



**CHAIRMAN'S PRESS STATEMENT
OF THE WORKING LUNCH HOSTED BY
PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE LEE HSIEN LOONG
FOR ASEAN LEADERS AND LEADERS OF GUESTS OF THE ASEAN CHAIR**

SINGAPORE, 14 NOVEMBER 2018

1. Prime Minister of the Republic of Singapore H.E. Lee Hsien Loong hosted a Working Lunch for ASEAN Leaders and Leaders of Guests of the ASEAN Chair in Singapore on 14 November 2018. The Guests of the ASEAN Chair were Prime Minister of Canada The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, President of the Republic of Chile H.E. Sebastián Piñera and Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) H.E. Christine Lagarde. The Secretary-General of ASEAN H.E. Dato Lim Jock Hoi was also in attendance.

2. The Leaders' discussions centred on the theme of 'Free Trade and Global Economy'. The Leaders affirmed ASEAN's stable and positive growth outlook, and welcomed ASEAN's improved trade and investment performance with its Free Trade Agreement (FTA) partners. The Leaders were further encouraged by the ongoing efforts of the ASEAN Economic Community to foster deeper regional economic integration in 2018, including via the ASEAN Smart Cities Network, the ASEAN Single Window and the ASEAN Agreement on Electronic Commerce. The ASEAN Leaders noted the importance of increasing intra-ASEAN trade and investments to make the region more economically integrated and resilient.

3. The Leaders noted with concern the increase in unilateral trade actions and protectionist sentiments globally. These changes put pressure on and threatened to undermine the rules-based multilateral trading system which underpinned the growth and prosperity of the region. In this context, the Leaders reaffirmed their support for the rules-based multilateral trading system and its importance to the stability and effective functioning of the global economic order. They emphasised the importance of improving the multilateral trading system as well as the financial system and its governance to ensure that globalisation benefits people more inclusively. They also urged greater efforts to enhance the effective participation of micro, small and medium enterprises in global value chains as regional and international cooperation expand. Some Leaders noted the need for the benefits of trade to be shared equitably with countries at different stages of development.

4. The Leaders also noted the deep concern of some ASEAN Member States on issues relating to unfair market access and treatment for palm oil. The Leaders reaffirmed their support for the concerned Member States' efforts to address the sustainability of palm oil, including their continued engagement with relevant parties.

5. The Leaders welcomed the signing of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) in March 2018, and its entry into force by end-2018. The Leaders also reiterated the priority placed by ASEAN on the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) as a centrepiece of its external economic relations. The Leaders welcomed the substantial progress made in the RCEP in 2018. They noted with satisfaction that the RCEP negotiations have advanced to the final stage, and ASEAN Leaders expressed their determination to conclude a modern, comprehensive, high quality, and mutually beneficial RCEP in 2019. The Leaders also expressed their commitment to uphold a global trade environment that is open, mutually beneficial, rules-based and inclusive.

6. The ASEAN Leaders welcomed the contributions made by Canada, Chile and the IMF in promoting economic integration and supporting the rules-based multilateral trading system. The Leaders discussed Canada's priorities as the 2018 Group of Seven (G7) President, as well as Chile's priorities as the 2019 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Chair. The ASEAN Leaders also welcomed Chile's constructive role in the Pacific Alliance, and looked forward to further cooperation between ASEAN and the Pacific Alliance in areas such as trade, e-commerce, and people-to-people exchanges. The Leaders reaffirmed the importance of a strong, quota-based and adequately resourced IMF at the centre of the global financial safety net, and greater cooperation with the region to promote regional financial stability. The Leaders also noted the importance of strengthening the collective efforts of ASEAN, G7, APEC, IMF and other multilateral organisations to address current global economic uncertainties.

7. The Leaders recognised that the digital revolution is currently under way, with rapid technological advances shortening innovation cycles and bringing about disruptions to many sectors. The ASEAN Leaders reaffirmed their resolve to continue advancing the ASEAN Economic Community agenda to bolster regional economic resilience against external shocks and to achieve long-term competitiveness, including through the development of human capital. The ASEAN Leaders also looked forward to constructively engaging ASEAN's external partners, including Canada and Chile, to promote the innovative use of technology and in so doing, capitalise on the opportunities brought about by the digital economy. The Leaders also encouraged efforts to build synergies among various regional processes and initiatives, especially with regard to infrastructure development and connectivity. They also recognised the importance of cooperation to confront the challenges of other global megatrends such as climate change, in order to maintain economic and social stability and sustainability.

The Leaders expressed their commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for achieving sustainability world-wide and welcomed regional efforts at promoting sustainable development, including complementarities between regional and global efforts.

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