



**CHAIR'S STATEMENT:
The Ninth ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting**

Ha Noi, 25-26 May 2009

1. The Ninth ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting (FMM 9) was held in Ha Noi, Viet Nam from 25-26 May 2009. This first official foreign ministerial gathering of 45 ASEM partners was opened by H.E. Mr. Nguyen Tan Dung, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, and chaired by H.E. Mr. Pham Gia Khiem, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs.
2. Under the overarching theme of "Forging a Closer Asia-Europe Partnership to Address the Financial and Economic Crisis and Other Global Challenges", Ministers held fruitful discussions on a wide range of issues of common concern and interest regarding in particular the main themes of the ASEM 7 Summit in Beijing in October 2008 to maintain momentum of ASEM dialogue towards the Brussels Summit in October 2010, and were determined to strengthen and deepen the Asia - Europe Partnership in the ASEM framework to tackle global challenges.

Cooperation to Address the Global Financial and Economic Crisis

3. Ministers held in-depth discussions on the global financial and economic situation and its impacts after the presentation by the IMF Director for Asia and the Pacific, Mr. Akira Ariyoshi on the issue. They noted that the current global financial and economic crisis and recession were the worst since the Great Depression, which negatively affected economic development, employment and social cohesion particularly in developing countries. The deepening global crisis and the resulting sharp reduction in capital flows had adverse impacts on trade and investment among and between Asian and European countries, endangering the financial stability and economic development of all member countries. Ministers nevertheless were encouraged to note the efforts of the international community to contain the effects of the crisis and expressed their appreciation of initiatives such as those proposed by the G20. They noted in particular the positive role of the Beijing ASEM 7 Summit in facilitating the involvement of more developing countries by using the G20 framework. They fully supported the efforts for implementation of the proposed measures and emphasized the need for further proactive policy actions to put the global economy back on track towards recovery. Ministers agreed that although the growth prospects for both developed and developing countries for 2009 have

deteriorated, and that the current crisis could go deeper in some countries and regions, it was possible that world economy might start recovering in 2010 with concerted efforts through close cooperation and coordination. In this regard, they expressed support to the United Nations Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and its Impact on Development, to be held in New York in June 2009. The forthcoming G8 Summit in l'Aquila and its outreach perspectives could also be instrumental to the global common end.

4. Ministers agreed that the international community needed to enhance open and equitable multilateral trade and financial systems and strengthen international cooperation for full and timely attainment of the Millennium Development Goals by, inter alia:
 - Rejecting protectionism, enhancing market access for the exports of developing countries, particularly in areas of their interest, and promoting regional and inter-regional integration. Ministers agreed that protectionist measures may provoke retaliatory actions, further harm the world economy and delay its recovery. They urged all countries to refrain from introducing or raising barriers to trade and investment and to remove them, if any, in a timely manner, and avoid turning inward in times of financial uncertainty. Accordingly, Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to a more open, equitable, rule-based, and non-discriminatory international trade system and called on all countries to intensify efforts, on the basis of the progress made so far, for an ambitious, comprehensive and balanced conclusion of the Doha Development Agenda, which was ever more needed in the context of the present crisis. Ministers reaffirmed the importance of universal membership in the WTO and strongly supported the Lao PDR's early accession to the WTO. Ministers also welcomed the commitment by G20 leaders to the availability of at least \$250 billion over the next two years to support trade finance through export credit and investment agencies and through the multilateral development banks.
 - Enhancing cooperation in and promoting good governance and transparency of international organizations such as IMF, World Bank and in international fora such as the G20. Ministers fully supported the agreed measures and joint policy actions to strengthen financial regulations and supervision, in order to restore market confidence. They underlined the need to reform mandates, scope, and governance of the international financial institutions to reflect changes in the world economy, and that emerging and developing economies must have greater voice and representation. They supported the G20 commitment to completing the next review of IMF quotas by January 2011 and reforming voice and representation at the World Bank by the 2010 Spring Meeting. They also welcomed the G20 commitment to refraining from retreating into financial protectionism, particularly from implementing measures that may constrain worldwide capital flows, especially to developing

countries. Ministers supported full and exceptional use of international financial institutions to create further lending capacity with more flexible financing policies to effectively assist countries affected by the crisis, and encouraged national and international concerted efforts to prevent capital flight out of developing countries.

