

(as delivered)

21st AEMM Co-Chairs' Press Conference
by H.E. Mr. Veerasak Futrakul, Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of Thailand
Grand Hall, Plaza Athénée Bangkok Hotel
Friday 14 October 2016 at 17.15 hrs.

Mr. Co-Chair,
Excellencies, Friends of the Media,

1. As you know, yesterday our revered monarch, His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej passed away. The Thai delegation, together with the entire nation, mourns this immeasurable loss. We are grateful for the overwhelming condolence and sympathy from our ASEAN and EU friends.

2. It has been very difficult in the past several days for the Thai delegation. Nevertheless, with the kind cooperation of our distinguished Co-Chair, H.E. Miroslav Lajčák, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic representing the EU, the 21st ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting reached a successful conclusion. We adopted the **'Bangkok Declaration on Promoting an ASEAN-EU Global Partnership for Shared Strategic Goals'**. The Declaration has solidified our partnership. ASEAN and the EU will be working together to elevate it to a strategic level.

3. The meeting also endorsed the *Matrix on Status of Implementation of Bandar Seri Begawan Plan of Action to Strengthen the ASEAN-EU Enhanced Partnership (2013-2017)*, which reflects the great scope of our relations. For example, the ASEAN-EU Comprehensive Air Transportation (CATA) negotiations will commence its first round of negotiations on 26-28 October 2016 in Brussels. After its realization, the agreement will be the first-ever region-to-region aviation agreement and will enhance greater connectivity between two regions.

4. Trade and investment will continue to be promoted through bilateral FTAs with the EU and an ASEAN-EU FTA. ASEAN-EU connectivity, including people-to-people links and academic exchanges, will be enhanced. To support this, an ASEAN-EU Educational Opportunity Roadshow will be organized next year.

5. Two Thai initiatives were endorsed. An ASEAN-EU Dialogue on sustainable development will be convened in Thailand next year to enhance dialogue and cooperation on this important global agenda. As part of the activities to highlight the 40th anniversary of ASEAN-EU relations next year, an ASEAN-EU Forum of Strategic Thinkers will be organized in Thailand to brainstorm new ideas to strengthen our relations.

6. We have made many achievements and I therefore thank ASEAN and EU Partners for making this possible. I now give the floor to my distinguished Co-Chair.
