



**THE AEM-USTR CONSULTATION
18 September 2022, Siem Reap, Cambodia**

JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT

1. ASEAN Member States (AMS) and the United States Trade Representative met on 18 September 2022 for AEM-USTR Consultations. The Consultation was co-chaired by H.E. PAN Sorasak, Minister of Commerce, Kingdom of Cambodia and H.E. Katherine Tai, United States Trade Representative, United States of America (U.S.).
2. The Meeting noted the continued strong rebound of economic relations between ASEAN Member States and the United States from the disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic and global instability. According to ASEAN's statistics, the total two-way merchandise trade reached USD 364 billion in 2021 or an increase of 17.9 percent year-on-year. The inflow of foreign direct investment (FDI) from the U.S. into ASEAN was at USD 40 billion, or an increase of 41.1 per cent year-on-year. The U.S. is ASEAN's second largest trading partner, and the largest source of foreign direct investments with a 23.0 per cent share to total inflows, mainly to financial and insurance services, and manufacturing sectors.
3. The Meeting noted that the post-COVID-19 economic recovery remains vulnerable to adverse global and regional disruptions. The Meeting expressed its deep concerns on geopolitical tensions and continued risks to global food and energy security, supply chain disruptions, and rising inflationary pressure.
4. Given the multidimensional impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Meeting applauded significant recovery progress made by the ASEAN Member States and underlined the importance of global cooperation to build regional resilience. The Meeting expressed gratitude towards US' support in strengthening the public health emergency responses, which includes the contribution to the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund as well as the support to the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF) and its Implementation Plan, particularly in the areas of public health personnel capacity building, digital trade, digital upskilling, micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), and sustainability.
5. The Meeting reiterated its commitment to ASEAN Centrality and unity in the evolving regional architecture and to support an ASEAN-centred regional architecture that is open, transparent, inclusive and rules-based, built upon ASEAN-led mechanisms to support the *ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific* (AOIP). 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.

6. The Meeting welcomed the active engagements by officials in discussing the possible ways and means to implement the U.S.-ASEAN Economic Futures, as part of new initiatives to expand the U.S.-ASEAN Strategic Partnership launched by the President Biden at 9th U.S.-ASEAN Summit. The Meeting underlined the need to ensure that that U.S.-ASEAN economic cooperation contribute to the realisation of meaningful, substantive and mutually beneficial outcomes under the ASEAN-U.S. Comprehensive Strategic Partnership that will be agreed to by leaders at the 10th ASEAN – U.S. Summit in November 2022.

7. The Meeting noted the positive results made in the implementation of the 2021-2022 ASEAN-U.S. Trade and Investment Framework Arrangement (TIFA) and E3 Work Plan, especially in the areas of digitalisation, trade facilitation and support for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). The Meeting also noted the ongoing discussions in exploring the exchange of electronic customs information between ASEAN Single Window (ASW) and the U.S.'s Automated Commercial Environment (ACE) to facilitate trade in the region.

8. The Meeting endorsed the activities planned to be conducted under the 2022-2023 ASEAN-U.S. Trade and Investment Framework Arrangement (TIFA) and Expanded Economic Engagement (E3) Work Plan and welcomed areas of cooperation in the Work Plan, including Sustainable Energy/Green Economy, Good Regulatory Practices, among others. The Meeting encouraged officials to continue to actively cooperate in implementing the activities that would continue to support the post-pandemic economic recovery.

9. The Meeting acknowledged the continuation of the ASEAN-U.S. Trade and Labor Dialogue held in March 2022. The Meeting welcomed the ASEAN SME Academy 2.0 platform that was launched in April 2022 with the US' support, to better assist MSMEs' recovery from the pandemic and enhance awareness on opportunities from green innovations among MSMEs, particularly women entrepreneurs.

10. The Meeting expressed appreciation for the U.S. support to ASEAN under the U.S.-ASEAN Connect and the U.S.' technical assistance programme on "Inclusive Growth in ASEAN through Innovation, Trade, and E-Commerce (IGNITE)", covering a wide spectrum of areas, including health, trade facilitation, sustainable development, transportation, and science, technology, and innovation.

11. 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, would position Members to undertake meaningful work to advance the foundational objectives of the WTO. Whilst recognizing the need to reform the WTO to improve all its functions, the Meeting also reiterated its support for a rules-based, non-discriminatory, open, fair, inclusive, equitable, and transparent multilateral trading system, with the WTO at its core.

12. The Meeting expressed its support for Indonesia's G20 Presidency under the theme "Recover Together, Recover Stronger", Thailand as host of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) under the theme "Open. Connect. Balance.", and the United States as host of APEC in 2023. The Meeting noted that these processes provide a unique opportunity for all participating countries/economies to discuss important issues in the global and regional economy, including their approaches to advancing prosperity and sustainable development for all.

13. The Meeting held a discussion with representatives of the US-ASEAN Business Council (USABC). The Meeting noted the initiatives and activities conducted by USABC in 2021-2022. The Meeting also commended USABC for the continued support to ASEAN, in further advancing ASEAN's digital economy especially on advancing MSMEs' digital capability. The meeting encouraged US ABC to also include sustainability and circularity in its capacity building programme for the MSMEs.
