SOCIO-CULTURAL COMMUNITY (ASCC)

41. To ensure that all three pillars of the ASEAN Community move in the same pace, we agreed to paying particular attention to putting in place a mechanism for the socio-cultural community, similar to the SOM and SEOM, which coordinates the activities of the two other Communities. We tasked our senior officials to come up with a blueprint to ensure proper coordination of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (SOC-COM).

42. We agreed that ASCC sectoral bodies should work together with those under the AEC in intensifying strategic focus, particularly on the core element pertaining to "Managing the Social Impact of Economic Integration." They should also focus on operationalising the decisions and declarations of the 12th ASEAN Summit and consider possible thematic approach and cross-cutting programmes in the fields of migrant workers, women, education, ASEAN identity, disaster management, climate change and sustainable development, and communicable diseases. We encouraged ASEAN sectoral bodies to develop and implement some flagship projects under the ASCC.

43. To carry out the ASCC Plan of Action, particularly towards building a community of caring societies, we agreed on the need to draw up an ASEAN roadmap for the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals Plus (MDG Plus) by the concerned ASEAN sectoral bodies, particularly those involved in poverty reduction and social development.

44. We recognised the valuable contribution of the civil society organizations (CSO) in the building of an ASEAN Community and expressed our commitment to continue to engage with CSO representatives at various levels, programmes and meetings.

45. We acknowledged the Report of the Executive Director of the ASEAN Foundation. We noted ASEAN Foundation's 10th year anniversary in 2007 and encouraged it to continue its

efforts in promoting ASEAN awareness in the region, especially among the youth and students, and in mobilising funds to support its programmes and activities.

Consular and Immigration

46. In line with our goal of increasing people-to-people contacts among ASEAN nationals and promoting freer intra-ASEAN travel, we called for the early ratification by Member Countries of the ASEAN Visa Framework Agreement.

47. Recalling the Statement by the Foreign Ministers of ASEAN in Kuala Lumpur on 25 July 2006 and consistent with our commitment to build One Caring and Sharing Community, we committed to extend the appropriate emergency assistance to all ASEAN nationals caught in crisis and conflict situations in third countries. We adopted the guidelines for the provision of emergency assistance by ASEAN missions in third countries to nationals of ASEAN Member Countries in crisis situation.

Environment and Climate Change

48. We expressed concern over the impact of global warming and climate change and called on concerted efforts involving the international community, including the private sector and the civil society, in addressing these challenges in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

49. We welcomed the proposal by Singapore, as the next Chair of ASEAN, to focus on "Energy, Environment, Climate Change and Sustainable Development" as the theme for discussions at the 13th ASEAN Summit and Related Summits in Singapore in November 2007. In line with this theme, we looked forward to the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Environmental Sustainability to be signed at the 13th ASEAN Summit. We also welcomed Singapore's proposal to work on a Singapore Declaration on the Environment to be issued at the 3rd East Asia Summit in Singapore. We also looked forward to the outcome of the Informal ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Environment to be held in Bangkok in September 2007. We called on the international community to support the successful convening of the 13th Conference of Parties (COP) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the 3rd Meeting of Parties (MOP) of the Kyoto Protocol to be held in Bali on 3-14 December 2007. We also welcomed the Indonesian proposal to develop a draft declaration on the 13th COP to the UNFCCC and the 3rd MOP to the Kyoto Protocol to be signed by the Leaders at the 13th ASEAN Summit.

50. We reiterated the need to step up cooperation to prevent and mitigate transboundary haze pollution in the region and welcomed the efforts of ASEAN Member Countries to finalize the process of ratification of the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution. We called upon the ASEAN Member Countries to expedite the operationalisation of the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution and for those that have not yet ratified to do so soon.

51. We welcomed the signing of the Host Country Agreement between the Republic of the Philippines and the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) on 8 August 2006 in Manila. We expressed support for the operations of the ACB and the implementation of various projects that would preserve and protect biodiversity areas in the region. We encouraged our Dialogue Partners to support the ACB in implementing key biodiversity projects.

