



PRESS RELEASE
MINISTRY OF ECONOMY, TRADE AND INDUSTRY

**THE FIFTY-EIGHT ASEAN ECONOMIC MINISTERS' (58TH AEM) MEETING
AND RELATED MEETINGS**

Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Haji Abdul Manaf bin Haji Metussin, Coordinating Minister for Economic Policies and Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry attended the 58th ASEAN Economic Ministers' (58th AEM) Meeting and Related Meetings held on 17th until 22nd September 2026 in Manila, the Philippines. The Meetings were chaired by Her Excellency Ma. Cristina A. Roque, Secretary, Department of Trade and Industry, the Philippines.

At the 58th AEM Meeting, the Ministers noted that ASEAN's economy continues to demonstrate resilience, despite uncertainties arising from the Middle East crisis and global geo-economic uncertainties. In this regard, the Ministers emphasised the importance of deepening regional economic integration, strengthening supply chain resilience, promoting investment, and advancing cooperation on emerging economic issues to sustain ASEAN's growth momentum and long-term competitiveness amidst an increasingly uncertain global environment.

The Ministers also affirmed ASEAN's strong commitment to the successful implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2045 and the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Strategic Plan 2026-2030. To this end, the Meeting adopted the AEC Sectoral Plans to guide the delivery of the AEC Strategic Plan 2026-2030, in support of ASEAN's aspiration to sustain high-quality growth and strengthen its position as a major player in the global economy.

The Ministers welcomed the substantial progress in the implementation of the 2026 Priority Economic Deliverables (PED), which include the signing of the ASEAN Digital Economy Framework Agreement (DEFA) scheduled at the sidelines of the 49th ASEAN Summit in November 2026. The ASEAN DEFA will provide a stronger foundation for a more integrated,



inclusive, competitive, and trusted digital economy, helping businesses, particularly the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), participate more easily in the region's digital economy and enabling seamless cross-border digital transactions. The Meeting also welcomed the signing of the First Protocol to Amend the ASEAN-Hong Kong, China Investment Agreement (AHKIA) on 20 September 2026. The Protocol is envisioned to enhance transparency for investors from ASEAN and Hong-Kong, China.

During the 58th AEM – 40th ASEAN Free Trade Area Council Meeting, the Ministers noted an increase in the utilisation rate of the ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (ATIGA), and welcomed the continued implementation of trade facilitative measures, including the full implementation of the electronic Form D (e-Form D) and the ASEAN-wide Self-certification scheme, that facilitate the seamless movement of goods and access to preferential tariff treatment. The Ministers also welcomed the Declaration on the Provisional Application of the Second Protocol to Amend the ATIGA (Upgraded ATIGA) which will facilitate the early entry-into-force of the Upgraded ATIGA within 2026 to realise the benefits of the Upgraded ATIGA by facilitating the seamless movement of goods, enhancing transparency and predictability for businesses, especially MSMEs across the region.

At the 58th AEM – 29th ASEAN Investment Area Council Meeting, Ministers welcomed the signing of the Fifth Protocol to Amend the ASEAN Comprehensive Investment Agreement (ACIA) by all Parties and the official adoption of the ASEAN Sustainable Investment Guidelines (ASIG). The Meeting also welcomed the good progress of several investment initiatives such as the implementation of the ASEAN Regional Investment Promotion Action Plan (RIPAP) as well as the launching of the new InvestASEAN website and "Investment Ready Projects: A Guide for Investment Promotion Agencies". The Ministers also discussed the ASEAN Investment Report 2026 on "Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Intangibles Development" and the "Review of Investment Policies in ASEAN".

Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Haji Abdul Manaf bin Haji Metussin, Coordinating Minister for Economic Policies and Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry participated in the 24th



AEM – ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ASEAN-BAC) Consultation where the Meeting discussed ASEAN-BAC's policy recommendations on supply chain and trade facilitation, the digital economy, circular economy and sustainability, as well as its legacy projects.

The Ministers also held a consultation with Mr. Darren Tang, Director-General of the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) where they discussed the progress of the ASEAN-WIPO Memorandum of Understanding and strategic areas of cooperation in Intellectual Property, as well as the impact of intangible assets and integrating Intellectual Property into the digital and creative economies that could enable businesses, research institutions and creators protect and commercialise their innovations, attract investment and expand into regional and international markets.

The series of meetings also included consultations with ASEAN's Dialogue Partners including Australia; Canada; People's Republic of China; European Union; Hong-Kong, People's Republic of China; India; Japan; Republic of Korea; New Zealand; Russia; Switzerland; the United Kingdom; and the United States of America. At the meetings, the Ministers welcomed the status of economic cooperation efforts and deliberated the implementation or negotiations of ASEAN's FTAs with Dialogue Partners namely (i) Australia and New Zealand; (ii) Canada; (iii) People's Republic of China; (iv) Hong-Kong, People's Republic of China; (v) India; (vi) Japan; and (vii) Republic of Korea.

During the 31st AEM-Closer Economic Relations Consultation, Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Haji Abdul Manaf bin Haji Metussin, Coordinating Minister for Economic Policies and Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry briefed the Meeting as the ASEAN Country Coordinator and expressed his satisfaction with the work related to the implementation of the Agreement Establishing the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA). To this end, Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Haji Abdul Manaf bin Haji Metussin expressed his appreciation to Australia and New Zealand for their continued commitment in supporting the AANZFTA implementation through technical and financial assistance under the AANZFTA Implementation Support Program (AISP) and the Regional Trade for Development (RT4D)



initiative. In addition, he urged on the remaining Parties to expedite their respective domestic procedures to ratify the Second Protocol to Amend the AANZFTA to enable traders, businesses, and investors from ASEAN, Australia and New Zealand to benefit from the upgraded agreement.

The Ministers also convened the 5th Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Ministerial Meeting, which was co-chaired by Her Excellency Dyah Roro Esti Widya Putri, Vice Minister of Trade of the Republic of Indonesia and the Honourable Dr. Shane Reti, MP, Member of the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee, New Zealand Parliament. Among others, the Ministers underscored the important role of the RCEP Agreement in advancing regional economic integration and welcomed the positive progress towards expanding RCEP membership. To this end, the Ministers approved the recommendation of the RCEP Joint Committee to establish an ad hoc Accession Working Group to advance the accession process for Hong Kong, China; Sri Lanka; Chile; and Bangladesh. As for Uruguay, the Meeting noted its interest to accede to the Agreement in February 2026, which will be given due consideration as appropriate. The Meeting also noted the ongoing preparations for the 2027 General Review of the RCEP Agreement, which will provide an opportunity to further strengthen and enhance the Agreement in line with emerging regional and global economic developments.

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