



ASEAN-AUSTRALIA-NEW ZEALAND FREE TRADE AREA (AANZFTA)

THE TWELFTH MEETING OF FTA JOINT COMMITTEE 7-9 April 2021 (Virtual Meeting)

The Twelfth Meeting of the AANZFTA Joint Committee (FJC) was held virtually on 7-9 April 2021. Representatives from all ASEAN Member States (AMS), Australia, and New Zealand, and staff from the ASEAN Secretariat attended the Meeting, which was co-chaired by:

- a) Ms Nor Zerlina Momin, Acting Director, Trade Division, Ministry of Finance and Economy, Brunei Darussalam, on behalf of the ASEAN Member States;
- b) Mr Simon Farbenbloom, Assistant Secretary, FTA Policy and Implementation Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, for Australia; and
- c) Mr Keawe Woodmore, Manager, FTA Implementation Unit, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, for New Zealand.

The following subsidiary bodies reported on their ongoing work and plans to the FJC:

- (i) Committee on Trade in Goods (CTG)
- (ii) Sub-Committee on Rules of Origin (SC-ROO)
- (iii) Sub-Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SC-SPS)
- (iv) Sub-Committee on Standards, Technical Regulations and Conformity Assessment Procedures (SC-STRACAP)
- (v) Sub-Committee on Customs Procedure and Trade Facilitation (SC-CPTF)
- (vi) Committee on Trade in Services (CTS)
- (vii) Sub-Committee on Telecommunications (SC-TEL)
- (viii) Sub-Committee on Financial Services (SC-FS)
- (ix) Working Group on Government Procurement (WG-GP)
- (x) Committee on Investment (COI)
- (xi) Committee on Electronic Commerce (CEC)
- (xii) Committee on Competition (CC)
- (xiii) Intellectual Property Committee (IPC)
- (xiv) Economic Cooperation on Sub-Committee (EC-SC)

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN OUTCOMES

1. Work Programme of the Subsidiary Bodies for AANZFTA Upgrade

NOTED that not all subsidiary bodies have identified the targets, frequency of negotiations, and the expected outcomes or milestones for each and every round of negotiations.

EMPHASISED the importance for subsidiary bodies to adhere to the two-year timeframe for the AANZFTA negotiations (i.e. October 2020 to September 2022).

EMPHASISED the importance of ensuring that the AANZFTA Upgrade negotiations add value to the AANZFTA so that it remains an ambitious and modern agreement, and addresses disruptions arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and support economic recovery.

TASKED subsidiary bodies to keep an open mind to other possible elements that can build on the recommendations endorsed by Ministers from the Stage 2 of the AANZFTA General Review, TOR, built-in agendas and cooperation in other fora such as RCEP Agreement.

2. Others Areas for AANZFTA Upgrade

NOTED New Zealand's proposal for incorporating Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD) into AANZFTA Upgrade, which is subjected for further discussions.

NOTED Singapore's suggestion to consider the possible areas for cooperation in TSD under AANZFTA related to green economy, carbon markets, urban and circular economy solutions, clean technology and green infrastructure.

NOTED the Philippines' suggestion on the possibility of considering including a Chapter on Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) as part of the AANZFTA Upgrade, using the RCEP Chapter on SMEs as basis, subject to further discussions.

3. AANZFTA Upgrade Work Plan and FJC Work Programme

NOTED the progress of discussions of several subsidiary bodies on the elements under the AANZFTA Upgrade Work Plan.

AGREED for subsidiary bodies to work inter-sessionally on the targets and meeting schedules for the FJC over the course of the AANZFTA negotiations (October 2020 to September 2022).

AGREED on the FJC Work Programme and the need to align the FJC Work Programme with the AANZFTA Upgrade Work Plan, and other regular implementation and cooperation elements.

4. Economic Cooperation

NOTED that the development of the AECSP successor program for future economic cooperation under AANZFTA beyond 2021 is under way.

ENDORSED the project proposal “*Lesson Learned from the RCEP Agreement and Other Relevant FTAs to support the AANZFTA Upgrade Negotiations*” which aims to provide a good reference for the FJC and its subsidiary bodies in support of the AANZFTA Upgrade negotiations.

NOTED the progress of the project “*AECSP Symposium: Results, Lesson Learned and Future Directions of the AANZFTA Economic Cooperation*” which will be presented at the 26th AEM-CER Consultations.

NOTED the progress of the “*Case Studies for the annual AECSP Communications Package*” which will also embody two cases studies, programme factsheet, and a series of short infographic videos to be submitted at the 26th AEM-CER Consultations.

5. The 9th ASEAN-CER Integration Partnership Forum

NOTED that the 9th ASEAN-CER Integration Partnership Forum was planned to take place alongside the FJC meeting in June 2019 but could not be realised under the impact of the COVID-19.

INFORMED that New Zealand is open to organising the 9th IPF, including “Trade and Sustainable Development” as a possible theme in 2021.