Disaster Management

52. Recognising the fact that Southeast Asia is one of the most disaster-prone regions in the world, we committed to coordinate and cooperate during disaster emergencies to provide immediate relief, assistance and rehabilitation to disaster victims, and implement measures to reduce disaster losses in the ASEAN region. We called for the early ratification of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER).

53. We endorsed the offer of Indonesia to host the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) as recommended by the 4/40 Meeting of the ASEAN Standing Committee, held in Manila on 27-28 July 2007, and we tasked the relevant officials to work out the details.

Health

54. We expressed support for the implementation of the Third ASEAN Work Programme (AWP) on HIV and AIDS for 2006-2010, following its adoption by the Leaders during the 12th ASEAN Summit Special Session on HIV and AIDS.

Education

55. We expressed support for programmes undertaken by the ASEAN University Network in promoting ASEAN studies and ASEAN regional identity among the youth. We acknowledged the critical role that education plays in fostering greater inter-cultural, inter-religious and inter-racial understanding within and among societies in the region. We agreed on the need to provide broader access to education and more educational opportunities and scholarships for study in ASEAN universities.

Labour

56. We welcomed the establishment on 30 July 2007 of the ASEAN Committee on the Implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers as the instrument for effectively implementing the provisions of the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers, which our Leaders signed on 13 January 2007 in Cebu, Philippines.

57. We expressed confidence that with the signing of the Cooperation Agreement between the ASEAN Secretariat and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Secretariat on 20 March 2007, ASEAN and the ILO would collaborate more to address labour issues where they have common interests. We also welcomed the adoption of an ASEAN Plan of Action on National OSH Framework and the continued progress of the ASEAN Occupational Safety and Health Network.

Youth

58. We recognised the importance of involving and engaging ASEAN youth to obtain their perspectives on the activities and programmes of ASEAN. We welcomed Singapore's announcement to launch a S\$5-million Singapore-ASEAN Youth Fund at the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Youth on 26 April 2007, which aims to foster greater understanding and friendship amongst the youth of the region through its support of ASEAN youth projects. We agreed to harness the capabilities, talents and potentials of the youth so that they could contribute more to ASEAN. We were encouraged by the interest of Dialogue Partners to undertake youth and student exchange programmes with ASEAN as a way of promoting

cross-cultural understanding.

Science and Technology

59. We commended the initiative to strengthen science and technology cooperation between ASEAN and the Dialogue Partners, such as Australia, China, India, Japan, the Republic of Korea and New Zealand, through the holding of informal ministerial consultations held on 28-29 August 2006 in Kuantan, Malaysia. We also welcomed the efforts of ASEAN and the U.S. to forge dynamic and effective cooperation among scientific and technological organisations and individual scientists and technical experts in these countries through the establishment of the ASEAN-U.S. Science and Technology Agreement, which will be signed soon. We also look forward to the establishment of the ASEAN-India Science and Technology Development Fund, which will promote collaborative research and development activities between ASEAN and India.

Rural Development and Poverty Eradication

60. We welcomed the development of the ASEAN Millennium Development Compact (AMDC) during the 5th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (5th AMRDPE) in Bangkok in January 2007. We looked forward to the adoption of the AMDC during the next Senior Officials Meeting on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (SOMRDPE) in Singapore next year to pursue the priority projects under the ASEAN Framework Action Plan on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication in order to improve the economic conditions of people living in the rural areas.

Culture and Information

61. We acknowledged the significance of a number of projects and activities that were implemented in the culture and information sectors to promote the rich and vast cultures of ASEAN and raise the level of ASEAN awareness among the peoples of ASEAN. We recognised the contribution of the ASEAN Committee on Culture and Information (COCI) in the implementation of these projects and activities. We supported the formulation of an ASEAN Communications Plan under the purview of the ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Information (AMRI) to promote ASEAN to the people in and outside the region. We underscored the importance of having more television programs about ASEAN in Member Countries as a communication tool to promote cross-cultural understanding among the people of ASEAN.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

62. We stressed the important role and contributions of our Dialogue Partners, namely Australia, Canada, China, the European Union (EU), India, Japan, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, and the United States of America, in the building of an ASEAN Community. We were pleased with the progress in our cooperation with our Dialogue Partners over the past year and committed to moving these partnerships forward. We discussed regional and international issues that were of interest to ASEAN and our Dialogue Partners.

