

**Joint Press Statement**  
**The First GCC-ASEAN Ministerial Meeting**  
**30 June 2009**  
**Manama, Bahrain**

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1. The First GCC-ASEAN Ministerial Meeting was held on 29-30 June 2009 in Manama. The Meeting was co-chaired by H.E. Shaikh Khalid Bin Ahmed Bin Mohamed Al Khalifa, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain and H.E. Mr. Kasit Piromya, Foreign Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand as the ASEAN Chair. The Meeting was attended by the Ministers, high-level representatives of GCC and ASEAN Member countries and the Secretary-Generals of GCC and ASEAN.
2. The Ministers noted that the GCC Charter of 1981 and the ASEAN Charter of 2007 provide for the two organizations to develop close and beneficial relations and, in this regard, the Ministers adopted a Joint Vision in order to provide a solid basis for developing mutually beneficial relations between the two regions.
3. The Ministers had an in-depth discussion and exchange of views on various international issues of common concern, in the spirit of South-South Cooperation, including the WTO – Doha Round and the international financial situation. They stressed the constructive roles of both sides in the promotion of peace, stability, prosperity, regional integration, sustainable development and community-building in their respective regions. The participants also discussed the development of mechanisms to support the strengthening and expansion of cooperation in many areas of mutual interest.
4. The Ministers underscored the importance of combating piracy at sea, in accordance with international law.
5. The Ministers recognized the potential of GCC and ASEAN in trade and investment, and agreed to seek further cooperation on these issues, including exploring the possibility of establishing a cooperation framework and a trade agreement between the two sides. In this regard, the Ministers also underscored the need for the private sector of the two regions to work closely together through the promotion of an ASEAN-GCC business forum.
6. The Ministers also recognized the importance of food security and development of joint ventures in agricultural productivity, supply and food standards, including halal food products, through greater investment, improvement on infrastructure and logistics as well as research and development.
7. The Meeting noted the potential for cooperation in the energy sector, including the exchange of information on hydrocarbon energy and alternative and renewable energy. The Ministers congratulated the UAE on the recent decision to select Abu Dhabi as the location for the interim headquarters of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA).
8. The Ministers expressed concern over the current financial and economic crisis and recognized the inevitable impacts on both sides. They also stressed the

importance of further financial cooperation between international financial, economic and trading organizations and groupings. The Ministers, therefore, welcomed the result of the G-20 Summit in London and the United Nations Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and its Impact on Development.

9. The Ministers recognized the potential of the tourism industry, including the medical and wellness sector, and, therefore, agreed to develop joint promotion and marketing, through, amongst others, establishment of an official network and the promotion and planning of tourism-related activities, with the involvement of the private sector, as well as the promotion of investment in this area amongst the member countries of the two regions.

10. The Ministers emphasized the need to foster people-to-people ties at all levels. They recognized human capital development to be essential in narrowing the development gap. Promotion of dialogue among civilizations and cultures, and cooperation and establishment of linkages in education, such as exchange of students and academicians, as well as dissemination of information amongst member countries, were raised in the Meeting.

11. The Ministers acknowledged the increase of people-to-people contact, including the movement of ASEAN and GCC nationals between the two regions. In this context, the Minister agreed to enhance cooperation in consular matters.

12. The Ministers welcomed the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between GCC and ASEAN Secretariats and underlined the desire to explore additional areas of cooperation. They tasked the two Secretariats to develop a GCC-ASEAN two-year Work Plan to ensure effective cooperation and tangible outcomes, to be submitted and reviewed at the Second full-fledged Ministerial Meeting in 2010 in an ASEAN country.

13. The Ministers agreed to convene the next full-fledged ASEAN-GCC Ministerial Meeting in 2010 in an ASEAN country. In addition, they also agreed to have the full-fledged Ministerial Meeting in every two years afterwards, hosted alternately by a GCC or ASEAN country, while an open-ended troika meeting would be held once a year at the margin of the UNGA. The Ministers tasked the two secretariats to study and make recommendations on (1) Free Trade Agreement between GCC and ASEAN, (2) economic cooperation and development, and (3) culture, education and information.

14. The Ministers agreed to accredit their respective ambassadors to ASEAN in Jakarta and to GCC in Riyadh, respectively, in order to further enhance partnership.

15. The Ministers expressed their deep appreciation to His Majesty King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa, King of Bahrain, and to the Government and people of Bahrain for their generous hospitality and excellent arrangements for the First GCC-ASEAN Ministerial Meeting.

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