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

THE SIXTEENTH MEETING OF THE ASEAN-AUSTRALIA-NEW ZEALAND FREE TRADE AREA (AANZFTA) JOINT COMMITTEE (16TH FJC)

1. April 2022 (Virtual Meeting)

The Sixteenth Meeting of the AANZFTA Joint Committee (16th FJC) was held virtually on 21 April 2022. Representatives from all ASEAN Member States (AMS), Australia, and New Zealand, as well as the staff members from the ASEAN Secretariat attended the Meeting, which was co-chaired by:

1. Ms. Nor Zerlina Momin, Acting Director, Trade Division, Ministry of Finance and Economy, Brunei Darussalam, on behalf of the ASEAN Member States;
2. Ms. Juliana Nam, Assistant Secretary, FTA Policy and Implementation Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, for Australia; and
3. Mr. Keawe Woodmore, Deputy Director General, FTA Implementation Unit, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, for New Zealand.

Emphasising the importance to further intensify the AANZFTA upgrade negotiations towards the substantial conclusion of the upgrade negotiation as one of the Priority Economic Deliverables (PEDs) of Cambodia Chairmanship of 2022. It was highlighted that SBs to focus more on value-added elements and to ensure that the AANZFTA remains of high standard and quality, fit for purpose, add value to businesses, and remain modern and relevant for many years to come.

The reporting session focused on subsidiary bodies (SBs) who are having contentious issues and need FJC’s guidance. These SBs are:

1. *Committee on Trade in Services (CTS)*
2. *Committee on Investment (COI)*
3. *Sub-Committee on Financial Services (SC-FS)*
4. *Committee on Trade in Goods (CTG)*
5. *Sub-Committee on Rules of Origins (SCROO)*
6. *Committee on Electronic Commerce (CEC)*
7. *Working Group on Legal and Institutional Issues (WGLII)*

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN OUTCOMES

1. FJC GUIDANCE TO THE SUBSIDIARY BODIES UNDER FJC

ENCOURAGED remaining Parties to submit all market access offers, including MNP offers, as soon as possible.

NOTED that progress towards concluding the upgrade does not hinge on the format of meetings being either virtual, hybrid or in-person, rather that SBs come prepared to negotiate on substance, either coming ready to accept proposals or provide counter-proposals.

URGED SBs to take-stock of outstanding issues with possible landing zones for resolutions, provide a counter-proposal, and identify value-added elements. NOTED that FJC Leads should be involved in the discussions in SBs and to intervene, if needed. REQUESTED the ASEAN Secretariat to list down all cross-cutting issues or provisions discussed by SBs.

1. FJC WORK PROGRAMME AND AANZFTA UPGRADE NEGOTIATIONS MONITORING PROGRESS

**URGED** SBs to update their work programme and reminded them to accelerate negotiations by convening additional meetings, through intersessional channels.

**NOTED** the monitoring progress on the text-based negotiations by the SBs and **REQUESTED** the ASEAN Secretariat to update the table and inform the FJC regularly.

New Zealand **INFORMED** the meeting that it is working with the contractor to design the programme of the 9th Integration Partnership Forum (9th IPF) on Trade and Sustainable Development.

1. ECONOMIC COOPERATION

Australia INFORMED that it is currently undertaking the procurement process to select a managing contractor to implement the Regional Trade for Development (RT4D) Initiative programme, which is expected to be mobilised by the middle of this year.

NOTED that the ASEAN Secretariat is discussing the legal and operational documents with Economic Cooperation Sub-Committee (EC-SC) Co-Chairs and ANZ counterparts.

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