

JOINT DECLARATION
7TH EC-ASEAN MINISTERIAL MEETING
DUESSELDORF, 2 AND 3 MAY, 1988

1. The seventh meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the European Community and of the Association of South-East Asian Nations was held in Duesseldorf on 2 and 3 May 1988. The Ministers had a comprehensive exchange of views on political and economic subjects, revealing a high level of agreement. The meeting confirmed that EC and ASEAN developed a working relationship which matured into an enhanced and broad mutual understanding in all fields. The Ministers felt that it was in the best interest of the EC and ASEAN to further strengthen the elements of their political and economic solidarity. The excellent record of relations among the Ministers gave confidence for the future cooperation between the two groups of states.

2. The Ministers welcomed important developments since their last meeting in Jakarta in October 1986, in particular progress in integrating the European Community manifest in the Single European Act, the impressive confirmation of ASEAN solidarity at the meeting of ASEAN Heads of Government in Manila in December 1987 and encouraging developments in world politics as reflected by the conclusion of the INF Treaty. At the same time, the Ministers expressed their concern that regional conflicts had not yet been resolved. They reaffirmed their determination jointly to work for the restoration of peace in the regions of tension to the best of their ability.

The Ministers were satisfied to note that the economies of the EC and ASEAN have again shown upward trends despite difficult global economic conditions. The Ministers expressed their great interest in even stronger economic cooperation between the two regional groupings and welcomed in this connection the fact that joint EC-ASEAN investment committees have been founded in all ASEAN capitals since their last meeting.

3. REGIONAL COOPERATION

The EC Ministers informed the ASEAN Ministers about the Single European Act, which entered into force on 1 July 1987, and which is an expression of the will of the EC member states to continue the work to transform relations as a whole among themselves into a European Union.

The ASEAN Ministers informed their European counterparts about the meeting of ASEAN Heads of Government which took place in Manila on 14-15 December 1987. The EC Ministers congratulated ASEAN on the twentieth anniversary of its founding and on the progress it had made through close

cooperation. The Ministers noted that ASEAN had evolved into an area of peace among its members and of growing stability and economic progress.

Now that the EC is well on its way towards the completion of an internal market of 320 million and in the process of establishing an ever-closer union among the peoples of Europe and that the meeting of ASEAN Heads of Government in Manila has adopted an important Programme of Action, it has become particularly evident that the establishment of EC-ASEAN relations was both foresighted and advantageous for all partners.

The Ministers were encouraged by the positive results of consultations between the EC and ASEAN since the beginning of the ASEAN-EC Ministerial Meeting in 1978. The Ministers reaffirmed the desirability in the future of having periodic consultations on issues of mutual interest, which would contribute further to the strengthening of the existing cooperative relations between the two regional groupings.

4. CULTURAL RELATIONS

The Ministers agreed to further strengthen EC-ASEAN cultural ties. In this context, emphasis should be given both to the cooperation between universities and other institutions of higher education and the cooperation in the field of sciences in general.

International Political Issues

5. EAST-WEST RELATIONS

The Ministers discussed East-West relations. They noted with satisfaction signs of improvement in East-West relations. They voiced their expectation that this should have a positive effect on the solution of regional conflicts. The Ministers expressed their readiness to actively contribute to such solutions.

6. DISARMAMENT AND ARMS CONTROL

The Ministers welcomed the INF Treaty as a milestone, being the first agreement by which the United States and the Soviet Union have decided to reduce their nuclear arsenals. They hope that this agreement will be followed by others and will thus be beneficial to other fields of arms control and disarmament. The prospect of a START agreement reducing the strategic nuclear weapons of the United States and the Soviet Union was welcomed by Ministers as significant also for Europe and Asia.

The Ministers had a useful exchange of views on the economic and political aspects of the security situation in their respective regions in which they share interest.

The Ministers agreed that the negotiations at the Geneva Conference on Disarmament on a Convention to ban chemical weapons worldwide must be rapidly brought to a fully satisfactory conclusion. They reaffirmed their resolve to spare no efforts towards reaching such a global and verifiable convention. In view of the alarming proliferation of chemical weapons, it is essential to eliminate them once and for all.

7. KAMPUCHEA

The Ministers had a thorough exchange of views on the Kampuchean problem. They reaffirmed their belief that peace and stability in South East Asia can be restored only through the cessation of hostilities and of foreign military occupation of Kampuchea. They welcomed the initiatives of Prince Sihanouk in the search for a comprehensive settlement of the problem. As the Kampuchea conflict is primarily a result of foreign aggression and military occupation, the Ministers therefore urged all those concerned to help accelerate the search for the settlement and appeal in particular to Vietnam to join Prince Sihanouk in the peace talks.