- Strengthening development cooperation through new and additional financial resources as well as Official Development Assistance (ODA) in the bilateral and multilateral frameworks to address, inter alia, the social dimension of development in developing countries. In this connection, Ministers called on all developed countries to achieve their ODA pledges to spend 0.7% of GNI.

5. Ministers encouraged partners to enhance economic cooperation within ASEM framework by, inter alia:

- Accelerating implementation of the Ha Noi Declaration on Closer ASEM Economic Partnership and the Beijing Statement on the International Financial Situation. Ministers noted in particular the need for practical cooperation initiatives aimed at expanding trade and investment, and promoting partnership and cooperation in areas of mutual benefit including, inter alia, finance, transport, energy, science and technology, agriculture, forestry and fishery, education, sustainable urban development and tourism. Ministers appreciated the initiative to convene the First ASEM Transport Ministers' Meeting in Lithuania in October 2009, which will launch the ASEM dialogue on transport. They took note of the successful ASEM Development Conference in Manila in April 2009 and welcomed its recommendation that a follow-up high-level ASEM Development Conference be convened in the first half of 2010 in the lead-up to the 8th ASEM Summit in Brussels. In addition, Ministers noted the need to establish ASEM dialogue aimed at enhancing support to mitigate social consequences of the crisis. Ministers also welcomed the First ASEM Meeting of the Ministers of Interior on Irregular Migration to be held in Bucharest in the first half of 2010.
- Deepening ASEM trade, investment and financial cooperation. In this regard, Ministers appreciated the preparations by Spain for the ASEM Finance Deputies' Meeting and the Ninth ASEM Finance Ministers' Meeting scheduled for 2009 and 2010 respectively. Ministers agreed on the necessity for resumption at the soonest of the ASEM Economic Ministers' Meeting (EMM), and encouraged full participation at the highest level by all partners in that meeting. Ministers expressed a strong desire for holding of the EMM in Asia before the end of 2009 and welcomed India's readiness to consider the possibility of hosting the Meeting. They also underlined the importance of expeditious implementation of the Trade Facilitation Action Plan (TFAP) and the Investment Promotion Action Plan (IPAP) with a view to boosting up the Asia - Europe trade and investment linkage.

- Encouraging the entrepreneurs to play more active role in ASEM economic cooperation, enhancing public-private partnership and promoting small and medium enterprises. Ministers welcomed Belgium's intention to hold a dynamic Asia-Europe Business Forum (AEBF) in parallel with the ASEM 8 Summit in Brussels in 2010, building on the good momentum of AEBF 11 held in parallel to ASEM 7.

Joint Efforts to Cope with Global Challenges

6. Noting that the world was facing severe global challenges, Ministers expressed deep concern and called for global solidarity and concerted actions, including those by the World Health Organization, other international institutions and ASEM, to tackle the influenza A (H1N1) outbreak. They commended recent activities by affected and possibly threatened countries and encouraged new initiatives for transparent and effective response to and prevention of human pandemics. Ministers highlighted their renewed commitment to regional and international cooperation in coping with non-traditional security issues, in particular trans-boundary and cross-continental disease transmission. In this connection, they welcomed the ASEM Workshop on Avian Influenza Control hosted by China and the ASEM Initiative for the Rapid Containment of Pandemic Influenza financed by Japan, the stockpile phase of which was successfully launched on the occasion of the FMM 9. They looked forward to the success of the ASEM Workshop on sharing experiences of preparedness to respond to climate change and emerging diseases to be held in Viet Nam in November 2009.
7. Ministers welcomed H.E. Dr. Pham Khoi Nguyen, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of Viet Nam and took note of his assessment of the severe challenges of climate change and the urgent need for strengthening international and ASEM cooperation in this field. They noted the adverse impact of climate change, the risk of glacier melting and sea level rise in particular, the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, and underlined the urgency of adaptation measures. Ministers also stressed that biological diversity and forest preservation were vital for a social, economic and ecological balanced existence and make a fundamental contribution to climate protection, and that conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity as well as protection of forests are key issues to combat poverty and achieve the MDGs.
8. Ministers reaffirmed their support of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Kyoto Protocol, and welcomed the substantial progress made at the Bali Conference in 2007 and appreciated the efforts made at the Poznan Conference in 2008 and underlined the need to maintain such momentum. Furthermore, Ministers affirmed ASEM strengthened cooperation and collective actions to enable the Copenhagen COP15 in December 2009 to reach an ambitious, effective and comprehensive agreed outcome which would improve the implementation of the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol now, up to and beyond 2012 along the Bali roadmap, and provide a strong answer to the global climate challenge. Ministers emphasized that developed countries had to take the lead and establish