63. We looked forward to the signing of the Joint Declaration of the ASEAN-Australia Comprehensive Partnership on 1 August 2007 and the early finalization of the Plan of Action to Implement the Joint Declaration of the ASEAN-Australia Comprehensive Partnership (2007-2012). We expressed confidence that the implementation of the Joint Declaration would further broaden and enhance ASEAN-Australia Dialogue Relations covering political

and security, economic and socio-cultural cooperation.

64. We agreed to adopt the 2007-2010 Second ASEAN-Canada Joint Cooperation Work Plan on 1 August 2007.

65. We also agreed to work expeditiously to complete the Plan of Action to Implement the Nuremberg Declaration on an ASEAN-EU Enhanced Partnership. We welcomed the launch of the ASEAN-EU FTA negotiations, on a region-to-region basis, during the 8th ASEAN Economic Ministers and EU Trade Commissioner Consultations in Brunei Darussalam in May 2007. In this regard, we welcomed the convening of the ASEAN-EU Commemorative Summit in Singapore on 22 November 2007 to further deepen and enhance the partnership.

66. We welcomed the Russian Federation's initial contribution to the ASEAN-Russian Federation Dialogue Partnership Fund, which would pave the way for the implementation of joint ASEAN-Russia projects. We noted the progress in the drafting of the ASEAN-Russia Agreement on Cultural Cooperation, and looked forward to its signing by the Ministers Responsible for Culture and Arts at an appropriate time, which will promote exchange and cooperation in various cultural and artistic fields between ASEAN and the Russian Federation.

67. We welcomed the conferment of observer status to ASEAN at the UN General Assembly and other main bodies in December 2006. We recalled our decision during our ASEAN Foreign Ministers Retreat in Siem Reap in March 2007 to explore the possibility to upgrade our relations with the UN. In this regard, we looked forward to conclude the ASEAN-UN Cooperation Agreement as soon as possible.

68. We acknowledged the interest of Pakistan, currently an ASEAN Sectoral Partner, to become a Full Dialogue Partner. We looked forward to implementing more cooperation projects and strengthening ASEAN-Pakistan relations. Towards this end, we welcomed the contribution from Pakistan to the ASEAN-Pakistan Cooperation Fund.

69. We were encouraged by the interest expressed by countries and regional and international organisations to forge relations with ASEAN. We agreed that ASEAN should work to promote greater interactions with those countries and organisations.

70. We took note that this year marks the 30th Anniversary of the establishment of ASEAN Dialogue Relations with the EU, the United States of America and Canada. We underscored the importance of these milestone events and agreed to conduct various commemorative activities in ASEAN and in the three Dialogue Partner countries this year.

71. We expressed satisfaction on the progress of partnership between ASEAN and the Plus Three Countries in the economic and financial area, particularly the multilateralisation of the Chiang Mai Initiative and expansion of the Asian Bond Market Initiative, as well as in new areas of cooperation, such as women, poverty alleviation, disaster management and minerals. We renewed our commitment to the ASEAN Plus Three process. We looked forward to the adoption of the Second Joint Statement on East Asia Cooperation and its accompanying Work Plan at the 11th ASEAN Plus Three Summit in Singapore, to mark the Tenth Anniversary of ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation. We reaffirmed that the Second Joint Statement should provide strategic guidance for the future direction of the ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation in the next ten years.

72. We welcomed the entry into force of the ASEAN-Korea Free Trade Agreement in Goods (FTA) on 1 June 2007 and the progress made in the FTA negotiations with Australia, India,

Japan and New Zealand, as well as negotiations on services and investment agreements with the Republic of Korea and the investment agreement with China. These expansions in economic ties with Dialogue Partners would contribute positively to the economic development of the region and complement ASEAN's own internal integration process.

