

## **ASEAN-REPUBLIC OF KOREA DIALOGUE RELATIONS**

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### **Introduction**

ASEAN and the Republic of Korea (ROK) initiated sectoral dialogue relations in November 1989. ROK was accorded a full Dialogue Partner status by ASEAN at the 24th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (AMM) in July 1991 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Since the ASEAN-ROK partnership was elevated to a summit level in 1997 in Kuala Lumpur, relations between ASEAN and ROK has been broadened and deepened. The relationship reached a new height with the signing of the Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Cooperation Partnership at the 8th ASEAN-ROK Summit in November 2004 in Vientiane, Lao PDR and the adoption of the ASEAN-ROK Plan of Action to implement the Joint Declaration at the 9th ASEAN-ROK Summit in December 2005 in Kuala Lumpur. The Plan of Action covers political and security cooperation, comprehensive economic cooperation, bridging the development gap among ASEAN Member States, ASEAN regional integration, strengthening ASEAN competitiveness, social and cultural exchanges, cooperation in addressing global issues, regional and international cooperation, and deepening East Asia cooperation.

1. The first and the second progress reports on the implementation of the ASEAN-ROK Plan of Action were submitted to the Leaders of ASEAN and ROK at the 10th ASEAN-ROK Summit in January 2007 in Cebu, Philippines and the 11th ASEAN-ROK Summit in November 2007 in Singapore, respectively. The third progress report will be submitted to the 12th ASEAN-ROK Summit in October 2009 in Thailand.

2. ASEAN and ROK commemorated the 20th Anniversary of ASEAN-ROK dialogue relations by convening the ASEAN-ROK Commemorative Summit in June in 2009 in Jeju Island, ROK.

### **Political-Security Cooperation**

3. ASEAN-ROK cooperation in the political and security fields has been strengthened by regular dialogues and exchange of views on regional and international issues through existing ASEAN-ROK mechanisms such as the ASEAN-ROK Summit, ASEAN-ROK Ministerial Meeting, ASEAN-ROK Dialogue and other mechanisms under regional frameworks such as the ASEAN Plus Three (APT) process, ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and East Asia Summit (EAS).

4. ROK acceded to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) at the ASEAN-ROK Ministerial Meeting in November 2004 in Vientiane. The accession of the ROK to the TAC demonstrates its strong commitment to further strengthen political and security engagement with ASEAN and contributes to regional peace, stability and prosperity.

5. ROK strongly supports ASEAN's efforts to establish a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) and a nuclear weapons-free zone in Southeast Asia. It also supports ASEAN as the driving force of the regional processes initiated by ASEAN such as APT, ARF and EAS.

6. In addressing the issue of terrorism, the ASEAN-ROK Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism was signed by the Foreign Ministers of ASEAN and the ROK at the sidelines of the 38th AMM in July 2005 in Vientiane. As a follow-up, ASEAN and ROK Senior Officials on Transnational Crime meet regularly to explore cooperation and exchange views on combating transnational crime.

7. Pursuant to the decision of the 11th ASEAN-ROK Summit in November 2007 in Singapore, the ASEAN-ROK Eminent Persons Group (EPG) was established. The EPG had held three meetings thus far. The fourth meeting is scheduled to be held in September 2009 in Seoul, ROK. A progress report on the work of the EPG was submitted to the ASEAN-ROK Commemorative Summit in June 2009 in Jeju Island, ROK. The final report of the EPG with recommendations will be submitted to the 12th ASEAN-ROK Summit in October 2009 in Thailand.

### **Economic Cooperation**

8. Trade between ASEAN and ROK continues to grow. The total trade between ASEAN and ROK had substantially doubled in the last five years from US\$ 46.4 billion in 2004 to US\$ 90.2 billion in 2008. There has been a steady increase in mutual investment between ASEAN and ROK amounting to US\$ 6.8 billion in 2008, which is more than five times the amount of US\$ 1.3 billion in 2004.

9. The Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation was signed by the Leaders at the 9th ASEAN-ROK Summit on 13 December 2005. The Framework Agreement provides for an ASEAN-ROK Free Trade Area by the year 2008 (with flexibility to 2010) for ROK, 2010 (with flexibility to 2012) for Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand, 2016 for Viet Nam and 2018 for Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Myanmar.

10. The Agreement on a Dispute Settlement Mechanism under the Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Partnership was signed by the Economic Ministers of ASEAN and ROK at the 9th ASEAN-ROK Summit in December 2005 in Kuala Lumpur.

11. The Agreement on Trade in Goods (TIG) under the ASEAN-Korea Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation was signed by nine ASEAN Member States and ROK in August 2006 in Kuala Lumpur. Thailand signed the Protocol on the Accession of Thailand to the TIG Agreement at the sidelines of the 14th ASEAN Summit in February 2009 in Cha-am/Hua Hin, Thailand.

12. The ASEAN-ROK Agreement on Trade in Services was signed by nine ASEAN Member States and ROK at the sidelines of the 11th ASEAN-ROK Summit in November 2007 in Singapore. Thailand signed the Protocol on the Accession to the Trade in Services Agreement at the sidelines of the 14th ASEAN Summit in February 2009 in Cha-am/Hua Hin. Negotiations on the Investment Agreement was concluded in April 2009 and signed during the ASEAN-ROK Commemorative Summit in June 2009 in Jeju Island.

13. ASEAN and ROK signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to establish the ASEAN-Korea Centre in November 2007 in Singapore. All ASEAN Member States and ROK have ratified the MOU and deposited the instruments of ratification with the ASEAN Secretariat. The MOU entered into force on 3 December 2008. The Seoul-based Centre plays a pivotal role to increase the volume of trade, accelerate investment flow, invigorate tourism and enrich cultural exchanges between ASEAN and the ROK.

### **Socio-Cultural Cooperation**

14. ASEAN-ROK development cooperation has deepened and expanded to cover the areas of trade and investment, transport, tourism, agriculture, science and technology, ICT, environment, health, human resource development, culture, people-to-people exchanges and narrowing the development gaps in ASEAN.

15. ASEAN-ROK development cooperation projects and programmes are being supported by the ASEAN-ROK SCF and Future Oriented Cooperation Project (FOCP) Fund, which were established in 1990 and 1997, respectively.