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

THE SEVENTEENTH MEETING OF THE ASEAN-AUSTRALIA-NEW ZEALAND FREE TRADE AREA (AANZFTA) JOINT COMMITTEE (17TH FJC)

16-17 June 2022, Hybrid Meeting, Jakarta

The Seventeenth Meeting of the AANZFTA Joint Committee (17th FJC) was held in hybrid format on 16-17 June 2022 at the ASEAN Secretariat, Indonesia. 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. Mr. Yusdiman Saman, Acting Assistant 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

The FJC Co-Chairs welcomed the progress of negotiations in the Subsidiary Bodies and looked forward to more positive outcomes towards the end of this round. The FJC Co-Chairs also underlined the need to keep the momentum going and emphasised the importance of expediting the AANZFTA upgrade negotiations, given the limited timeline and looked forward to concluding the upgrade negotiations by September 2022.

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 Goods (CTG)*
2. *Ad-Hoc Group on Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise (MSME)*
3. *Sub-Committee on Financial Services (SC-FS)*
4. *Economic Cooperation Sub-Committee (ECSC)*
5. *Committee on Electronic Commerce (CEC)*
6. *Committee on Trade in Services (CTS)*
7. *Committee on Investment (COI)*
8. *Sub-Committee on Rules of Origins (SCROO)*
9. *Working Group on Legal and Institutional Issues (WGLII)*

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN OUTCOMES

1. OUTCOMES FROM THE HIGH-LEVEL MEETING

NOTED that the Senior Economic Official Meeting – Closer Economic Relations (SEOM-CER) tasked the FJC to find creative solutions to address the contentious issues and to move the negotiations forward. ENCOURAGED FJC and Subsidiary Bodies (SBs) to expedite the negotiation and to exercise utmost flexibilities while also reaffirming the required level of ambition to conclude the negotiations by September 2022

1. FJC GUIDANCE TO THE SUBSIDIARY BODIES UNDER FJC

ENCOURAGED AANFTA Parties to: (i) focus on the current issues and refrain from tabling new proposals; (ii) reach out to proponents if clarification is needed; (iii) come to the next meeting with full mandate. FURTHER ENCOURAGED AANZFTA Parties to have in-person meetings for the next round of negotiations.

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.

APPRECIATED Australia’s support of AUD 46 million to support economic cooperation and integration under the AANZFTA and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). FURTHER APPRECIATED New Zealand’s commitment to continue supporting the implementation of on-going AECSP Programme during the transition period until the AANZFTA Implementation Support (AIS) facility, as the successor programme of AECSP, is properly established. URGED Australia and New Zealand to expedite the procurement process to ensure a smooth transition to the new facility.

1. THE 9TH ASEAN-CER INTEGRATION PARTNERSHIP FORUM

New Zealand INFORMED the Meeting on the preparation for the 9th ASEAN-CER Integration Partnership Forum (IPF) to be held virtually on 20 June 2022 with the topic of “Trade and Sustainable Development”. ENCOURAGED AANZFTA Parties to participate and looked forward to successful implementation of the 9th ASEAN-CER IPF.

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