



**THE EIGHTEENTH AEM-MOFCOM CONSULTATIONS
9 September 2019, Bangkok, Thailand**

JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT

1. Economic Ministers from the ten ASEAN Member States and China (“the Ministers”) met on 9 September 2019 in Bangkok, Thailand for the Eighteenth AEM-MOFCOM Consultations. The Consultations were co-chaired by H.E. Jurin Laksanawisit, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Commerce, Thailand, and H.E. Wang Shouwen, Vice Minister of Commerce, the People’s Republic of China (representing H.E Zhong Shan, Minister of Commerce, the People’s Republic of China).

2. The Ministers reaffirmed ASEAN and China’s strong commitment to strengthen the robust trade and economic relations between both sides. In particular, the Ministers welcomed the increase in total merchandise trade between ASEAN and China which, according to preliminary ASEAN data, reached USD 479.4 billion in 2018, accounting for 17.1 per cent of ASEAN’s total merchandise trade. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows from China to ASEAN amounted to USD 10.2 billion in 2018, accounting for 6.6 per cent of ASEAN’s total FDI. China maintained its position as ASEAN’s largest trading partner since 2009 and in 2018, China was ASEAN’s third external source of FDI among ASEAN’s Dialogue Partners, compared to its previous position in 2017 where it was the fourth largest. Furthermore, according to statistics from the Chinese side, for the first half of 2019, ASEAN has overtaken the US as China’s second-largest trading partner.

3. The Ministers noted the progress of the ASEAN-China FTA (ACFTA) implementation and welcomed the entry into force of the Protocol to Amend the Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Certain Agreements thereunder between ASEAN and China (ACFTA Upgrading Protocol) for all Parties. The Ministers also welcomed the implementation of the enhanced rules on trade in goods under the Protocol in August 2019. The Ministers noted the ongoing discussions on the remaining elements of the Future Work Programme under the Protocol to improve ASEAN-China trade. The Ministers welcomed the ACFTA Joint Committee’s decision to commence discussions on the further liberalization of trade in goods at the ACFTA Joint Committee Meeting next year with possible discussions on the preparation of the meeting done intersessionally.

4. The Ministers expressed appreciation for China's support in enhancing ASEAN connectivity and integration through the various projects in the areas of finance, transportation and infrastructure. The Ministers welcomed and encouraged the continuous effort to synergize the Belt and Road Initiative with the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity to strengthen ASEAN Community building, as well as to create win-win cooperation through the utilisation of local resources.

5. The Ministers -encouraged the successful implementation of two projects under the ACFTA grant of RMB 50 million (approximately USD 7.3 million) by China, namely the "*Outreach Programme on the revised Rules of Origin under ACFTA Upgrading Protocol and Capacity Building for Frontline Officers*" and "*Enhance ASEAN Tourism Digital Platforms*". The Ministers encouraged for more project proposals to the Parties of the ACFTA to utilise the grant and ensure that China's assistance brings substantial benefits.

6. The Ministers welcomed China's organisation of the 2nd China International Import Expo on 5-10 November 2019 in Shanghai, China, and underscored that it will be a good opportunity to showcase ASEAN goods and products in China.

LIST OF MINISTERS

5. **H.E. Dato Dr. Amin Liew Abdullah**, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Minister of Finance and Economy II, Brunei Darussalam;
6. **H.E. Pan Sorasak**, Minister of Commerce, Cambodia;
7. **H.E. Wang Shouwen**, Vice Minister of Commerce, the People's Republic of China; (representing H.E. Zhong Shan, Minister of Commerce, the People's Republic of China);
8. **H.E. Enggartiasto Lukita**, Minister of Trade, Indonesia;
9. **H.E. Mrs. Khemmani Pholsena**, Minister of Industry and Commerce, Lao PDR;
10. **H.E. Darell Leiking**, Minister of International Trade and Industry, Malaysia;
11. **H.E. Thaung Tun**, Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations, Myanmar;
12. **H.E. Ceferino S. Rodolfo**, Undersecretary, Department of Trade and Industry, Philippines (representing H.E. Ramon M. Lopez, Secretary of Trade and Industry, Philippines);
13. **Mr. Gabriel Lim**, Permanent Secretary for Trade and Industry, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Singapore (representing H.E. Chan Chun Sing, Minister for Trade and Industry, Singapore);
14. **H.E. Jurin Laksanawisit**, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Commerce, Thailand;
15. **H.E. Tran Quoc Khanh**, Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade, Viet Nam (representing H.E. Tran Tuan Anh, Minister of Industry and Trade, Viet Nam; and
16. **H.E. Dato Lim Jock Hoi**, Secretary-General of ASEAN.