

**ACMECS LEADERS' DECLARATION ON
FACILITATION AND PROMOTION
OF TRADE, INVESTMENT AND TOURISM**

WE, the Heads of the Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Union of Myanmar, the Kingdom of Thailand and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam;

REAFFIRMING our commitment to further strengthen and deepen economic cooperation among the ACMECS countries building upon our traditional relations of friendship, good neighbourliness and mutual benefits;

REITERATING initiatives in trade, investment and tourism cooperation, particularly facilitation of cross-border trade, transit shipment of goods, investment and tourism as set out in the Bagan Declaration, the ACMECS Plan of Action 2006 and the Second ACMECS Summit Declaration;

FULLY RECOGNIZING that with its strategic location, abundant natural and human resources, and long and rich history as well as cultural heritage, ACMECS has great potentials for trade, investment and tourism cooperation to contribute to the socio-economic development, integration and stability of the ACMECS countries individually and collectively;

REALIZING that the ACMECS countries are endowed with great potentials for trade, investment and tourism cooperation in border areas and the need to further facilitate exchange of goods, services, investment flows and travel in border areas through joint efforts in reducing barriers to trade, investment and tourism with a view to create favourable investment and business environment among the ACMECS countries in border areas, thereby contributing to acceleration of economic growth and social progress as well as bridging development gap between border areas with others of the ACMECS countries;

NOTING with satisfaction the recent efforts by Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam in the establishment of the Cambodia- Lao PDR- Vietnam Development Triangle Area and expecting more progress to be achieved in the upcoming 5th Cambodia- Lao PDR - Vietnam Summit in Vientiane on 24-26th November 2008 in the areas of trade, investment and tourism flows in the Development Triangle Area.

RECOGNIZING the importance of sustainable development, taking into account environmental and socio-economic influences, in the area of trade, investment and tourism especially in border areas;

WE HEREBY DECLARE as follows:

In trade and investment facilitation, we are pleased to witness that the trade and investment volume among the ACMECS countries have been increasing significantly. To maximize the potentials of the ACMECS countries from trade, investment, and tourism cooperation, we agreed to strengthen facilitation and promotion of trade, investment and tourism among ACMECS countries with the view to promoting socio- economic development and economic integration of ACMECS member countries through:

1. Establishment of a coordination mechanism of border and transit trade among the ACMECS countries, of which, among others, the following shall be focused on:

- Granting products originated in border areas and economic zones of ACMECS countries with preferential tax incentives, which are currently introduced by the ACMECS countries in accordance with each country's laws, regulations and international commitments under both the bilateral and multilateral frameworks, particularly under the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) and ASEAN Integration System of Preference (AISP) scheme.

- Accelerating the implementation and expansion of "single- stop, single- window" inspection at border checkpoints as developed under the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) cooperation framework and at other appropriate border checkpoints in accordance with the readiness of the ACMECS countries.

- Agreeing on the implementation of standardised forms of customs documents, harmonizing and simplifying customs clearance and quarantine procedures at international border checkpoints in line with international standards.

- Further improving banking facilities and services of the ACMECS countries as well as encouraging the use of local currencies to facilitate business transactions in border areas.

- Promoting business sector to increase contract farming products among ACMECS countries and facilitating trade and investment under contract farming in border provinces where appropriate in order to increase their trade volume.

2. Facilitating and promoting investment in ACMECS countries, particularly in border areas and economic zones through according investment

incentives and simplified licensing procedures, as well as investment protection in accordance with the respective domestic laws and regulations.

Cross-border movement of products made by the ACMECS investors in border provinces of the other ACMECS countries shall enjoy the most simplified import - export procedures.

3. Encouraging investors to invest and calling upon relevant development partners to assist the ACMECS countries in infrastructure and telecommunication network development/ improvement to facilitate and increase trade, investment and tourism in the ACMECS countries.

4. Further simplifying immigration procedures at border checkpoints to promote cross - border travel among the ACMECS countries. The ACMECS countries are encouraged to join the “ACMECS single visa” scheme.

Promoting cross - border tours, integrated tours and caravan tours in the ACMECS countries in order to increase cross - border tourism flows by reducing unnecessary fees, enhancing safety measures for tourists, and linking the ACMECS countries’ tourism websites to provide information on attractive tourism destinations in the member countries.

Coordination to study tax exemption and/or VAT refund schemes for tourists in one stop service centres at border checkpoints, as well as providing financial services for investors.

5. Conducting joint trade, investment and tourism promotion events and exhibitions on rotation among the ACMECS countries. Encouraging and facilitating the exchange of central and provincial business missions to organize workshops, seminars related to border trade, investment and tourism as well as information and experience sharing.

6. Strengthening information sharing and closer coordination in order to ensure the regular exchange and update of information on trade and investment opportunities, cross-border and transit shipment of goods, investment and tourism. Each ACMECS country shall appoint an appropriate central agency as a focal point for sharing information related to border trade, investment and tourism in order to coordinate all local agencies to work in the same direction concurrently.

7. Acknowledging the GMS Cross-border Transportation Agreement originally signed in November 1999 by the Ministers of Transportation of Thailand, Lao PDR and Viet Nam and the conclusion of GMS Cross-border Transportation Agreement in March 2007, agreed to speed up facilitation and

promotion of trade, investment and tourism along the East-West Economic Corridor (EWEC) as a pilot project, as well as recognising the agreement to intensify the cooperation on the North-South and the Southern Economic Corridors.

8. Encouraging the establishment of Sister Cities and the cooperation agreements among border provinces to promote cooperation, meetings and dialogue among the provincial authorities in the implementation of ACMECS agreements in trade, investment and tourism and all other areas of cooperation.

9. Encouraging the establishment of trade and commerce institutions and promoting cooperation among the chambers of commerce, trade associations, board of industries, and associations of the ACMECS countries, both at national and provincial level.

We task the Ministers to instruct the Trade- Investment Working Group and Tourism Working Group to expedite the process under ACMECS Plan of Action and to study and propose a common and consistent mechanism of cross - border trade and transit shipment of goods and tourism among the ACMECS countries and report to the next ACMECS SOM and Ministerial Meeting for consideration and submission to the ACMECS Leaders for approval.

Adopted in Hanoi, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, on 7th November 2008.