73. We recalled the successful convening of the 2nd EAS in Cebu on 15 January 2007 and noted that the EAS has carved for itself an important niche as a Leaders-led forum for dialogue on broad strategic, political and economic issues of common interest. We reaffirmed our commitment to intensify our cooperation in the priority areas of energy security, education, finance, avian influenza, poverty alleviation and natural disaster mitigation. We welcomed the progress in the cooperation made thus far in energy security and the work done on other important proposals and ideas endorsed by the EAS Leaders in Cebu, in particular, in financial integration, the proposal for a Comprehensive Economic Partnership in East Asia, and the revival of the Nalanda University. We agreed that progress reports on these projects should be submitted to the next EAS in Singapore. We noted the preparation of the EAS Regional Financial Cooperation and Integration (RFCI) Workshop to be held in Jakarta on 10 September 2007.

74. We noted the on-going 2nd Phase Study on the feasibility of establishing the East Asia Free Trade Area (EAFTA) and the commencement of the study of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership in East Asia (CEPEA) involving ASEAN, Australia, China, India, Japan, Korea, and New Zealand. We also noted the discussion among the experts on the establishment of the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA).

DEVELOPMENTS IN MYANMAR

75. We took note of the briefing by Myanmar on the recent developments in the process of national reconciliation and peaceful transition to democracy as envisaged in the Roadmap to Democracy. We expressed concern on the pace of the national reconciliation process and urged Myanmar to show tangible progress that would lead to a peaceful transition to democracy in the near future. We welcomed the convening of the final session of the National Convention, which commenced on 18 July 2007, and we were encouraged by the assurances of Myanmar that the National Convention process will be completed within two months. We also expressed the hope that it would allow Myanmar to move to the next steps of the Roadmap. While recognizing the steps taken by the Myanmar Government to release the leader of the NLD, we continue to express concern on the detention of all political detainees and reiterate our calls for their early release.

76. We recognized the fact that Myanmar has tried to address the many and complex challenges she is facing. We reaffirmed our commitment to remain constructively engaged with Myanmar as part of building "one caring and sharing" regional community together.

REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

We exchanged views on the following issues:

• Timor-Leste

77. We congratulated Timor-Leste for the orderly and credible conduct of its presidential and parliamentary elections this year. We expressed confidence that the leadership of President Jose Ramos-Horta and the future Prime Minister of Timor-Leste would be able ensure the political and economic development of Timor-Leste, and enable the country to further deepen its relations with its neighbours in the region, especially with ASEAN Member

Countries.

• **Iraq**

78. We voiced our deep concern over the continued instability in Iraq and reaffirmed our support for the Iraqi government and its efforts to ensure unity, security, stability, and prosperity in Iraq. Towards this end, we believe that the phased and calibrated withdrawal of foreign forces in Iraq, taking into account the conditions on the ground, will contribute towards bringing normalcy. We welcomed the outcomes of the international meetings in Baghdad and Sharm El-Sheikh towards expediting national reconciliation and reconstructions that is crucial to the attainment of peace, security and developments in Iraq.

• **Middle East**

79. We expressed deep concern over the situation in the Middle East and the need for substantial progress in the quest for a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. We welcomed the Quartet's reaffirmation of their commitments made in Lisbon on 19 July 2007 to bring an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and to undertake serious efforts towards the establishment of an independent, democratic, and viable Palestinian state living side by side with Israel in peace and security, as a step towards a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace in the Middle East, consistent with the Roadmap and UN Security Council resolutions. We expressed hope that the Palestinians would be able to forge unity among themselves in pursuit of these objectives.

80. We also expressed concern over the report of the Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in May 2007 that Iran had not suspended its enrichment related activities. We urged Iran to comply with all relevant UN Security Council resolutions and IAEA requirements and resolutions. We were encouraged by the outcome of the recent meetings between the European Union and Iran to find a way to restart dialogue between the Permanent Members of the UN Security Council plus Germany and Iran. We expressed hope that they will settle all issues standing in the way of negotiations towards a peaceful solution to the Iran nuclear issue. We welcomed Iran's decision to grant IAEA inspectors access to the pilot fuel enrichment plant in Natanz and view such decision as a significant confidence-building measure on Iran's part, with a view to allowing the IAEA to conclusively determine the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme. The Ministers stressed the urgent need for a diplomatic solution and a comprehensive arrangement with Iran, while respecting Iran's right to peaceful nuclear energy under safeguards and in accordance with its obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

• **Korean Peninsula**

81. We stressed that the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula is essential in maintaining the peace and stability of the Asia Pacific region and expressed support for the peaceful resolution of the nuclear issue through dialogue and negotiation.