ambitious and economy-wide mid-term targets as well as long-term goals for emission reduction, and urged them to propose such targets well ahead of the Copenhagen meeting. Ministers recognized the need for developing countries to take nationally appropriate mitigation action of this nature in the context of sustainable development, supported and enabled by technology, financing and capacity-building, in order to put their economies on a green growth pathway, adhering to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. They emphasized the importance of the market-based mechanisms such as carbon market, and supported the improvement of the flexible mechanisms and other approaches under the Kyoto Protocol. Ministers also underlined their commitment to promoting cooperation to ensure enhanced financial mechanism based on equity, effectiveness and accountability which supported the objectives of the UNFCCC and enabled the implementation of the outcome mentioned above.

9. Ministers highlighted their support for closer ASEM cooperation on climate change and called for consistent and expeditious implementation of the Beijing Declaration on Sustainable Development and the Helsinki Declaration on Climate Change. In this regard, Ministers emphasized the need for ASEM partners to work together in accordance with their respective UNFCCC commitments to strengthen the ability of developing countries to adapt to climate change, including financial and technical assistance, capacity-building and integrating adaptation actions with development policies. Ministers welcomed the outcome of the 2007 Third ASEM Environment Ministers' Meeting in Copenhagen and the Chair's Summary of the ASEM Seminar on Adaptation to Climate Change co-chaired by Japan and the European Commission in Tokyo in October 2008. They commended the wide range of new ASEM initiatives in dealing with climate change, including the ASEM Workshop on sharing experiences of preparedness to respond to the global climate change and emerging diseases, and the ASEM Forum on Climate Change and Adaptation Measures co-sponsored by Viet Nam, Denmark, the United Kingdom, Indonesia and the EC.
10. Recognizing the importance of energy security as acknowledged in the Ha Noi Declaration on Closer ASEM Economic Partnership and the Beijing Declaration on Sustainable Development, Ministers affirmed their support for strengthened ASEM energy cooperation, especially to promote sustainable use of energy, development and utilization of renewable and alternative energies, as well as the establishment of a stable, effective and transparent global energy market. Ministers welcomed the first ASEM Ministerial Conference on Energy Security to be held in Belgium in June 2009.
11. Ministers underlined the need to adopt a multilateral approach and collective actions in addressing global issues and the maintenance of international peace and security. Recalling the ASEM Declaration on Multilateralism adopted by Foreign Ministers in Ireland in 2004, Ministers reaffirmed ASEM's commitment to strengthening the important role of multilateralism and a multilateral international system with the United Nations at its heart in the settlement of international disputes, maintenance of

international peace and security, promoting human rights, and cooperation among states based on the principles enshrined in the UN Charter and international law. In this context, Ministers underscored the importance of UN reform, in particular that of the Security Council with a view to enhancing its representativeness, effectiveness and transparency.

12. Ministers, recalling their determination as expressed in the ASEM 4 Declaration on Cooperation against International Terrorism, reaffirmed their strong commitment to countering terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, which remained a serious threat to international peace and security, sustainable development and political stability. Ministers reaffirmed ASEM commitment to taking practical steps in the international fight against terrorism in line with the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the relevant UN Security Council resolutions while underlining the need to adhere to the major UN conventions and protocols dealing with terrorism in full respect for the UN Charter and international laws including human rights law, refugee law and humanitarian law. Ministers reaffirmed the importance of an early conclusion of the negotiations on the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism. Ministers welcomed continued efforts in this area and looked forward to the 7th ASEM conference on Counter-Terrorism and its preparatory activity on Maritime Customs, Immigration, Quarantine, and Security to be held in Manila in June 2009.
13. Ministers emphasized the importance of multilateral efforts for strengthening disarmament, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their means of delivery, and reaffirmed the inalienable right of states to develop, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. They underlined the importance of cooperation to ensure a successful outcome of the 2010 Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).
14. Mindful of the serious concerns over increasing incidents of piracy off the coast of Somalia, and the importance of mitigating threats posed on key shipping lanes, especially between Asia and Europe, Ministers agreed that ASEM partners should take appropriate measures in accordance with international laws and relevant UN resolutions and enhance cooperation, including assistance for capacity-building, for better maritime security, and the fight against maritime piracy while assuring the smooth flow of goods and people.
15. Ministers expressed their concern over fluctuation of commodity prices worldwide, especially of oil and food, since they posed a serious challenge to stable growth and caused great difficulties to the life of people in many countries. Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to taking joint and comprehensive measures to address the medium- and long-term crisis, including enhancement of international cooperation for improving productivity and labor capacity and promoting agricultural innovation to ensure food security, aiming at halving the number of hungry people in the world by 2015 as committed at the Millennium Summit. Ministers called for the enhancement

of all efforts, including food supportive activities, social protection, among others, in order to stabilize food price in particular in the context of global economic and financial crisis. Ministers affirmed their support for the United Nations to play a leading and coordinating role in this regard.

