The 1ˢᵗ ASEAN Digital Ministers' Meeting and Related Meetings
22 January 2021

JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT

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1.   The 1st ASEAN Digital Ministers Meeting (ADGMIN) was held via video conference on 21 and 22 January 2021. H.E. Dato' Saifuddin bin Abdullah, Minister of Communications and Multimedia Malaysia, chaired the Meeting, and H.E. U Thant Sin Maung, Union Minister for Transport and Communications of Myanmar was the Vice-Chair. The Ministers also held consultations with their counterparts from China, Japan, Republic of Korea (ROK), India, the United States, and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

ASEAN: A Digitally Connected Community

2.   The Ministers commended the senior officials and regulators in charge of the digital sector for the successful completion of the ASEAN ICT Masterplan 2020 (AIM2020) and its contribution to propel ASEAN towards a digitally-enabled economy that is secure, sustainable, and transformative; and to enable an innovative, inclusive and integrated ASEAN Community.

3.   The Ministers noted that ASEAN has put in tremendous efforts to complete the AIM2020, with 51 projects undertaken to implement the eight strategic thrusts of the masterplan. These efforts have led to substantial improvements in ICT development and connectivity in the region.

4.   The Ministers recognised the unprecedented challenges posed by the Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and expressed condolences for the loss of lives and disrupted livelihoods. The Ministers underscored the importance of accelerating inclusive digital transformation in ASEAN, which is one of the key strategies adopted under the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF) and its Implementation Plan, that serves as a consolidated exit strategy from the COVID-19 crisis.

5.   The Ministers welcomed the launch of the ASEAN Digital Masterplan 2025 (ADM2025) to guide ASEAN's digital cooperation from 2021 to 2025 in realising ASEAN as a leading digital community and economic bloc, powered by secure and transformative digital services, technologies and ecosystem, and undergirded by cybersecurity to foster a trusted and reliable digital space.

6.   The Ministers also welcomed the Implementing Guidelines for the ASEAN Data Management Framework (DMF) and ASEAN Cross Border Data Flows (CBDF) Mechanism, which are initiatives of the ASEAN Framework on Digital Data Governance, and which builds on the principles of the ASEAN Framework on Personal Data Protection to harmonise data management and cross border data flows standards in the ASEAN region, raise the digital competitiveness of ASEAN Member States by establishing a trusted, transparent and accountable environment for doing business, and build ASEAN's readiness to take up new digital opportunities. This will prepare ASEAN to work with other regional and global partners on creating interoperable data management and cross border data flows standards globally.

7.   The Ministers noted that enhancing cybersecurity cooperation is key to the security of our future economy and digitalisation initiatives, especially in view of the recent rise of global cybersecurity and supply chain attacks and threats. They welcomed the proposal to enhance ASEAN cybersecurity cooperation through the formalising of existing AMS National CERT-level exchanges through the establishment of an ASEAN CERT information exchange mechanism as a core component of the future ASEAN CERT. The mechanism will support national CERTs through the exchange of information and best practices, and coordinate CERT capacity building programmes in the region.

8.   The Ministers adopted the Putrajaya Declaration on "ASEAN: A Digitally Connected Community" to build a digitally-ready and connected ASEAN to help businesses and citizens benefit from opportunities presented by the digital economy.

DIGITAL COOPERATION WITH DIALOGUE AND DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

9.   The Ministers looked forward to further deepening the cooperation with Dialogue and Development Partners in enhancing digital cooperation, developing human resources, exploring emerging technologies for adoption, and improving the capacity to address cybersecurity risks in the implementation of the ADM2025.

10.   The Ministers expressed their appreciation to China for the active promotion and success of the 2020 ASEAN-China Year of Digital Economy Cooperation, the establishment of ASEAN-China digital economy partnership, and nearly 20 activities on various topics, including digital technology in pandemic prevention and control, 5G use cases, AI, industrial Internet, cybersecurity, smart city, and industrial digital transformation by overcoming the negative impact of COVID-19. The Ministers looked forward to strengthening policy alignment and deepening the cooperation on digital technology and application for both sides, and agreed to exchange and cooperate on digital development policy, digital technology in pandemic prevention and control, digital innovation, digital infrastructure, digital security, and digital

capacity building in 2021. The Ministers also agreed to develop the Action Plan for Implementing the ASEAN-China Partnership on Digital Economy 2021-2025 in 2021.

11.   The Ministers expressed their appreciation to Japan for its assistance in various areas of cooperation in 2020, including the ASEAN Conference on 5G Ecosystem Development, Developing Guideline and Common Standard of Smart Notification System for Natural Disasters, ASEAN-Japan Symposium on ADM2025, Information Security Workshop for Internet Service Providers, and the various cybersecurity training programmes, in which providing e-learning and making exercises available online is being worked on, delivered at the ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Capacity Building Centre in Bangkok. The Ministers endorsed the 2021 ASEAN-Japan ICT Work Plan which contributes to the achievement of the ADM2025 which envisions ASEAN as a leading digital community and economic bloc, powered by secure and transformative digital services, technologies and ecosystem.

12.   The Ministers expressed their appreciation to the ROK for its assistance in cooperation activities in the areas of innovation, connectivity enhancement, human resource development and information security. The Ministers welcomed the endorsement of the 2021 ASEAN-ROK ICT Work Plan which would support the joint activities in 5G, open data, etc. in order to promote a sustainable, resilient, and inclusive ASEAN-ROK digital ecosystem. The Ministers committed to strengthening cooperation on digital connectivity further in line with the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025 and the ADM2025.

