

**Bali Declaration in Forging Partnership to Advance High Speed Connection to Bridge  
Digital Divide in ASEAN,  
Bali, Indonesia, 29 August 2008**

The ASEAN Ministers responsible for Telecommunications and Information Technology, meeting in Bali, Indonesia on 28 - 29 August 2008, for the Eighth ASEAN Telecommunications and IT Ministers (TELMIN) Meeting;

**RECALLING** the 2000 e-ASEAN Framework Agreement as reiterated under the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Blueprint for ASEAN Member States to work toward establishing high speed direct connection between national information infrastructure with a view to evolving this interconnection into an ASEAN Information Infrastructure backbone;

**HAVING** reflected on the challenges faced by the ASEAN Member States and their strong determination and reaffirmation of their continued efforts to turn such challenges into opportunities and achievements and contribute to the digital prosperity for economic and social development of their Member States.

**WELCOMING** the 13th ASEAN Summit's commitment in Singapore in 2007 on increasing inter-dependence of the ASEAN economies within the region as well as with the rest of the world and stressing the importance of narrowing the development gap as well as providing new business opportunities for accelerating the ASEAN Economic Community by 2015.

**UNITED** by the formation of the ASEAN Charter to establish a legal and institutional framework for ASEAN, and recognising the existence of mutual interests and inter-dependence among the peoples and Member States of ASEAN which are bound by geography, common objectives and shared destiny

**SUPPORTING** the Vientiane Action Program (VAP) 2004 – 2010 as well as the ASEAN ICT Focus 2005-2010 to enhance concerted and collective cooperation in building of the Information Society and in enhancing the region's connectivity and competitiveness;

**ACKNOWLEDGING** that ICTs are essential for political, economic, social and cultural development and play an important role in poverty alleviation, job creation, and the prevention and mitigation of natural and other disasters;

**REITERATING** that digital information technologies will be most important tools to enable ASEAN Member States to join together globally in market, social networks, and cooperative efforts for economic prosperity and mutual benefit.

**RE-AFFIRMING** that universal and affordable access to ICTs is key to social and economic prosperity and contributes to greater economic activities, higher productivity and ultimately general welfare;

**COMMITTED** to concerted cooperation and joint efforts between and among government ministries and agencies, international organisations, industry players and other relevant stakeholders toward accelerating the development of the ICT infrastructure, services, content and applications to bridge the digital divide and eventually to benefit the rural communities and the general economy within the ASEAN region.

**WE HEREBY AGREE TO IMPLEMENT THE FOLLOWING:**

1. Foster existing cooperation activities as agreed upon in previous regional initiatives and declarations toward the secured, connected and vibrant ASEAN Community as described in the AEC Blueprint;
2. Put in place enabling policies and responsive regulations to ensure a competitive and business-friendly environment across ASEAN Member States to develop high speed ICT infrastructure, particularly focusing on cost effective communications between Member States and expand the number of ASEAN Member States participating in the Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) for telecommunications equipment;
3. Increase broadband penetration and broadband services through amongst others, affordable technology solutions and wireless broadband access, especially for the rural and remote areas;
4. Implement pilot projects with industry players and social communities to increase awareness of information society and to ensure that ICT services are widely available to different segments of the society which can assist ASEAN Community's building process;
5. Facilitate Internet traffic between and amongst ASEAN Member States through national and regional Internet exchanges and gateways;
6. Intensify cooperation activities to have secured and reliable international connectivities to mitigate the effects of natural disasters;
7. Further cooperate to ensure the conducive business environment to enable reliable information networks, information security, privacy safeguards and intellectual property rights as the foundation to encourage development of local online content, recognising that localised content will serve as important catalysts to enhance demand for broadband services;
8. Develop relevant policies, programs and action plans to help nurture the digital and creative contents industry in the region as a mean to drive broadband demand as well as to create a stronger and more integrated ASEAN community;
9. Strengthen human resource cooperation, particularly on regional standardisation of ICT human capital competencies and regional recognition across ASEAN Member States of ICT skills certification to increase knowledgeable and versatile workforce in efforts to build an inclusive, knowledge-based ASEAN Community in 2015;
10. Promote Public Private Partnership arrangement to bring relevant stakeholders through a consultative process to position ASEAN as a competitive region for ICT adoption, innovation and investment; and
11. Call upon ASEAN Dialogue Partners, International Organisations and Agencies and the private sector to continue to collaborate in planning, development and deployment of suitable and innovative technologies to address the information infrastructure programs, including the sharing of knowledge and experiences, technology transfers, joint-pilot projects and human resources and capacity building activities to increase broadband access and penetration in ASEAN region.

**ADOPTED** at the Eighth ASEAN Telecommunications and IT Ministers Meeting (TELMIN) on 29 August 2008 in Bali, Indonesia.