

For immediate release

ASEAN AND CHINA LAUNCH YEAR OF INNOVATION TO FURTHER COOPERATION

1. ASEAN and China officially launched the ASEAN-China Year of Innovation on 12 April 2018 in Beijing, China. Senior Minister of State for Trade and Industry and National Development Dr Koh Poh Koon represented Singapore at the launch ceremony hosted by PRC Minister of Science and Technology Wang Zhigang. Representatives from the other ASEAN Member States were also in attendance.

2 ASEAN and China established dialogue partner relations in 1991. Since then, China has become one of ASEAN's most substantive dialogue partners. In 2016, ASEAN and China commemorated the 25th Anniversary of ASEAN-China Dialogue Relations. This year, both sides will be celebrating 15 years of ASEAN-China Strategic Partnership.

3 To enhance cooperation and further advance relations, ASEAN and China have designated a theme for ASEAN-China cooperation over the last three years. In 2016, ASEAN and China commemorated the Year of Educational Exchanges and in 2017, both sides commemorated the Year of Tourism Cooperation. In line with Singapore's ASEAN Chairmanship themes of Resilience and Innovation, ASEAN and China agreed to designate 2018 as the ASEAN-China Year of Innovation.

4 At the launch ceremony, SMS Koh delivered a speech which included a congratulatory message from Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong. In his congratulatory message, PM Lee noted that ASEAN-China relations are strong, substantive and mutually-beneficial. PM Lee also highlighted that Singapore will continue to play a constructive role to promote ASEAN-China cooperation as ASEAN Chair and country coordinator for ASEAN-China dialogue relations this year.

5 In his speech, SMS Koh outlined several ASEAN initiatives related to innovation in which ASEAN can cooperate with China. He said, "We welcome China's involvement and cooperation in the area of innovation, including the sharing of experiences and best practices, which will help bolster the innovation ecosystem in Asia. Through sustained effort, ASEAN and China can work together to build a competitive, resilient and innovative region that anchors our relevance on the global stage."

Annex: ASEAN-China Year of Innovation Launch Ceremony Photo and Caption

MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY
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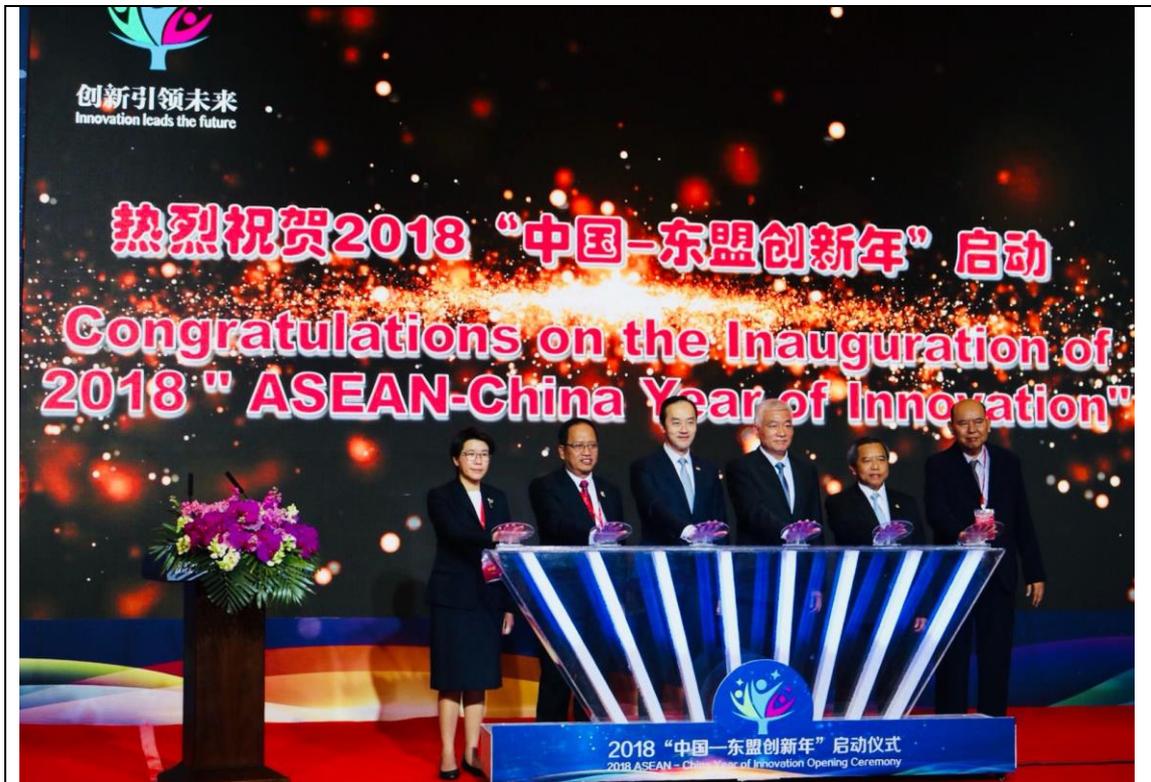
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ANNEX - ASEAN-China Year of Innovation Launch Ceremony Photo and Caption



Caption: Senior Minister of State Dr Koh Poh Koon at the launch of the ASEAN-China Year of Innovation 2018 in Beijing, China