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

THE EIGHTEENTH MEETING OF THE

ASEAN-AUSTRALIA-NEW ZEALAND FREE TRADE AREA (AANZFTA) JOINT COMMITTEE (18TH FJC)

3-5 August 2022, Siem Reap, Cambodia

The Eighteenth Meeting of the AANZFTA Joint Committee (18th FJC) was held in Siem Reap, Cambodia on 3-5 August 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. 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 noted the slow progress from some of the Subsidiary Bodies. It was also highlighted that the FJC should take responsibility for finding solutions and give guidance to close all the issues as much as possible.

The reporting session focused on subsidiary bodies (SBs) who are involve in the AANZFTA upgrade negotiations. These SBs are:

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

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN OUTCOMES

1. FJC WORK PROGRAMME AND AANZFTA UPGRADE NEGOTIATIONS MONITORING PROGRESS

NOTED the significant progress of the upgrade negotiations and URGED Subsidiary Bodies (SBs) to accelerate negotiations by making greater efforts towards domestic consensus so as to form positions and enable conclusion of chapter text and impacted negotiations in line with timeline proposed at FJC.

ENCOURAGED AANZFTA Parties to:

1. exercise utmost flexibility and to find possible solutions or landing zones;
2. come to the negotiations with a full mandate;
3. provide constructive explanation of their positions or sensitivities on certain issues while offering possible solutions that could be acceptable to the rest of the Parties; and
4. accelerate domestic consultations and revert on pending issues without delay.
5. FJC GUIDANCE TO THE SUBSIDIARY BODIES UNDER FJC

TASKED WGLII to undertake the legal scrubbing of the concluded chapters.

**URGED** Parties that have yet to do so to submit their second revised Market Access Offers by mid-August 2022, and final Market Access Offers by end of August 2022.

DISCUSSED on AGREED ASEAN’s proposal on the way forward for the AANZFTA Upgrade Negotiations. ALSO AGREED that the “substantial conclusion” would encompass both the progress of the market access offers and text-based negotiations and tasked ASEAN Secretariat to monitor the progress.

1. ECONOMIC COOPERATION

REITERATED its appreciation for Australia’s commitment of AUD 46 million for the Regional Trade for Development (RT4D) Initiative. NOTED that dedicated national coordinators will be located in Hanoi, Vientiane, and Phnom Penh to support engagement by Viet Nam, Lao PDR and Cambodia engagement with the Programme.

EXPRESSED APPRECIATION for New Zealand’s continued support for the implementation of on-going AECSP Programme during the transition period until the AIS facility is fully established.

NOTED that the ASEAN Secretariat is undertaking process to finalise the approval of the RT4D initiative through Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN (CPR).

1. ASEAN-CER INTEGRATION PARTNERSHIP FORUM

New Zealand INFORMED the Meeting on the outcomes of the 9th ASEAN-CER Integration Partnership Forum (IPF) held virtually on 20 June 2022 with the topic of “Trade and Sustainable Development”. APPRECIATED New Zealand for her excellent arrangements and LOOKED FORWARD to the 10th ASEAN-CER IPF next year.

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