

## **ASEAN MEMBER STATES REAFFIRM COMMITMENT TO FACILITATE TRADE FLOWS AND STRENGTHEN ECONOMIC INTEGRATION**

1. Minister for Trade and Industry Chan Chun Sing attended the 19<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Council Meeting today virtually as part of the 37<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit and Related Meetings to be held from 10 to 15 November 2020.

2. This evening, the ASEAN Economic Ministers signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the Implementation of Non-Tariff Measures (NTMs) on Essential Goods under the Hanoi Plan of Action on Strengthening ASEAN Economic Cooperation and Supply Chain Connectivity in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Under the MOU, ASEAN Member States will refrain from implementing trade restrictive measures on selected essential goods, namely medicines and medical supplies. This will improve the smooth flow of essential goods within the region amidst our efforts to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. At the 19<sup>th</sup> AEC Council Meeting this afternoon, the Ministers also discussed and endorsed the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF) to reaffirm their commitment to work together to mitigate the adverse impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the region as countries gradually re-open their economies. The ACRF will be submitted to the ASEAN Leaders for adoption at the Leaders' Summit on 12 November 2020.

4. The Ministers also endorsed the AEC Council Report for submission to the ASEAN Leaders. The Report highlights ASEAN's efforts to improve trade connectivity and digitalisation in the region, including the successful implementation of the ASEAN-wide Self Certification scheme, the inaugural ASEAN Online Sale Day, the ASEAN Customs Transit System and the adoption of the Declaration on Digital Tourism this year. The Ministers also discussed the preliminary report of the mid-term review of the AEC Blueprint 2025.

5. Mr Chan said, "ASEAN's efforts to deepen connectivity and digitalisation will generate practical benefits for our businesses, which is particularly significant during this difficult time. The successful launch of these initiatives this year also reflect ASEAN's determination to facilitate trade and strengthen supply chain connectivity within the region. The development of the ACRF represents our collective efforts to enable the ASEAN economies to maximise the benefits of greater economic integration to spur recovery and longer-term resilience."

6. Mr Chan will participate in the AEM's Troika Open-ended Dialogue with Switzerland later today, as well as the Preparatory Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Ministerial Meeting on 11 November 2020 and the 4<sup>th</sup> RCEP Summit on 15 November 2020.

**MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY  
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