

ASEAN and Australia to Strengthen Comprehensive Partnership



JAKARTA, 29 September 2014 - ASEAN and Australia reaffirmed their shared commitment to further strengthen their comprehensive partnership at the 4th ASEAN-Australia Joint Cooperation Committee (AAJCC) Meeting on 25 September at ASEAN Secretariat. During the meeting, they discussed preparations for ASEAN-Australia Commemorative Summit to be held on 12 November in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, to mark the 40th anniversary of ASEAN-Australia Dialogue Relations as an opportunity to elevate the mature ties to a higher level.

“2014 is a banner year for ASEAN-Australia relations even as we hold this AAJCC on the 40th Anniversary of the establishment of our relations. Indeed, a number of activities have been undertaken to mark the long and mutually beneficial friendship that ASEAN and Australia have been according each other,” said H.E. Elizabeth P. Buensuceso, the Permanent Representative of the Philippines to ASEAN. “2014 is also the year we completed the successor document to our Plan of Action which was adopted by our Ministers at the Post Ministerial Conference with Australia in August in Nay Pyi Taw. We remember fondly, of course, the landmark visit to Australia of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN, where we met with no less than Minister for Foreign Affairs Julie Bishop and Minister for Trade and Investment Andrew Robb,” Ambassador Buensuceso added.

The AAJCC discussed preparations for the ASEAN-Australia Commemorative Summit to be chaired by H.E. U Thein Sein, President of Myanmar and Chair of ASEAN, and attended by all ASEAN Leaders and the Prime Minister of Australia.

The AAJCC agreed that a statement to be released after the Commemorative Summit will serve as an important guide in charting the future directions of ASEAN-Australia Dialogue Relations in all areas of cooperative partnership.

The AAJCC exchanged views on the goals for the next five years to further strengthen ASEAN-Australia relations, including the effective implementation of the newly-adopted Plan of Action (POA) to Implement the Joint Declaration on ASEAN-Australia Comprehensive Partnership (2015-2019). The POA covers a range of ASEAN-Australia cooperative endeavors in political and security, economic, trade and

investment, socio-cultural, people-to-people exchanges, tourism, development cooperation and education issues.

Meanwhile, H.E. Simon Merrifield, Australia's first resident Ambassador to ASEAN reiterated Australia's commitment to further deepen and strengthen its relationship with ASEAN covering cooperation in security, culture, trade, education and development. He added that Australia will continue to support ASEAN's community building efforts and its Post-2015 Vision. He said that Australia will continue to be an active partner of ASEAN in various ASEAN-led mechanisms like the East Asia Summit (EAS), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM Plus).

"I was delighted to co-chair my second JCC, and appreciated the useful discussions we had about regional issues of mutual interest and the deepening of the ASEAN-Australia partnership. It was also a valuable opportunity to discuss preparations for the ASEAN-Australia Commemorative Summit in November, which will be a highlight of our celebrations of the 40th anniversary of ASEAN-Australia relations this year," Ambassador Merrifield said. "ASEAN is our number two trading partner after China and Australia is ASEAN's sixth largest export destination. Two-way trade is now at \$92.3 billion per annum (2013 figures) and that figure is twice what it was a decade ago," Ambassador Merrifield added.

The meeting was co-chaired by Ambassador Buensuceso and Ambassador Merrifield, and attended by all the Permanent Representatives/Ambassadors to ASEAN of ASEAN Member States. Australia, which established its formal ties with ASEAN in 1974, is ASEAN's oldest dialogue partner.

Source: <http://www.asean.org/news/asean-secretariat-news/item/asean-and-australia-to-strengthen-comprehensive-partnership>