82. We welcomed the action taken by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in shutting down the Yongbyon nuclear facility on 15 July 2007 and noted the report of the IAEA verifying the shutdown of the facility. We welcomed the announcement of the DPRK that it shall earnestly implement its commitments to a complete declaration of all nuclear programs and disablement of all nuclear facilities. We were pleased to learn that the DPRK is fully cooperative with the inspectors of the IAEA.

83. We reiterated our support for the Six-Party Talks and welcomed the agreements reached

at the resumption of the latest round of talks from 18-20 July 2007 in Beijing, China, that Parties will earnestly fulfil their commitments in the Joint Statement of 19 September 2005 and the agreement of 13 February 2007. This positive development should be utilized as a strong drive of efforts to promote sustainable peace and security in the region. We also stressed the importance of addressing the humanitarian needs in the DPRK.

- **Afghanistan**

84. The Ministers strongly condemned the abduction and brutal killing of innocent civilians in Afghanistan and urged the immediate release of all remaining hostages.

- **World Trade Organisation (WTO)**

85. We recalled the ASEAN Leaders' declaration at the 12th ASEAN Summit calling for the resumption of the Doha Round. We reiterated ASEAN's preparedness to contribute constructively in all areas of the Doha negotiations, including the importance of the development dimension of the negotiations. We called on all WTO Members to push the Doha Development Agenda negotiations forward for the benefit of all Members, especially the developing Members.

86. We urged key members of the WTO to show the necessary leadership to hasten the negotiations and reiterated our commitment to support the efforts of the Chairs of the negotiating groups and the WTO Director-General to build consensus on an ambitious and balanced outcome. To this end, we strongly re-affirmed our commitment to a successful completion of the Doha round negotiations this year.

87. We reiterated our support for the early accession of Lao PDR into the WTO. We warmly congratulated Viet Nam's accession to the WTO as its 150th member.
Cooperation with Regional Organisations

88. We agreed to pursue cooperation with other regional organisations that could complement ASEAN's objectives. We agreed to follow up on the results of the Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of ASEAN and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in September 2006 in New York, including the possible joint meeting of the Secretariats of ASEAN and the GCC and a study on the feasibility of having an ASEAN-GCC Free Trade Area. We further agreed to continue exploring concrete areas of cooperation with the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation in line with the decision of the Leaders at the 12th ASEAN Summit. We welcomed the interest of the League of Arab Nations to engage ASEAN and agreed to explore possible areas of cooperation between the two organizations.

INSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

Streamlining of ASEAN Meetings

89. We agreed to rationalise and streamline the ASEAN Summit and ASEAN Ministerial Meeting to improve the substance of those meetings and ensure the effectiveness of its deliberations by holding all ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conferences Plus One Sessions with our Dialogue Partners immediately after the annual ASEAN Ministerial Meetings starting from July 2008 in Singapore. We recommended that rationalization and streamlining of the meetings be also applied to ASEAN sectoral bodies.

Secretary-General of ASEAN

90. We expressed appreciation for the outstanding stewardship and contribution of H.E. Ong Keng Yong to ASEAN as the Secretary-General of ASEAN for the period 2003 to 2007. We endorsed Thailand's nomination of Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, former Foreign Minister of Thailand, for consideration of our Leaders at the 13th ASEAN Summit for his appointment as the new Secretary-General of ASEAN for the period 2008-2012.

41st AMM

91. We elected Singapore as the Chair of the 41st ASEAN Standing Committee and Thailand as the Vice-Chair. We look forward to the 41st ASEAN Ministerial Meeting / Post Ministerial Conferences / 15th ASEAN Regional Forum to be held in July 2008 in Singapore