



**THE NINETEENTH AEM-CER CONSULTATIONS
26 August 2014, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar**

JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT

1. ASEAN Economic Ministers (AEM) and the Ministers of Australia and New Zealand (Closer Economic Relations – CER) met in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar on 26 August 2014 for the Nineteenth AEM-CER Consultations, which were co-chaired by H.E. Dr. Kan Zaw, Union Minister for National Planning and Economic Development, Myanmar; the Honourable Mr. Andrew Robb, Minister for Trade and Investment, Australia; and the Honourable Mr. Tim Groser, Minister of Trade, New Zealand.
2. ASEAN welcomed the commemoration of its 40th anniversary of Dialogue Relations with Australia this year, and with New Zealand in 2015, and welcomed the strengthening of its partnership with the CER countries.
3. ASEAN and Australia’s combined two-way merchandise trade more than doubled over the past decade to US\$68 billion in 2013, making ASEAN Australia’s second largest trading partner. In 2013, ASEAN received over US\$2 billion of foreign direct investment from Australia, a 9.4% increase on a year-on-year basis.
4. The economic relationship between ASEAN and New Zealand has also grown with total two-way merchandise trade at US\$9.8 billion in 2013, a 6.1% increase year-on-year. ASEAN also received a US\$250 million inflows of FDI from New Zealand in 2013. The implementation of “NZ Inc Strategy for ASEAN” launched in 2013 is expected to further strengthen trade and investment relations between ASEAN and New Zealand.

ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand FTA Implementation

5. The Ministers welcomed the signing of the *First Protocol to Amend the Agreement establishing the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA)*. The First Protocol is intended to make AANZFTA more business-friendly, transparent and improve administrative efficiency, including by simplifying information requirements on certificates of origin and consolidating rules of origin. Ministers affirmed the importance of the Protocol’s early implementation and endorsed the target date of entry into force by 31 March 2015 upon ratification of at least four ASEAN Member States, Australia, and New Zealand.
6. In order to ensure that the implementation of the Protocol was trade-facilitating, the Ministers tasked the relevant AANZFTA committees to put in place appropriate transitional

arrangements, particularly on revised Rules of Origin, well before the entry into force of the Protocol. Ministers noted the need to ensure that business was adequately informed about the changes to AANZFTA's operation resulting from the First Protocol, to assist companies to continue to fully utilise the Agreement. The Ministers welcomed the progress in completing the transposition of the AANZFTA tariff reduction schedules from HS 2007 to HS 2012, and looked forward to early completion of the remaining schedules. Ministers underscored the need to prioritise the development of guidelines and methodologies for future transposition of tariff schedules.

7. The Ministers noted the status of the implementation of the regional mechanism to monitor AANZFTA tariff utilisation as well as the progress of the review of non-tariff measures, including the conduct of a business survey.

8. The Ministers noted the importance of progressing the FTA's built-in agenda and welcomed the work done to date, such as the timeframe for the conclusion of the investment schedule of reservations, the preparatory work for the review of services commitments, and the interface between investment and services committees. The Ministers looked forward to the reviews of product specific rules and cumulation rules as deliverables at the AEM-CER Consultations in 2015.

9. The Ministers noted the achievements in intellectual property cooperation such as long-term regional capacity building for patent examination, development of an ASEAN strategy for public education and awareness, exchanges on genetic resources, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, and development of implementation roadmaps to support ASEAN Member States' accession to and the implementation of the Madrid Protocol.

10. The Ministers welcomed the development of the Competition Law Implementation Programme which aims to provide strategic direction to economic cooperation in the area of competition through phased and practically-focused technical assistance.

Broader Economic Cooperation

11. The Ministers were pleased with the momentum of the implementation of the AANZFTA Economic Cooperation Support Programme (AECSP) which will run until the end of December 2015. The Programme, which to date has a committed expenditure of AUD 18.9 million, continues to support AANZFTA implementation and the promotion of deeper and broader economic integration.

12. The Ministers also welcomed the development and dissemination of new communications material including the *Programme Highlights* and *Fact Sheets*, which provide a snapshot of each project's contribution to AEC priorities. The Ministers looked forward to the FTA Joint Committee's close monitoring of the projects to deliver focused outcomes and greater coordination of economic cooperation post-2015.

13. Ministers welcomed the endorsement of the ASEAN Qualification Reference Framework (AQR) at the 46th ASEAN Economic Ministers' Meeting. The AQR, which will

enable comparisons of qualifications across ASEAN Member States, is a step further towards the ASEAN Economic Community goal of free flow of skilled labour. The Ministers acknowledged the work undertaken by the Task Force on AQR, which comprised representatives from ministries of labour, education, trade, and qualification agencies. ASEAN thanked Australia and New Zealand for their continued support to the Task Force through the AECSP.

ASEAN-CER INTEGRATION PARTNERSHIP FORUM

14. The Ministers were pleased to note the outcomes of the 4th ASEAN-CER Integration Partnership Forum in Auckland in May 2014 with the theme *“Agro-Food Trade: Tackling Non-Tariff Measures – Helping Trade to Flow Freely in Global Value Chains”*. The Forum explored the experiences of and challenges faced by New Zealand and Australia in adopting a mutual recognition and joint standards regime for agro-food as a way to enhance participation in global value chains.

LIST OF MINISTERS

1. **The Hon. Andrew Robb** AO MP, Minister for Trade and Investment, Australia
2. **The Hon. Pehin Dato Lim Jock Seng**, Second Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Brunei Darussalam
3. **H.E. Sun Chanthol**, Senior Minister and Minister of Commerce, Cambodia
4. **H.E. Muhammad Lutfi**, Minister of Trade, Indonesia
5. **H.E. Mrs. Khemmani Pholsena**, Minister of Industry and Commerce, Lao PDR
6. **H.E. Dato' Sri Mustapa Mohamed**, Minister of International Trade and Industry, Malaysia
7. **H.E. Dr. Kan Zaw**, Union Minister for National Planning and Economic Development, Myanmar
8. **The Hon. Tim Groser**, Minister of Trade, New Zealand
9. **H.E. Gregory L. Domingo**, Secretary of Trade and Industry, the Philippines
10. **H.E. Lim Hng Kiang**, Minister for Trade and Industry, Singapore
11. **H.E. Ms. Chutima Bunyapraphasara**, Permanent Secretary, Acting for the Minister of Commerce, Thailand
12. **H.E. Dr. Vu Huy Hoang**, Minister of Industry and Trade, Viet Nam
13. **H.E. Le Luong Minh**, Secretary-General of ASEAN