



**THE ELEVENTH AEM – CANADA CONSULTATION
17 September 2022, Siem Reap, Cambodia**

JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT

1. ASEAN Member States (AMS) and Canada met on 17 September 2022 for the 11th ASEAN Economic Ministers (AEM) – Canada Consultation. The Consultation was co-chaired by H.E. PAN Sorasak, Minister of Commerce, Kingdom of Cambodia, and the Honourable Mary Ng, Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, Canada.
2. The Meeting noted that, as the global economy is starting to recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, bilateral economic relations between ASEAN and Canada are showing positive signs of recovery. According to Canada's statistics, in 2021, the total two-way merchandise trade was valued at USD 25.1 billion, or an increase of 17.5 percent year-on-year. The foreign direct investment (FDI) inflow from Canada to ASEAN reached USD 16.9 billion, or an increase of 9.3 percent year-on-year.
3. The Meeting noted the significant progress made by the ASEAN Member States to recover from the multidimensional impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Meeting commended Canada's immense support towards the region's overarching recovery responses, including through its contribution to the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund and personal protective equipment (PPE) donation to ASEAN, as well as support to the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF) and its Implementation Plan, particularly in the areas of public health surveillance and fostering supportive environment for digital industries. The Meeting encouraged ASEAN and Canada to forge collective actions in endeavouring toward a lasting post-pandemic recovery by leveraging ASEAN's efforts on digitalisation and sustainability.
4. The Meeting noted that the post-COVID-19 economic recovery remains vulnerable to adverse global economic developments. The Meeting expressed deep concerns over rising geopolitical tensions in the region and beyond, continued risks to global food and energy security, and rising inflationary pressure. The Meeting underscored the importance of multilateralism, adherence to international law, and respect for sovereignty in contributing to global and regional peace, stability and prosperity.
5. The Meeting noted the establishment of the Trade Negotiating Committee (TNC) for the ASEAN-Canada Free Trade Agreement (ACAFTA) which endorsed negotiating guidelines, and held its first round of negotiations on 30 August – 01

September 2022. The Meeting further noted the discussion of “new FTA issue areas” for ASEAN, including Labour, Environment, and Inclusive Trade. The Meeting tasked officials to continue to engage in discussions to close the gaps on the issues of divergence and advance the negotiations progressively.

6. The Meeting welcomed Canada’s technical assistance to ASEAN under the Expert Deployment Mechanism for Trade and Development (EDM) in 2022. It was noted that the EDM provided a platform for an exchange of views on approaches and policies related to government procurement, digital economy, trade policy and data, trade in service, MSMEs and regulatory systems in the context of FTA negotiations and implementation, and a shared vision of rules-based trade and economic relations in the region. The Meeting encouraged interested ASEAN Member States to continue drawing on the EDM to build mutual understanding and confidence in the context of ASEAN-Canada FTA negotiations.

7. The Meeting welcomed the progress in the implementation of cooperation activities under the 2021-2025 Work Plan to implement the ASEAN-Canada Joint Declaration on Trade and Investment (JDTI Work Plan), which had continued to progress despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Meeting noted the positive outcomes from the continued dialogues and capacity building programs to improve economic governance and stimulate sustainable economic growth within ASEAN.

8. The Meeting welcomed the successful outcomes of the Twelfth World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference (MC12) held on 12-17 June 2022 in Geneva, Switzerland. The Meeting expressed its optimism that the series of decisions made at the MC12, namely the “Geneva Package” would significantly help reinvigorate the WTO and improve the trust of the global community in the multilateral trading system. Whilst highlighting the need to reform the WTO to improve all its proper functions and to ensure that it remains fit-for-purpose and forward looking, the Meeting also reiterated its support for a rules-based, non-discriminatory, open, free, inclusive, equitable, and transparent multilateral trading system, with the WTO at its core.

9. The Meeting reaffirmed its commitment to ASEAN Centrality and unity in the evolving regional architecture and reiterated its commitment to an ASEAN-centred regional architecture that is open, transparent, inclusive and rules-based, in support of ASEAN-led mechanisms and the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP). The Meeting called for joint efforts to protect and reinforce a more open, predictable and sustainable economic order in the Indo-Pacific.

10. The Meeting noted that 2022 marks the 45th anniversary of ASEAN-Canada Dialogue Partner relations and noted Canada’s desire to elevate a Strategic Partnership with ASEAN. The Meeting looked forward to the convening of the ASEAN-Canada Summit to Commemorate the 45th Anniversary of ASEAN-Canada Dialogue Relations on the margin of ASEAN Summit and Related Summits in November 2022. The Meeting welcomed Canada’s recent announcement of the creation of an ASEAN-Canada Plan of Action Trust Fund, as a demonstration of Canada’s commitment to working with and through ASEAN institutions and structures to deepen partnerships across all three ASEAN Community pillars. The Meeting also welcomed Canada’s

support for the upcoming ASEAN Women Entrepreneurs Conference and Award Ceremony as an important element of ASEAN's 2022 agenda.

11. The Meeting expressed its support for Indonesia's G20 Presidency, under the theme "Recover Together, Recover Stronger," and Thailand, as host of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) under the theme "Open. Connect. Balance." The Meeting noted that these processes provide a unique opportunity for all participating countries/economies to jointly advance the collective global and regional agenda and efforts to bring peace, prosperity, and sustainable and inclusive development to all our peoples.

12. The Meeting held a discussion with representatives of the Canada-ASEAN Business Council (CABC). The Meeting noted CABC's recommendation on in the areas of trade liberalisation, business and investment flows, energy transition and digital economy development and encouraged active supports from the business in advancing the ACAFTA negotiations.