13.   The Ministers welcomed the endorsement of the 2021 ASEAN-EU ICT Work Plan during the 1st ADGSOM+EU meeting to advance the cooperation in areas of mutual interest, including the on-going development of an ASEAN Digital Index (ADIX) and capacity building programmes on digital policies under the Enhanced Regional EU-ASEAN Dialogue Instrument (E-READI) Facility.

14.   The Ministers acknowledged India for the progress made in the commissioning of Centres of Excellence in Software Development and Training (CESDT) in Cambodia and Lao PDR and similar ongoing activities in Viet Nam and Myanmar in addition to its assistance to the ICT human resource development through various knowledge sharing and capacity building programmes at reputable training centres in India. The Ministers endorsed the 2021 ASEAN-India ICT Work Plan which supports the ADM2025 initiatives including the establishment of ASEAN-India Advanced IT Knowledge Hub (AIKH) at the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), capacity building and knowledge sharing in the areas of Internet of Things (IoT) and 5G, ICT in Disaster Management, Creating Smart Societies through ICT, Next Generation Transmission Technologies, Future Trends in Mobile Communication, Advanced Satellite Communication and Regulatory and Policy issues.

15.   The Ministers welcomed the first ministerial-level meeting between ASEAN and the United States on digital and telecommunications issues. They expressed hope to build this relationship in future ADGMIN engagements. The Ministers appreciated the United States' ongoing assistance provided under the Digital Connectivity and Cybersecurity Partnership (DCCP) including the ASEAN-USAID Inclusive Growth in ASEAN through Innovation, Trade and E-Commerce (IGNITE), and especially the ongoing development of the ASEAN Digital Integration Index, which also measures ASEAN's digital performance, as well as the ASEAN-U.S. Connect Digital Economy Series. The Ministers also welcomed the continuing activities with the US-ASEAN Business Council, including the ASEAN-US Digital Policy Consultative Forum and the ATRC Stakeholders' Consultative Dialogue. The Ministers welcomed the endorsement of the 2021 ASEAN-U.S. ICT Work Plan during the 1st ADGSOM+U.S. meeting which includes USAID's ASEAN IGNITE and other policy implementation programmes that will accelerate the implementation of key ASEAN initiatives in support of ASEAN-U.S. common goals.

16.   The Ministers expressed their appreciation to the ITU for its sustained support in advancing the development of the digital sector in ASEAN, specifically in the areas of Smart Sustainable Cities, 5G ecosystem development, preliminary review of the ADM2025, and international mobile roaming, as well as direct assistance extended to individual AMS.

17.   The Ministers reiterated ASEAN's commitment to pursue policy and regulatory dialogue with both dialogue and development partners. The Ministers also called for greater participation from the private sector to jointly develop quality ICT infrastructure and services, including protecting Critical Information Infrastructures as highlighted at the 5th ASEAN Ministerial Conference on Cybersecurity, to improve ASEAN's competitiveness to support the goals of the ASEAN Community.

NEXT MEETING

18.   The Ministers agreed to convene the 2nd ADGMIN and its Meetings with Dialogue Partners and the ITU in Myanmar at the end of 2021.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

19.   The Ministers expressed appreciation to the Government of Malaysia for hosting the meetings via video conference and for the excellent arrangements made for the 1st ADGMIN and Related Meetings.

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LIST OF MINISTERS

1. **H.E. Dato Seri Setia Abdul Mutalib Yusof**, Minister of Transport and Infocommunications of Brunei Darussalam;
2. **H.E. Dr. Vandeth Chea**, Minister of Post and Telecommunications of Cambodia;
3. **H.E. Johnny G. Plate**, Minister of Communication and Informatics Technology of Indonesia;
4. **H.E. Bounsaleumsay Khennavong**, Vice Minister of Post and Telecommunications of Lao PDR;
5. **H.E. Dato' Saifuddin Abdullah,** Minister of Communications and Multimedia Malaysia;
6. **H.E. Thant Sin Maung**, Union Minister of Transport and Communications of Myanmar;
7. **H.E. Alan A. Silor**, Undersecretary of the Department of Information and Communications Technology of the Philippines;
8. **H.E. S. Iswaran**, Minister for Communications and Information of Singapore;
9. **H.E. Buddhipongse Punnakanta**, Minister of Digital Economy and Society of Thailand;
10. **H.E. Dr. Phan Tam**, Deputy Minister of Information and Communications of Viet Nam;
11. **H.E. Dr. Aladdin D. Rillo**, Deputy Secretary-General for ASEAN Economic Community;
12. **H.E. Liu Liehong**, Vice Minister of Industry and Information Technology of People's Republic of China;
13. **H.E. Masayoshi Shintani**, State Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications of Japan;
14. **H.E. Dr. Choi Kiyoung**, Minister of Science, ICT and Future Planning of the Republic of Korea;
15. **H.E. Shri Anshu Prakash**, Vice Minister, Secretary (Telecom), Department of Telecommunications, Ministry of Communications of India;
16. **H.E. Geoffrey Starks**, Commissioner, the United States Federal Communications Commission;
17. **H.E. Houlin Zhao**, Secretary General of the International Telecommunication Union.