Enhancement of Political Dialogue

16. Ministers reaffirmed the common desire to strengthen the political dialogue between Asia and Europe and agreed that its enhancement within the ASEM framework was necessary and fruitful as it would help highlight and expand common ground, advance mutual understanding and friendship. Ministers expressed their appreciation of the dialogue carried out by ASEM partners through the informal ASEM Seminars on Human Rights, held annually since 1998. They underlined their commitment to cooperate in the promotion and protection of human rights on the basis of equality and mutual respect.
17. Ministers reiterated their support for the progress made in ASEAN Community building, regional integration of East Asia and South Asia, and welcomed in particular the entry into force of the ASEAN Charter and the signing of the Cha-am Hua Hin Declaration on the Roadmap for the ASEAN Community (2009-2015). Ministers welcomed the readiness of the European Union to accede to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) upon completion of the relevant legal process to amend the Treaty. Ministers noted with satisfaction the progress made in the EU's integration and acknowledged the important role of this process in promoting peace, stability and prosperity in Europe.
18. Ministers stressed their commitment to the promotion of peace, stability and development in Afghanistan and emphasized their support for Afghanistan's national reconciliation, unity and territorial integrity. They welcomed the significant progress already made in Afghanistan including the forthcoming presidential and provincial elections and stressed the need for continued improvement on governance and human rights issues. They endorsed the need to address issues from regional perspectives for a comprehensive approach and participation of the international community to assist the Government of Afghanistan in their efforts to combat terrorism, tackle the cultivation and trafficking of illicit narcotics, strengthen the rule of law and take action against corruption at all levels of government, thereby fulfilling objectives of the Afghanistan Compact and the Afghan National Development Strategy. They welcomed the central and impartial role of the United Nations as well as the growing cooperation between Afghanistan and its neighboring countries and noted, in this regard, the progress made at the Third Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan in Islamabad on 13-14 May 2009.
19. In light of the concern about the recent developments relating to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Ministers exchanged views on the situation in Myanmar. They called for the

early release of those under detention and the lifting of restrictions placed on political parties. They took note of the briefing by Myanmar on the recent developments and prospects, and called upon the Myanmar Government to prepare and conduct the multi-party general election in 2010 in a free and fair manner. They welcomed the talks between the EU Troika and Myanmar at the Ministerial level as a further step toward their mutual understanding. They reaffirmed their support for the good offices role of the United Nations Secretary-General and his planned visit, and encouraged the Government of Myanmar to engage all stakeholders in an inclusive process in order to achieve national reconciliation and economic and social development. They welcomed the extension of the mandate of the Tripartite Core Group and encouraged Myanmar to continue to co-operate with the UN and ASEAN to facilitate the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance. They called upon the international community to increase humanitarian assistance to the people of Myanmar. Ministers affirmed their commitments to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Myanmar and, in that context, reiterated that the future of Myanmar lied in the hands of all of its people.

20. Ministers confirmed their commitment to seeking a negotiated and peaceful solution to the Iranian nuclear issue. They called on Iran to comply fully with UN Security Council resolutions and to meet the requirements of the IAEA Board of Governors. They welcomed the efforts by China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States in proposing a road-map of the resumption of negotiations and the package of enhanced incentives in June 2008. They also welcomed the recent commitment of the United States Government to engage in direct diplomacy with Iran. They called on relevant parties to seize this opportunity for the resumption of negotiations.
21. Ministers discussed the recent developments in Northeast Asia, particularly the nuclear test conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and issued the "Statement of the 9th ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting on the nuclear test conducted by the DPRK on May 25, 2009."

Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations

22. Ministers noted that since the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations (2001), there has been a common understanding among nations that globalization encompassed economic, financial and technological aspects, human, cultural, spiritual dimensions, the interdependence of humankind and its rich diversity. The dialogue among cultures and civilizations was therefore necessary. In this context, Ministers welcomed Poland's initiative to host the Fourth ASEM Culture Ministers' Meeting in 2010, underlining the importance of the debate on these issues, with a special emphasis on cultural heritage. Ministers also welcomed China's offer to host the ASEM Culture and Art Festival in September 2009.
23. Ministers expressed their support to the Alliance of Civilizations (AoC) and welcomed the results of the II Forum held in Istanbul in April 2009 which provided a

room for an open, inclusive and global dialogue to advance the principles and objectives of the AoC in their respective countries and regions. They also welcomed the announcement by AoC members of new national plans, new Partnership Agreements and Regional Strategies. Ministers noted with satisfaction that the implementation of concrete projects and the launch of new multi-stakeholders initiatives of the AoC in the fields of education, youth, migration and media helped to mobilize high profile commitments in support of dialogue and cultural understanding, and reinforced the capacity of the UN to adapt to emerging challenges.

24. Ministers were of the view that this dialogue should highlight the importance of values and ethics and promote a constructive debate and exchange of ideas that may facilitate the recognition of shared values and foster respect and tolerance by nurturing conscience and a common base for human existence rooted in history, heritage and tradition while being forward-looking to accommodate the challenges of modernity and globalisation. In this respect, Ministers welcomed the United Nations Resolution 62/90 of 17 December 2007 whereas 2010 would be proclaimed the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures.
25. Ministers emphasized that education and training were essential foundations for social stability and economic welfare as well as for a culture of peace and a dialogue among civilizations. They welcomed the outcome of the Second ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting in Ha Noi on 15 May 2009, which agreed on setting up several ASEM expert groups to strengthen quality assurance, credit recognition and transfer in education and to enhance sustainable human resources development and employability, in order to promote HRD, especially vocational and higher education.
26. Ministers noted that within the ASEM framework, there have been a number of interfaith dialogues that advocated respect for values universal to all civilizations such as solidarity, tolerance, recognition of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. In this connection, they welcomed the readiness of the Republic of Korea and Finland as co-host to organize a new edition of the ASEM Interfaith Dialogue in Seoul this September, the ASEM interfaith and intercultural Retreat for Religious Leaders to be held in Indonesia in the second half of 2009, and the continuation of the exercise that would represent the next ASEM Interfaith Dialogue to be held in Spain in 2010. They reaffirmed their support for the active contributions by the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) in promoting dialogue and cooperation between the peoples of Asia and Europe through intellectual, cultural, and people-to-people exchanges. They emphasized the importance of ASEF's flagship programme in further aligning ASEF activities with ASEM priorities and in enhancing the visibility of ASEM.

Preparations for the 8th ASEM Summit in Belgium in 2010

27. Belgium briefed Ministers on its preparations for the ASEM 8 Summit to be held in Brussels in October 2010. Ministers expressed appreciation and support for Belgium's efforts in the run-up to the Summit.

The Future of ASEM

28. Ministers reaffirmed the strategic importance of ASEM as a unique vehicle for dialogue and cooperation between Asia and Europe, and were committed to further engaging actively in this partnership between equals to maintain and enhance peace and stability as well as to promote conditions conducive to sustainable economic and social development for the benefit of their peoples.
29. Ministers welcomed the applications of Australia and Russia to ASEM and mandated Senior Officials to work out modalities to enable both countries to formally join ASEM at the ASEM 8 Summit in Brussels in 2010. In light of growing interest from other countries to join ASEM, Ministers also mandated Senior Officials to discuss and propose criteria, principles, and procedures, on the basis of the Asia-Europe Cooperation Framework of 2000 regarding the future enlargement of ASEM.
30. Ministers emphasized ASEM's continuing vital role as a framework for dialogue and cooperation, serving as a prime point of convergence between Asia and Europe as well as a catalyst in the broader context of Asia - Europe relations. They encouraged further progress in enhancing ASEM cooperation with specific goals and result-oriented programmes and projects by implementing the Issue-Based Leadership initiative and in improving ASEM coordination and management mechanism as commensurate with its nature and development. In this regard, they welcomed the proposal for an "ASEM 8 Coordinating Office" as an ad hoc one-year initiative to prepare, coordinate and support the ASEM 8 Summit. Ministers adopted various cooperation initiatives put forth by partners (attached as Annex I) and the ASEM Work Programme for 2008-2010 (attached as Annex II)
31. Ministers welcomed Hungary's offer to host the Tenth ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting in 2011.

Ha Noi

26 May 2009