

## ASEAN + Republic of Korea

### 8th ASEAN + Republic of Korea

#### **Chairman's Statement: Deepening ASEAN-Republic of Korea Relationship** Vientiane, 30 November 2004

1. The ASEAN Leaders had a productive meeting with H.E. Roh Moo-hyun, President of the Republic of Korea (ROK). We exchanged views on wide ranging regional and international political, security and economic issues.
2. We recalled that the ASEAN-ROK relations began in 1989 and that this year marked the 15th Anniversary of the relationship. We noted with satisfaction that the relations have deepened and widened and many substantive activities have been implemented to support the dialogue partnership and ASEAN's integration efforts. We welcomed the activities and projects by ASEAN and the ROK to commemorate the 15th anniversary to showcase ASEAN-ROK partnership, especially the strong people-to-people contacts between the two sides.
3. The ASEAN Leaders welcomed the ROK's accession to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, which will not only demonstrate the strong commitment by the ROK to further strengthen political and security engagement with ASEAN to a higher level but will also contribute to regional peace, stability and prosperity.
4. We reaffirmed the importance of the ASEAN-ROK partnership. We signed the ASEAN-ROK Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Cooperation Partnership on this 15th Anniversary of the dialogue relations to further consolidate the partnership and to chart the future direction in the 21st century. We tasked our Ministers to develop a Plan of Action to implement the Joint Declaration for adoption at the next ASEAN-ROK Summit in Malaysia in 2005.
5. We proposed that the ROK consider incorporating ASEAN Studies in the curriculum of its universities to enable Korean youth to obtain a better understanding of the ASEAN Member Countries and its peoples.
6. We welcomed the recommendations from the ASEAN-ROK Experts Group on the measures to expand two-way trade and investment by liberalising and integrating the markets. We affirmed that the establishment of an ASEAN-ROK Free Trade Area (AKFTA) would be mutually beneficial. In this regard, we agreed to launch the AKFTA negotiations in early 2005 with a goal of having at least 80% of products zero tariff by 2009, and with consideration for special and differential treatment and additional flexibility for new ASEAN Member Countries.
7. Taking into account the current high oil price, the ASEAN Leaders proposed that the ROK work together with ASEAN in defining the global strategy on energy cooperation, in particular, in alternative energy, such as bio-fuels, and hydroelectric power, and oil stockpiling and energy security. In this regard, ASEAN Leaders

encouraged the ROK to increase direct investment in Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar, such as through the construction of hydroelectric power plants.

8. We reaffirmed our commitment to a peaceful and comprehensive solution to the nuclear issue on Korean Peninsular. In this connection, we noted the importance of the Six-Party Talks and the need to engage into dialogue to promote mutual confidence. We also shared the view that the Six-Party Talks should be reconvened at the earliest possibility to bring about the common goal of denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsular. We recognised the important role of the ROK in the Six-Party Talks.

9. The ROK welcomed the signing of Joint Declaration between ASEAN and its other dialogue partners on cooperation to combat terrorism. In this regard, we agreed to further strengthen our cooperation in fighting terrorism.

10. The ASEAN Leaders highly valued the ROK's decision to increase its contribution to the ASEAN-ROK Special Cooperation Fund (SCF) and ASEAN-ROK Future Oriented Cooperation Projects Fund (FOCP) next year, which demonstrates its strong commitment to enhance the dialogue partnership. The ASEAN Leaders also expressed its appreciation to the ROK for its support for the implementation of projects under the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI), and hoped that the ROK will contribute to the implementation of the Vientiane Action Programme (VAP) to assist ASEAN in narrowing the development gaps and accelerating its integration as the whole.

11. The ASEAN Leaders expressed their appreciation to the ROK for its support to bridge the development gaps through cooperation in the sub-regional frameworks, such as the AMBDC, ACMECS, BIMP-EAGA, and GMS to promote economic and social development, and improve living standards of the people in the region.

12. The ROK welcomed and expressed its support to the forthcoming Second East Asia Forum, which will be held in Kuala Lumpur in December 2004. The ROK also welcomed the decision reached by ASEAN Leaders to convene the first East Asia Summit (EAS) in Malaysia in 2005.