



## **CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT OF THE THIRD ASEM FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING Beijing, China, 24-25 May 2001**

1. The third ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting was held in Beijing, China, on 24-25 May 2001. It was attended by Foreign Ministers from ten Asian and fifteen European nations, and the Commissioner for External Relations of the European Commission. The meeting was chaired by Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan. Chinese President Jiang Zemin and Premier Zhu Rongji addressed the meeting at its opening and closing ceremonies respectively and received the Foreign Ministers and the Commissioner. Chinese Vice Premier Qian Qichen also met them.
2. The Ministers held comprehensive, in-depth and fruitful discussions based on the theme of enhancing Asia-Europe partnership in the new century. They affirmed that the relations between Asia and Europe had become closer, more extensive and important than ever, that ASEM had entered a new stage of dynamic development. It was the strong wish of both Asia and Europe to further deepen understanding, expand common ground, enhance cooperation and forge closer relations. The Ministers stressed the importance of building upon the achievements of the Seoul Summit, to further promote and enhance Asia-Europe exchanges and cooperation based on the principle of equal partnership. They expected ASEM to play an active and constructive role in building a new international political and economic order by upholding the Purposes and Principles of the UN Charter and other universally recognized norms governing international relations. The Ministers called for greater international cooperation in promoting peace, stability, sustainable development, democracy, the rule of law, human rights including the right to development, and fundamental freedoms.
3. The Ministers held that, guided by the principles set by ASEM Summits, the political dialogue as one of the three pillars of the ASEM process had developed positively, which benefited both regions by promoting and deepening mutual understanding, expanding common ground, defining common interests and enhancing cooperation. They reaffirmed the great importance of further enhancing such dialogue and cooperation in the political field between the two regions.
4. The Ministers exchanged views on regional issues of common interest. They observed that positive trends in Asia and Europe had consolidated cooperation in the two regions. They noted with satisfaction that good-neighborliness, mutual trust, dialogue and cooperation had become the consensus of the east Asian countries. The ASEAN+3 Summit had played an important role in fostering such relations. The Nice Summit has enabled the European Union to reform its institutions, thereby opening the way for the enlargement of the EU and has further developed the European Defence and Security Policy, thus giving the EU the means to play its full role on the international stage. The Ministers noted with interest the efforts to enhance integration between old and new members of ASEAN including through the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) launched at the fourth ASEAN Informal Summit held in Singapore on 24-25 November 2000. They welcomed the determination expressed by the thirteenth ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting to enhance cooperation. The Ministers firmly believed that enhanced regional cooperation in Asia and Europe respectively such as EU and ASEAN would give new impetus to socio-economic development in both Asia and Europe, and create

favourable conditions for comprehensive and multi-faceted cooperation between the two regions. They also welcomed the continued progress of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) as an important forum for regional dialogue and cooperation. They were convinced that, in the context of the trend towards globalization and interdependence, the strengthening of the equal and mutually beneficial Asia-Europe partnership would not only benefit the people of the two continents, but also the world at large.

5. Recalling the Seoul Declaration for Peace on the Korean Peninsula adopted at the third ASEM, the Ministers expressed their appreciation and support for the positive steps taken by both the Republic of Korea (ROK) and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in implementing the South-North Joint Declaration since the first inter-Korean Summit in June 2000, and looked forward to further progress in the process of reconciliation and cooperation with strengthened inter-Korean dialogue including the early holding of the second Summit between the ROK and the DPRK. The Ministers welcomed the outcome of the recent visit by the President of the European Council, the High Representative and the Commissioner for external relations to the Korean Peninsula and noted the report made by the European side about the positive outcome of the discussions with both Korean Leaders on reconciliation on the peninsula, the moratorium on missile tests and related security issues, humanitarian matters, human rights and other topics. The Ministers looked forward to further dialogue between the DPRK and ASEM partners on these and other questions, reaffirming their full support for the realization of peace, stability and the eventual reunification on the Korean Peninsula.

The Ministers underlined the need for further achievements in internal stability and national reconciliation in countries of the Balkan region. The main thrust of integration with the EU is given content by the stabilization and association process, which requires the countries of the region to promote democracy, the rule of law, regional reconciliation and cooperation, respect for States' international borders and respect for human rights, including those of all ethnic groups and minorities, as underlined by the Zagreb Summit. The Ministers strongly support the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all the countries of the region and the inviolability of their internationally recognised borders. The Ministers stressed the important contribution made by the international community, particularly by the Stability Pact to the implementation of reforms, economic development and the strengthening of regional security and cooperation. The European Union was the initiator of the Stability Pact and will continue to act as its driving force.

