



**THE FOURTH REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP (RCEP)
MINISTERIAL MEETING
5 August 2016, Vientiane, Lao PDR**

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

1. The Fourth RCEP Ministerial Meeting was held on 5 August 2016 in Vientiane, Lao PDR. The Meeting was chaired by H.E. Mrs. Khemmani Pholsena, Minister of Industry and Commerce, Lao PDR, and attended by Ministers and Heads of Delegation from all RCEP Participating Countries (RPCs). The list of Ministers appears as **ANNEX 1**.
2. The Meeting considered the RCEP Trade Negotiating Committee (TNC) Report to Ministers on the progress of the RCEP negotiations, which appears as **ANNEX 2**. Given the challenging and subdued outlook for the world economy, the Meeting noted the contribution that a successfully concluded RCEP could make to boosting business confidence. The Meeting discussed extensively the key issues raised by the RCEP TNC Chair to Ministers for guidance and agreed on the importance of providing strategic directions to help advance the RCEP negotiations in the subsequent rounds. In response to the key issues raised, the Meeting welcomed the proposal submitted by ASEAN on the key issues, which was subsequently updated and deliberated by RPCs. The Meeting noted the views of ASEAN and some other RPCs that while concluding negotiations by end of 2016 is an objective, the early conclusion of the RCEP negotiations should not be at the expense of the quality of the eventual agreement.
3. The Meeting noted further comments provided by RPCs on the updated ASEAN's views on trade in goods, trade in services, Movement of Natural Persons, investment and government procurement. Going forward, the Meeting tasked the TNC to continue to work towards finding broad landing zones on these issues, building on both the updated ASEAN's views and the further comments from RPCs. The Meeting welcomed the response from the RCEP TNC Chair affirming the intention of TNC to work constructively in the spirit of finding broad landing zones on these key issues at the 14th round of negotiations in Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam. The Meeting noted ASEAN's *Updated Views on Key Issues in RCEP Negotiations*, which appears as **ANNEX 3**.
4. The Meeting also encouraged all RPCs to reflect on the appropriate messaging on the progress of the RCEP negotiations for the 28th and 29th ASEAN Summits and Related Summits scheduled from 6 to 8 September 2016 in Vientiane, Lao PDR, and to discuss this further during the 14th round.
5. The Meeting underscored the need for RCEP Ministers to intensify engagement in the RCEP negotiations and agreed to hold an intersessional RCEP Ministerial Meeting in

November 2016 to provide further guidance after the outcomes of the 14th and 15th rounds in August and October, respectively, and in preparation for the round scheduled for December 2016. The Meeting tasked the ASEAN Secretariat to finalise the date and venue for the proposed intersessional RCEP Ministerial Meeting.

6. The Meeting considered the draft Joint Media Statement (JMS) for the 4th RCEP Ministerial Meeting. The Meeting noted the view of some RPCs to mention RCEP as a single undertaking in the JMS on the argument that this was the understanding in which negotiations have been conducted to date. The Meeting also noted the view of some RPCs to keep to the language that has been agreed in the *Guiding Principles and Objectives for Negotiating the RCEP*, as endorsed by Leaders. There was no Joint Media Statement released for the 4th RCEP Ministerial Meeting after reaching no consensus on the draft.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Delegations from the ASEAN Member States, Australia, China, India, Japan, Korea, New Zealand and the ASEAN Secretariat expressed their appreciation to the people and the Government of Lao PDR for the warm hospitality and excellent arrangements made for the Meeting.

