

**CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT OF THE EAST ASIA SUMMIT  
FOREIGN MINISTERS' INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS,  
22 JULY 2008, SINGAPORE**

1 The EAS Foreign Ministers' Informal Consultations was held on 22 July 2008 in Singapore. The Consultations were chaired by H.E. George Yeo, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Singapore.

2 The Ministers had a wide-ranging and fruitful exchange of views on key regional and international issues. Amidst volatile and escalating oil prices, the Ministers agreed that greater regional and international cooperation was important in ensuring the region's energy security. They welcomed the substantive progress made by the EAS energy sectoral in the areas of energy efficiency and conservation, energy market integration, and bio-fuels for transport and other purposes. Moreover, EAS countries could also consider strengthening dialogue and communication between energy producers and consumers, encouraging the private sector to participate in the development of alternative energy sources like hydro-power and biofuels, as well as concrete measures to address the problem of oil speculation.

3 The Ministers also noted that food security was another key concern for EAS countries. It was important to ensure that markets functioned efficiently, and to come up with longer-term agricultural solutions. Various ideas were suggested, including the use of high yield agricultural seedlings, greater research and development, as well as developing techniques to exploit more inhospitable agricultural environments for food production. In addition, the EAS could pursue concrete cooperation in areas such as the production, transportation and preservation of food. The private sector should also be encouraged to participate in these areas.

4 The Ministers further reaffirmed their commitment to addressing the key challenge of climate change and working towards an effective, comprehensive, and equitable post-2012 international climate change arrangement under the UNFCCC process. The Ministers also noted the Republic of Korea's willingness to host the RIO+20 World Summit in 2012, in which world leaders would be able to reaffirm their commitment to sustainable development in the post-2012 climate regime. The Ministers also exchanged views on the global financial situation and welcomed continued cooperation between EAS countries in the area of finance.

5 The Foreign Ministers agreed that we should pursue a holistic and sustainable approach to these issues, given their inter-related nature in particular the need to balance between food and biofuel production. Elements of such an approach might include, for instance, a framework to generate and share knowledge between countries, as well as a means to deal with excesses and instabilities.

6 Noting that Thailand intends to focus on issues related to peoples' welfare and livelihoods at the 4th EAS in Bangkok in December 2008, the Foreign Ministers looked forward to substantive and productive discussions among the Leaders on these issues. They reaffirmed their belief that the EAS could contribute to the global dialogue on these issues.

7 The Ministers also exchanged views on recent regional and international developments. They reiterated their support for the Six-Party Talks toward the verifiable denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula and the eventual normalisation of the relations between the relevant Six Party members through the full implementation of the Joint Statement of 19 September 2005, including the resolution of outstanding issues of concern such as security and humanitarian concerns. In this regard, the Ministers emphasised the importance of the early establishment of an effective verification mechanism. The Ministers welcomed the upcoming informal meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Six Party Talks on 23 July 2008 in Singapore.

8 The ASEAN Foreign Ministers expressed their appreciation for the humanitarian assistance rendered to Myanmar by their EAS partners in the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis. Separately, the Ministers also welcomed the Myanmar Government's decision to invite UNSG Special Advisor Professor Ibrahim Gambari to visit Myanmar again in August 2008, and reaffirmed their continued support for his mission.

9 The Ministers were briefed on the situation in the area around the Temple of Preah Vihear. They urged both sides to exercise utmost restraint and to resolve the issue amicably.

10 Reaffirming their commitment to continue developing the EAS as an important forum for strategic dialogue and regional cooperation, the Ministers noted the growing cooperation in the various EAS sectorals, such as the EAS Workshop on Biofuels in Bangkok on 18-19 June 2008, informal EAS Finance Officials Dialogue in Vietnam on 24 June 2008, China's proposal to host an EAS Seminar on Climate Change Adaptation Capacity Building in October 2008, the ongoing study on the Comprehensive Economic Partnership of East Asia (CEPEA) and the establishment of the Economic Research Institute of ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA). The Ministers looked forward to the submission of substantive reports on all these initiatives at the next EAS in Bangkok. They also welcomed the suggestion for the EAS to work on educational projects similar to the European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students (ERASMUS) programme, as well as to enhance cooperation in the area of disaster relief, including, for instance, Japan's proposal to establish a "Disaster Management and Infectious Disease Control Network in Asia".

11 The Foreign Ministers also discussed the Future Directions of the EAS. While preserving the EAS' unique strategic and Leaders-led nature, it is also important to ensure that the Leaders' discussions translate into tangible projects and concrete results. ASEAN will continue as the driving force while EAS cooperation will also be utilised to strengthen ASEAN Community-building. Besides continuing to explore possible structures, the Ministers also noted, in particular, the need to strengthen the EAS Unit within the ASEAN Secretariat.



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12           As the EAS Foreign Ministers had previously only met over lunch, this was the first time the Ministers had held Informal Consultations. The FMs agreed that discussions in this format were substantive and useful, as it allowed them to discuss key regional issues as well as provide ideas for the Leaders' consideration. They thus looked forward to the next Consultations meeting to be held under Thailand's Chairmanship.

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