The Ministers highlighted the importance they attach to generating the necessary conditions for a successful transition of East Timor towards independence. They shared the view that the international community's active engagement to support the process of rehabilitation and nation building in East Timor should continue beyond independence. They also recognized the important steps taken and the urgency to solve the problems still remaining, namely the question of the East Timorese refugees. The Ministers discussed the worrying situation in the Middle East. They called on the parties to take all necessary measures to stop the tragic escalation and urged them to work for a cease-fire. The Ministers welcomed and gave their support to the report and to proposals of the Sharm el Sheikh Fact Finding Committee ("Mitchell Committee") as well as to the Jordanian-Egyptian initiative.

6. Recalling the UN Millenium Declaration, the Ministers stressed that the enhancement of the role of the United Nations, the inter-governmental organization

with the most universal representation and participation, served the common interests of all nations and discussed important issues such as strengthening the UN, UN reforms, UN peacekeeping in different aspects and UN's role in the areas of development, disarmament, arms control and human rights. The Ministers also underlined the importance of maintaining global strategic balance and stability and strengthening regional and global initiatives on arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass-destruction. They agreed to further develop ASEM dialogue in the fields of arms control, disarmament and UN reforms. In order to strengthen cooperation on issues addressed by the UN, they decided that before sessions of the General Assembly, ASEM partners would hold consultations at the appropriate level in New York or other agreed places to exchange views on agenda items. Such consultations could also take other agreed forms.

7. The Ministers underlined that closer economic links among ASEM partners formed the basis of a strong partnership between Asia and Europe. They shared the view that ASEM should give priority to and strive for an Asia-Europe economic relationship that is mutually beneficial. They were pleased to note the recovery of Asian economy and the stability of the euro area. This had created favourable conditions for the two regions to enhance economic and trade cooperation, including in the areas of information and communications technology, to promote the joint prosperity of the two regions.
8. The Ministers agreed that the process of globalization, which presented opportunities as well as risks and challenges, called for comprehensive and sensitive monitoring in order to realize the desired benefits for all. Through enhanced cooperation ASEM partners could utilize the opportunities of globalization better, face its challenges and join hands in promoting a win-win globalization, towards equality and mutual benefits for all nations. They noted that the seventh ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Ministerial Meeting held in Bangkok on 27 July 2000 had discussed the security implications of globalization, thereby contributing to the regional dialogue on this issue. They also recognized that globalization expanded the prospect for technological advances and for effective integration into the world economy, increasing prosperity and the potential for countries, particularly the poorest and the most vulnerable. ASEM Partners should make use of the opportunities and deal with the challenges of globalization together, by working jointly to narrow the development gap within and among countries, reduce the number of people living in poverty, decrease asymmetries and imbalances in the international economy, and promote stability in the international financial system which continued to be a concern and required careful attention. They pointed out that as an important partnership, ASEM could play a more significant role in working towards a globalization with maximum benefits and minimum side effects, conducive to the common development of the developed and developing countries.
9. Against this background and bearing in mind the role of the multilateral trading system in promoting economic growth and prosperity among nations, the Ministers would intensify their efforts to launch a new round of multilateral trade negotiations with a balanced and broad-based agenda taking into account the interests of all WTO members, at the Fourth Ministerial Conference to be held in Doha, Qatar. They reaffirmed that full participation in the WTO by all ASEM partners would strengthen the organization.
10. The Ministers looked forward to the convening of the third ASEM Economic Ministers' Meeting in Vietnam on 10-11 September 2001 and noted that it would



discuss measures to enhance the implementation of the activities under the Trade Facilitation Action Plan (TFAP) and Investment Promotion Action Plan (IPAP). They hoped that this meeting would enhance cooperation between Asia and Europe, particularly in relevant priority areas set out in AECF 2000. The Ministers also looked forward to the convening of the second ASEM Science and Technology Ministers' Meeting at an early date. The Ministers commended the constructive role of AEBF in promoting business-to-business and business-to-government dialogue and cooperation between Asia and Europe. They encouraged it to continue its efforts in helping Asian and European SMEs to pursue growth and prosperity. The Ministers welcomed the positive result of the ASEM Seminar on Digital Opportunity and supported the continued efforts to address the digital divide. The Ministers noted that WTO Trade Facilitation Seminar would be held in Kuala Lumpur in June 2001. They hoped that the ASEM Seminar on Information and Communications Technology and the ASEM Roundtable on Globalization would score effective achievements. Information and Communications Technology and the global electronic networks offer real opportunities for growth and sustainable development, which the ASEM partnership should promote. They looked forward to the establishment of the Trans-Eurasia Information Network, the convening of the Conference on E-commerce and Logistics.