The Ministers reiterated their resolve to work in accordance with the relevant resolutions adopted by the United Nations which aim at restoring the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Kampuchea consistent with the interests and the well-being of the people of Kampuchea who have undergone so much suffering. A democratic, neutral and independent Kampuchea is not attainable without the withdrawal of all foreign troops under international supervision. The Ministers thus reiterated their call for Vietnam to withdraw its troops from Kampuchea. The Ministers reaffirmed that no assistance should be given to Vietnam of such a nature as to sustain and enhance the Vietnamese occupation of Kampuchea.

The Ministers firmly believed that the preponderant role of Prince Sihanouk in the settlement of the Kampuchean problem would promote the various interests of all parties concerned; thus, the Ministers saw the need to render all possible support for Prince Sihanouk's efforts to seek a political solution.

In this connection also, the EC Ministers noted with appreciation the continuing efforts of ASEAN to contribute to finding a comprehensive political settlement to the Kampuchean problem, including the convening in Jakarta of an informal meeting of the parties directly involved, above all Vietnam.

For a political solution Vietnam's participation is indispensable.

8. INDOCHINESE REFUGEES

Asean and EC Ministers shared the view that the plight of those who have fled from Indochina, including those still in refugee transit camps in ASEAN countries and those along the Thai-Kampuchean border, remained the cause of serious concern. These refugees and displaced persons have an inalienable right to return to their home countries. The Community is ready to assist in their return. As long as the flow of refugees continues, humanitarian efforts co-ordinated between the countries of first asylum, the resettlement countries and the international organisations concerned will have to continue to ease the suffering of the refugees and expedite their resettlement.

The Ministers were seriously concerned about the recent dramatic increase in the flow of Vietnamese boat people, a problem which originated with Vietnam. They were of the view that Vietnam should, in conformity with humanitarian principles and in the interest of regional peace, stability and harmony, cooperate with the UNHCR, the countries of first asylum and the resettlement countries to find a solution. Vietnam should also accept the return of those who do not meet the agreed criteria for refugee status, subject to satisfactory guarantees as to their treatment on return.

Asean and EC Ministers stressed their determination to maintain their coordinated response to the situation.

9. AFGHANISTAN

Ministers welcomed the successful conclusion of the indirect Geneva talks on Afghanistan on 14 April 1988.

They expressed appreciation for the untiring efforts of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and his special representative, Mr. Diego Cordovez, to achieve a solution of the crisis.

The Ministers hold the view that, to permit the restoration of genuine peace, the withdrawal of Soviet troops and the unimpeded return of refugees must be accompanied by an overall political settlement of the crisis fully involving the Afghan people. In this connection, they consider participation of the resistance in a process of self-determination and in the installation of a truly representative government in Kabul to be indispensable.

10. MIDDLE EAST

The Ministers discussed developments in the Middle East and expressed their concern about the situation in the Occupied Territories. They referred to declarations and démarches made by the Twelve, including the declarations of February 23rd, July 13th, December 5th, 1987, and February 8th, 1988, and to resolutions of the UN Security Council. They supported the idea of an International Conference under the

auspices of the United Nations as the suitable framework for a political solution.

The Twelve and ASEAN continue to support the sovereignty, integrity and independence of Lebanon. The Iraq-Iran conflict is continuing to cause great human suffering and heavy material loss. It threatens the stability of the whole region. The Ministers reaffirmed their support for a speedy solution of the conflict through the implementation of Security Council Resolution 598.

11. SOUTHERN AFRICA

With regard to Southern Africa, the Ministers rejected unequivocally the system of apartheid which violates human dignity and reiterated their call for its total abolition. They called on the government of South Africa to initiate without further delay the national dialogue with the genuine representatives of the South African people. The prerequisites of this should include the lifting of the state of emergency, the unconditional release of all political prisoners and the unbanning of all political parties. The Ministers vigorously condemned the recent political suppression of South African organisations. They urged the South African Government most strongly to repeal the imposed measures without delay. The Ministers further condemned all aggressive and destabilizing activities on the part of South Africa against its neighbours in the region and called for the settlement of regional problems by peaceful means. The Ministers called for the independence of Namibia without further delay on the basis of the inalienable right to self-determination in accordance with UN Resolution 435.

12. INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

International terrorism continues to affect a wide range of countries, and is a source of great concern. The Ministers reiterated their strong condemnation of all forms of international terrorism and their resolve to cooperate as closely as possible in the fight against this menace. They also underlined the importance of finding political solutions to the problems which form the roots of terrorism.

13. NARCOTICS

Drug trafficking and abuse constitute an increasing threat to the economic and social development of the international community. The Ministers expressed their resolve to unite their countries' forces to fight this serious international threat. They welcomed the fact that the first International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in June 1987 provided an opportunity to work out common strategies to combat the illicit manufacture, trafficking and consumption of drugs and related criminal

activities. It is now essential to implement the conference's recommendations consistently and rapidly, in particular by implementing the recommendations in the resolution adopted by consensus at the 1988 meeting of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and by an early negotiation, signature and ratification of the new UN Convention on Illicit Trafficking.

The ASEAN Ministers expressed their appreciation to the EC for its assistance for the ASEAN-EC drug related projects in the areas of drug prevention and rehabilitation.

14. INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC SITUATION

The Ministers had an exchange of views on the recent evolution and prospects of the international economic situation. The need for developing and applying policies geared towards the intensification of growth was recognised. The correction of existing disequilibria, particularly in trade and current account imbalances and the reduction of monetary instability were considered to be a major task in restoring a sound international economy. The necessity was also stressed of countering growing protectionist pressures, increasing financial flows to developing countries, alleviating their debt burden and thus allowing them resources for growth.

The Ministers recognised the important role the developing countries could play in fostering world economic growth. In this context, the Ministers also recognised that the close relations developed between ASEAN and the EC would benefit the world economy. The Ministers expressed their satisfaction that their co-operation both in international fora and on a bilateral basis contributed to the encouraging improvements in the efforts towards restoring a sound international economy. The Ministers expressed the hope that the Toronto Summit of the industrialised countries will be fruitful. ASEAN Ministers urged that the interests of the developing countries including ASEAN be fully taken into account.

15. URUGUAY ROUND

The Ministers welcomed the progress that had been made in the new round of multilateral trade negotiations and reaffirmed their commitment to work towards the achievement of the objectives laid down at Punta del Este. The Community and ASEAN noted with satisfaction that close contacts were established on these important negotiations and agreed that every effort should be made to maintain them in the continuing negotiations.

The Ministers noted that the Community had been the first participant in the MTN which had tabled a significant offer on tropical products, a sector of particular interest to ASEAN. They reaffirmed that the negotiations shall aim at the fullest liberalisation of trade in this sector.

The Ministers also noted the importance of natural resource-based products as well as textiles and clothing for ASEAN and expressed their determination to work towards the achievement of the objectives stated in the Punta del Este Declaration.

Ministers expressed satisfaction that a large number of proposals had been tabled in Geneva on agriculture, which could serve as a basis for meaningful negotiations. In order to fulfill the commitments set out in Punta del Este, the Ministers agreed that these negotiations should focus on securing a comprehensive long-term framework for agricultural reform as well as consistent short-term measures. Both sides considered that progress in this key sector is an important element to the overall success of the Uruguay Round as well as the promotion of liberalised world agricultural trade in general.

The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to the principle of standstill and rollback and expressed their concern that in spite of the on-going negotiations, barriers continued to be introduced by certain countries. In this context the Ministers welcomed the Community's initiative in presenting an autonomous rollback offer in Geneva. They noted that special and differential treatment for developing countries applies to these negotiations in accordance with the Punta del Este Declaration. They also noted that as the economic and trade situation of developing countries improves, the countries concerned accordingly expect to participate more fully in the framework of rights and obligations under the GATT. On the new subjects, notably services, intellectual property and trade-related investment measures they took note of the preparatory work carried out so far and expressed their hope that further work in these increasingly important areas could lead to successful results.

The Ministers welcomed the decision to hold a Trade Negotiating Committee (TNC) Ministerial Meeting in Montreal in December 1988 and agreed that the meeting should be seen as an opportunity to give political impetus to the negotiations which shall be treated as a single undertaking without prejudice to the implementation of agreements reached at an early stage; in that connection the ASEAN Ministers expressed the hope that an early result on tropical products could be achieved by the time of the mid-term review.

16. COMMODITIES

The Ministers expressed concern over the instability in commodity

prices and export earnings of the developing countries. They stressed the need for international co-operation to deal effectively with commodity problems.

To strengthen mutual co-operation, the Ministers agreed to exert concerted efforts in bilateral as well as multilateral fora, towards finding ways and means in which those ASEAN countries heavily dependent on the commodity sector could bring about growth, diversification and expansion of commodity trade. The Ministers welcomed the successful outcome of the negotiation for the renewal of the International Natural Rubber Agreement. ASEAN Ministers expressed the necessity of ratifying the Agreement so that it could enter into force by January 1989 as scheduled.

