

**MINISTERIAL UNDERSTANDING ON ASEAN COOPERATION IN TELECOMMUNICATIONS
AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY,**

KUALA LUMPUR, 13 JULY 2001

We the undersigned, attending the First ASEAN Telecommunications Ministers Meeting held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 13-14 July 2001;

RECALLING the:

1. ASEAN Declaration signed in Bangkok, Thailand on 8 August 1967, which stated the improvement of transportation and communications facilities as one of the aims and purposes of the Association;
2. Declaration of ASEAN Concord signed in Bali, Indonesia on 24 February 1976, which stated that Member States shall take cooperative action in their national and regional development programs, to broaden the complementarity of their respective economies;
3. Singapore Declaration and the Framework Agreement on Enhancing ASEAN Economic Cooperation signed in Singapore on 28 January 1992, which declared that ASEAN shall further enhance regional cooperation to provide safe, efficient and innovative transportation and communications infrastructure network and also to continue to improve and develop telecommunications systems to provide cost-effective, high quality and customer-oriented systems;
4. Bangkok Summit Declaration signed on 15 December 1995, which declared among others that:
 - a. ASEAN shall move towards greater economic integration by building on existing cooperation activities, initiating new areas of cooperation, and promoting closer cooperation in international fora;
 - b. ASEAN shall continue to support sub-regional arrangements;
 - c. ASEAN shall move towards enhancing cooperation and freer trade in services to include telecommunications, through the implementation of the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services; and
 - d. ASEAN Sectoral Ministers as well as Senior Officials shall meet regularly to embark on new initiatives to strengthen economic cooperation;
5. ASEAN Vision 2020 adopted by the ASEAN Heads of State and Government in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 15 December 1997, which stated the need for harnessing telecommunications and information technology to meet the ever increasing demand for improved communications in ASEAN;
6. Hanoi Plan of Action adopted on 15 December 1998, which provided a Telecommunications and Information Technology Action Agenda to enhance Greater Economic Integration in ASEAN;
7. Hanoi Declaration signed on 16 December 1998, which called for the development and strengthening of ASEAN regional infrastructure, through the expansion of transport and telecommunications links and cooperation in the development of the ASEAN Information

Infrastructure, and assigned the Ministers and Senior Officials in the implementation of their respective sectoral action agenda;

8. Third ASEAN Informal Summit in Manila, Philippines on 27-28 November 1999 endorsed, among others, the e-ASEAN initiative; and

9. The e-ASEAN Framework Agreement signed by the ASEAN Heads of State and Government on 24 November 2000 at the Fourth ASEAN Informal Summit in Singapore.

REITERATING our commitment to the foregoing directives, and for intensified cooperation and in the initiation of new areas of cooperation in the ASEAN telecommunications and information technology (IT) sector;

BELIEVING that meaningful ASEAN cooperation can be best achieved through the strengthening of existing national programs in the telecommunications and IT sector of the Member States and in the regional integration of these programs;

DO HEREBY AGREE THAT:

Article 1 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this Ministerial Understanding on ASEAN Cooperation in Telecommunications and Information Technology are to:

- a. Develop the ASEAN telecommunications and IT sector as a catalyst to foster closer regional economic integration;
- b. Enhance the overall competitiveness of the ASEAN region through a vibrant telecommunications and IT industry; and
- c. Develop the ASEAN Information Society, where its citizens are able to work, communicate and recreate in the knowledge-based economy.

Article 2 AREAS OF COOPERATION

1. Cooperation in ASEAN telecommunications and IT shall entail partnership in policy development and in program implementation in the following areas:

- a. Cooperation in the establishment of the ASEAN Information Infrastructure and in further advancement of the e-ASEAN initiative;
- b. Facilitation of intra-ASEAN trade and investment in telecommunications and IT sector;
- c. Coordination and harmonization of telecommunications and IT policies and programs;
- d. Promotion and development of indigenous ASEAN telecommunications and IT content;
- e. Promotion of private sector participation and enhancing public-private sector collaboration in regional telecommunications and IT cooperation programs and activities;
- f. Exchange of information and experience;
- g. Strengthening cooperation and joint approaches in addressing international and regional telecommunications and IT issues in areas of common interest;

- h. Bridging Digital Divide within ASEAN by encouraging capacity building and human resource development and enhancing access to and use of telecommunications and IT; and
- i. All other areas as may be deemed necessary.

2. Member States shall collectively develop work programs or plans for the above areas of cooperation, for consideration and approval by TELMIN. Participation of the private or business sector and the relevant regional/international organizations shall be encouraged in the development and implementation of the work programs/plans on ASEAN cooperation in telecommunications and IT sector.

Article 3 ORGANIZATION AND COORDINATION

1. The Chairmanship of the ASEAN Telecommunications Ministers Meeting (TELMIN) shall be rotated annually in alphabetical order among the Member States.

2. The ASEAN Telecommunications Senior Officials Meeting (TELSOM) shall be the operating arm of TELMIN in the supervision, coordination, and implementation of programs and policy directions set by the ASEAN Telecommunications Ministers. TELSOM shall:

- a. Develop, coordinate and implement work programs/plans to enhance cooperation in telecommunications and IT, including the approval of the necessary cooperation programs, projects and activities;
- b. Provide a mechanism to promote participation from the private or business sector, regional/international organizations and non-governmental organizations; and
- c. As and when necessary, establish working groups with clear terms of reference and specific time frames, to assist in the development and implementation of its policies and work programs/plans. Experts from regional and international organizations and the private or business sector may also be invited for the purpose.

3. TELMIN shall meet annually to discuss issues and developments of common interest and to set policy directions in the ASEAN telecommunications and IT sector.

4. The ASEAN Secretariat shall assist TELMIN and TELSOM in carrying out their functions including technical support in the supervision, coordination and implementation of cooperation programs and activities.

5. TELMIN and TELSOM shall coordinate their activities with the ASEAN Economic Ministers (AEM) and the Senior Economic Officials Meeting (SEOM), respectively, through the Secretary-General of ASEAN.

Article 4 Final Provisions

- 1. This Ministerial Understanding shall enter into force on the date of signature.
- 2. This Ministerial Understanding may be amended or modified by mutual agreement of the Member States.
- 3. This Ministerial Understanding shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of ASEAN who

shall promptly furnish a certified copy thereof to each Member State.

DONE at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia this 13th day of July 2001, in a single copy in the English language.

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Minister of Communications
Brunei Darussalam

LAM PHU AN
Secretary of State
Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications
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DJAMHARI SIRAT
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