

ANNEX

Status of the RCEP Negotiations (as at November 2018)

Without prejudice to the ongoing negotiations, the following describes the status of the RCEP negotiations as at November 2018:

Market Access Negotiations: Final Push toward a Commercially Meaningful Outcome

Negotiations on goods and services market access and on investment Reservation Lists have advanced significantly with all RCEP Participating Countries (RPCs) intensively engaged in a series of bilateral and plurilateral negotiations throughout the year. There has been a genuine effort by RPCs to progress market access negotiations while recognizing that different RPCs have different sensitivities toward each other.

RPCs are within reach of concluding market access negotiations to meet the goals in the Guiding Principles and Objectives for Negotiating the RCEP, but some work is needed to close the remaining gaps. Special consideration may need to be given to the fact that not all RPCs have in place bilateral free trade agreements among themselves, without undermining the potential expansion and deepening of regional supply chains among the 16 RPCs.

Rules Negotiations: Ensuring a Platform for Growth

Negotiations on rules have also progressed substantially. This year alone, RPCs managed to conclude the Chapters on Customs Procedures and Trade Facilitation (CPTF); Government Procurement; Institutional Provisions; Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures; and Standards, Technical Regulations, and Conformity Assessment Procedures (STRACAP); which, added to the earlier concluded Chapters on Economic and Technical Cooperation (ECOTECH) and on Small and Medium Enterprises, bring the total number of concluded chapters in RCEP to seven.

Significant progress has also been made in other chapters and relevant annexes, with some almost concluded while others require further technical work or horizontal consideration due to their cross-cutting nature, i.e. settlement of relevant issues in other chapters is required to conclude some chapters.

Negotiations on rules are directed toward an RCEP agreement that is modern and relevant to the current realities, yet adaptable to future developments while allowing RPCs the flexibility to respond to challenges arising from their diverse circumstances.

Capitalizing on the Momentum: Concluding the Negotiations

Given the significant progress achieved this year, there is a strong resolve for RPCs to build on the current momentum and bring RCEP negotiations to a conclusion by next year. Towards this end, all RPCs will allocate and commit resources necessary to conclude negotiations in 2019. All RPCs will also seek creative, pragmatic, realistic, and mutually acceptable solutions to the remaining issues without undermining the objective to achieve comprehensive, balanced, and commercially meaningful outcomes.
