



**THE EIGHTH AEM-CANADA CONSULTATIONS
10 September 2019, Thailand, Bangkok**

JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT

1. Economic Ministers from the ten ASEAN Member States (AMS) and Canada (“the Ministers”) met on 10 September 2019 in Bangkok, Thailand for the Eighth ASEAN Economic Ministers-Canada Consultations. The Consultations were co-chaired by H.E. Jurin Laksanawisit, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Commerce of Thailand and H.E. John Hannaford, Deputy Minister of International Trade of Canada.
2. The Ministers welcomed positive trade relations between ASEAN and Canada, noting that total two-way merchandise trade with Canada reached over USD 18.75 billion in 2018. The Ministers also noted that the cumulative Canadian Direct Investment in ASEAN reached almost USD 9.5 billion¹ that same year.
3. The Ministers welcomed the conclusion of the exploratory discussions for a possible ASEAN-Canada Free Trade Agreement (FTA). The Ministers noted that the second set of exploratory discussions was held on 7-8 April 2019, followed by intersessional expert exchanges. On the basis of a joint report by senior officials on the key outcomes of exploratory discussions, the Ministers noted that exploratory discussions have provided ASEAN and Canada with a better understanding of each other’s FTA approach and expectations for a possible ASEAN-Canada FTA. The Ministers tasked officials to exchange views on the next steps towards the possibility of an ASEAN-Canada FTA at the next SEOM-Canada Consultations in 2020 with a view of presenting recommendations to the Ministers at the next AEM-Canada Consultations.
4. The Ministers welcomed progress made in the implementation of the 2016-2020 Work Plan to implement the ASEAN-Canada Joint Declaration on Trade and Investment. The Ministers noted that the 3rd ASEAN-Canada Annual Trade Policy Dialogue (TPD) was held on 12 July, 2019, in Solo, Indonesia under the theme of “Intellectual Property and the Importance of Supporting Innovation Through Trade”. The Ministers encouraged officials to continue the dialogue to decide the theme for next year’s TPD in an area of mutual interest and suggested officials examine opportunities for further capacity building and cooperation in new FTA issue areas.
5. The Ministers appreciated Canada’s continued support for ASEAN economic integration through a number of technical assistance activities that contribute to capacity building and sustainable economic growth within ASEAN. The Ministers

¹ Canadian Statistics as of September 2019

particularly welcomed the ongoing Canada-OECD Project on ASEAN SMEs (COPAS), and the Canadian Trade and Investment Facility for Development (CTIF); as well as the newly launched Expert Deployment Mechanism for Trade and Development (EDM).

6. The Ministers welcomed Canada's active participation in the ASEAN World Trade Organization (WTO) Reform Seminar jointly hosted by Thailand and the WTO Secretariat in Bangkok in March 2019. Canada and ASEAN share a commitment towards safeguarding a rules-based trading system, including ways to strengthen and modernize the WTO.

7. The Ministers held a dialogue with representatives of the Canada-ASEAN Business Council and commended the Council for its on-going efforts to promote ASEAN-Canada trade and investment. The Ministers welcomed the results of the 2019 Canada-ASEAN Business Survey, which highlight the increased interest from the private sector for enhanced bilateral trade and investment. The Ministers also noted the recommendations raised by the Council advocating for an ASEAN-Canada FTA.

LIST OF MINISTERS

1. **H.E. Dato Dr. Amin Liew Abdullah**, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Minister of Finance and Economy II, Brunei Darussalam;
2. **H.E. John Hannaford**, Deputy Minister of International Trade, Canada (representing The Hon. James Gordon Carr, Minister of International Trade Diversification, Canada);
3. **H.E. Pan Sorasak**, Minister of Commerce, Cambodia;
4. **H.E. Enggartiasto Lukita**, Minister of Trade, Indonesia;
5. **H.E. Mrs. Khemmani Pholsena**, Minister of Industry and Commerce, Lao PDR;
6. **H.E. Darell Leiking**, Minister of International Trade and Industry, Malaysia;
7. **Mr. Than Aung Kyaw**, Director General, Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations, Myanmar (representing H.E. Thaung Tun, Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations, Myanmar);
8. **H.E. Ceferino S. Rodolfo**, Undersecretary, Department of Trade and Industry, Philippines (representing H.E. Ramon M. Lopez, Secretary of Trade and Industry, Philippines);
9. **H.E. 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);
10. **H.E. Jurin Laksanawisit**, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Commerce, Thailand;
11. **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
12. **H.E. Dato Lim Jock Hoi**, Secretary-General of ASEAN.