

Chairman's Statement of the ASEAN-Australia and New Zealand Commemorative Summit
Vientiane, 30 November 2004

1. We, Leaders from ASEAN, Australia and New Zealand met on 30 November 2004 in Vientiane, Lao PDR, to commemorate the 30th Anniversary of ASEAN-Australia and ASEAN-New Zealand dialogue relationships in 2004 and 2005 respectively and to set the direction for our future relations.

2. We were gratified that the dialogue partnerships between ASEAN and Australia, and New Zealand have strengthened and matured over the three decades and have contributed to the building of mutual trust and respect, good neighbourliness and interdependence and provided mutual benefits to our peoples. We also noted with satisfaction that our countries have steadily fostered a close, cooperative and multifaceted partnership, including in the areas of security and defence, trade, investment and finance, law and order, development cooperation, education, research, science and technology, tourism, media, culture and the arts, and people to people contacts.

3. We signed a Joint Declaration of the Leaders at the ASEAN-Australia and New Zealand Commemorative Summit. This Declaration will mark the beginning of a new era in our partnerships further intensifying and expanding our cooperation to serve the interests of our peoples and promote peace, stability, sustained development and prosperity in our region.

4. The Leaders of Australia and New Zealand expressed their support for the establishment of the ASEAN Community comprising the ASEAN Security Community, ASEAN Economic Community, and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community as well as the Vientiane Action Programme (VAP) aimed at further integrating ASEAN and narrowing the developments gaps;

5. We had a very productive and fruitful discussion on regional and international political and economic issues. We agreed to further enhance the ASEAN-Australia and New Zealand economic partnerships by launching negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement (FTA), which will build on the substantial trade and investment linkages already established between ASEAN, Australia and New Zealand. We agreed to commence negotiations on an ASEAN-Australia and New Zealand Free Trade Area in early 2005, to be completed within two years, on the basis of the time frames and the guiding principles agreed by our Economic Ministers.

6. We recognise the importance of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia in building peace and stability in the region and strengthening ASEAN's relationship with its Dialogue Partners. In this connection, the ASEAN Leaders encourage Australia and New Zealand to positively consider acceding to the Treaty in

the near future in the spirit of the strong trust and friendship between ASEAN and Australia and New Zealand, and their common desire to contribute to regional peace and stability.

7. We underscored the importance and need to intensify cooperation and capacity building efforts at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels to combat terrorism and transnational crimes. In this connection, we agreed to strengthen institutional linkages and implement cooperation programmes.

8. The Leaders of Australia and New Zealand agreed to continue their support, including through development cooperation programmes, to ASEAN's economic development and integration efforts as well as to strengthen existing efforts to bridge the development gaps in ASEAN through the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) and by developing the sub-regional growth areas in ASEAN to promote economic and social development, strengthen the cohesiveness of ASEAN and improve standards of living in the region. They also agreed to continue the Official Development Assistance from Australia and New Zealand to ASEAN, especially the new Member Countries. In this connection, the ASEAN Leaders expressed their appreciation to Australia and New Zealand for their continued assistance.

9. We agreed to strengthen cooperation in human resource development through promoting further education sector linkages through student and youth exchanges and scholarships as well as in preventing and combating the spread of communicable diseases, such as HIV/AIDS, SARS and Avian flu.

10. We agreed to deepen and expand the partnerships based on mutual trust, respect, equality and understanding of each other's cultures and values through people-to-people exchanges among government personnel, educational and academic exchanges, professional exchanges and grassroots interactions.

11. We welcomed the initiatives taken by ASEAN, Australia and New Zealand to promote a conducive and favourable environment for citizens of ASEAN, Australia and New Zealand who are living, working and studying in each other's territories.

12. The Leaders of Australia and New Zealand agreed to support the early accession of Laos and Viet Nam in the WTO.