The Ministers noted the increased prospects of the Common Fund entering into force and expressed their hope that it would make a useful contribution in the commodity field. In this connection, Ministers noted that there are a number of matters pertaining to the implementation of the Fund which need examination.

The ASEAN Ministers reemphasized the importance of vegetable oils and fats products for the development of their economies and stressed the need for further expansion of their exports to the world market including the EEC.

17. EC-ASEAN ECONOMIC COOPERATION

The Ministers noted with satisfaction the increasing scope of activities being carried in the framework of their bilateral relations resulting from the new priorities and directions agreed at the Bangkok Ministerial Meeting on Economic Matters in October, 1985 and the 6th EC-ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in Jakarta in October, 1986.

While recognising that the co-operation between ASEAN and the EC has made progress, the Ministers believed that the present activities can be further enhanced in the years ahead particularly with regard to the cooperation in commercial and economic fields. In improving ASEAN-EC economic and trade relations, the Ministers recognised the important role played by the private sector and agreed to encourage private sector participation in ASEAN-EC economic cooperation.

Trade

The Ministers recognised that there was still a need for more intensified efforts to improve market access and eliminate trade barriers.

The ASEAN Ministers acknowledged the role of the Community's GSP in contributing to the expansion of their exports, in particular

in manufactured goods which constitute 50% of ASEAN total exports to the EC. The EC Ministers agreed to examine the possibility of improving the EC's GSP scheme further.

ASEAN Ministers reiterated that ASEAN attaches great importance to the maintenance and expansion of market opportunities in the EEC for tropical timber.

Investment and Industrial Cooperation

The Ministers noted that ASEAN represents an important, rapidly expanding region of special interest to the European investors. The Ministers noted that financial organisations in some Member States of the Community participate in the financing of investment projects in the region. They expressed the hope that this cooperation can be pursued in the future and will contribute to increased European investments in the ASEAN countries.

The Ministers noted the constructive work being undertaken to further improve the investment climate and welcomed the valuable work being carried out in the Joint Investment Committee set up in each of the ASEAN capitals and the appointment of a "European Investment Consultant".

In this connection, as problems still existed including those concerning the protection of intellectual property rights, the Ministers expressed their wish to continue efforts to find the most appropriate ways to overcome those problems.

They also noted the steps taken to establish a "Partner Research Network" to facilitate business co-operation and joint ventures, the improvement of information on investment opportunities in the ASEAN region and initiatives aimed at promoting increased European investment. On the occasion of the successful 3rd Meeting of the EC-ASEAN Business Council in Brussels in October 1987, representatives of the private sector in the two regions welcomed the positive contribution of these activities.

The Ministers stressed the importance they attach to the promotion of EC-ASEAN industrial cooperation and agreed that it should continue to be accorded high priority in EC-ASEAN cooperation. They welcomed the recently initiated survey to identify industrial sectors, product groups and potential partner companies suitable for establishing ASEAN Industrial Joint Ventures.

They expressed the hope that the cooperation in this field would be further intensified and will contribute to increased European investment in the ASEAN region.

18. DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

The ASEAN Ministers expressed their continuing appreciation for the important contributions, both bilaterally and regionally, of the Community and its Member States in the field of development cooperation. It was noted that the European Community and its Member States are the second most important source of bilateral development assistance to ASEAN countries.

The Ministers expressed satisfaction with the wide range of activities carried out in the field of Human Resources Development, particularly those which brought about exchanges and contacts between ASEAN and EC officials and businessmen. They underlined the particular importance of training for future cooperation. In this context they welcomed the creation of a data bank on training opportunities in the Community. They highlighted the value of sharing knowledge and experiences between the two regional groupings in the course of implementation of HRD, Science and Technology as well as Energy Cooperation projects. In this connection, the ASEAN Ministers expressed appreciation for the Community's assistance towards the establishment of the ASEAN-EC Energy Management Training and Research Centre.

The Ministers agreed in principle that an ASEAN-EC Management Centre be established in ASEAN. They were of the view that the Centre would effectively enhance the Community's long-term presence in the region. The Ministers requested the ASEAN-EC JCC to consider the operational details on the establishment of such a Centre and took note of ASEAN's intention to locate it in Brunei Darussalam.

The ASEAN Ministers expressed appreciation for the contribution provided by the Community towards the ASEAN Tourism Development Programm.