11. The Ministers stressed that greater cooperation between Asia and Europe in the financial field would be conducive to the development and stability of world finance. Asia and Europe would step up mutually beneficial cooperation and exchanges in strengthening financial supervision and regulation, and putting into practice the principle of orderly financial liberalization. They acknowledged that the third ASEM Finance Ministers' Meeting in Kobe had held in-depth discussions on issues including strengthening inter-regional economic and financial cooperation between Asia and Europe, and welcomed the commitment of all sides to actively continue the exchanges, coordination and cooperation in this area. The Ministers welcomed the concrete initiatives launched as a follow-up to the Kobe meeting including the finalization of modalities for the ASEM Trust Fund II (ATF II) and the creation of the Kobe research project designed to facilitate inter-regional cooperative research and studies of mutual interest.
12. The Ministers emphasized the importance of strengthening Asia-Europe cooperation in social, cultural, educational and other areas involving all sectors of society. In this regard, they welcomed the fruitful results of the ASEM Conference on the Combination of Traditional and Modern Medicine in December 2000. They stressed that human resources development in ASEM partners was the foundation and guarantee of the comprehensive development of Asia and Europe. Projects could be developed to strengthen capacity building in the two regions. Asia and Europe would further promote the establishment of networks among scholars, think tanks and students, and conduct academic and cultural exchanges. In this connection, they welcomed the significant progress made towards the launch of DUO, ASEM Fellowship Programme at the Expert Group Meeting in Seoul. They also welcomed the progress made in the establishment of ASEM Education Hubs and activities launched by Asian-Europe Institute.
13. The Ministers commended the activities of the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), which since its setting up had contributed to greater understanding and cooperation through people-to-people contacts and cultural and intellectual exchanges. They took note of the report by the ASEF Executive Director on the foundation's future goals and priorities. In this regard, the Ministers expressed support for a new round of contributions to ASEF's budget by partners in time for ASEM IV in Copenhagen.



14. The Ministers expressed deep concerns for transnational organized crime and recognized the importance of migration for both regions and would follow closely the preparations for the Symposium on ASEM Law Enforcement Agencies' Cooperation in Combating Transnational Crime, the Cooperation in Combating Corruption, the Anti-money Laundering Initiative. The Ministers took note of the preparations for the Ministerial Conference on Cooperation for the Management of Migratory Flows Europe-Asia. They hoped that more effective mechanisms and channels for relevant Asia-Europe cooperation could be established through those initiatives.
15. The Ministers recognized that trafficking in women and children was a growing concern to all and welcomed the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols. ASEM Partners would intensify cooperation to combat the hideous crime of trafficking in human beings with a view to ensuring respect and protection of the rights of victims of trafficking, especially women and children. The Ministers welcomed the action plan prepared by the Core Group Expert Meeting on ASEM initiative on Trafficking in Women and Children.
16. The Ministers hoped that the first ASEM Environment Ministers' Meeting to be held in China could contribute to the process of environmental cooperation between Asia and Europe. In view of the challenges of pollution and ecological damage in the twenty-first century, they agreed on the need not only to de-couple environmental degradation from continued economic growth, but to ensure that pressures on the environment are reduced to a level compatible with sustainable development. The Ministers shared the view that global warming is a serious challenge which the entire international community should take concerted and coordinated actions to tackle. In this regard, the Ministers stressed that the Kyoto protocol is an important first step to achieve the necessary turn-around in industrialized countries' emissions. They recognized that many current trends were not sustainable, and emphasized that in the longer term, a healthy environment was fundamental to economic development, human welfare and reduction of poverty. The Ministers expressed their determination to work towards a successful 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development. They also noted the role of the Asia-Europe Environmental Technology Centre (AEETC) for the past two years in enhancing environmental cooperation.
17. Asia-Europe Cooperation Framework 2000 set out the principles, objectives, priorities and mechanisms of cooperation for the ASEM process for the first decade of the new millennium. The Ministers reviewed the progress of the initiatives endorsed by the third ASEM and on the recommendations of the Senior Officials' Meeting held in Stockholm in April 2001, endorsed the following as official ASEM initiatives:
  - Kobe Research Project
  - ASEM Public Debt Management Forum
  - ASEM SOM Information Exchange, Monitoring and Review Mechanism for ASEM Initiatives and Activities
  - Lifelong Learning



- Seminar on Asia-Europe Cooperation on the Applications of Information Technology to Human Resources Development in the Mekong Sub-region
18. The Ministers discussed future modalities of the ASEM dialogue, in particular those of Leaders. In this connection, they exchanged views on how to make ASEM more informal and interactive and agreed to continue exploring more effective ways to this end. As overall coordinators of the ASEM process, the Ministers instructed Senior Officials to ensure that AECF 2000 is fully implemented. They encouraged Senior Officials to continue their work on stocktaking and to identify thematic clusters of initiatives which could contribute to the ASEM dialogue and cooperation.
19. In accordance with the results of the third ASEM Summit, the Ministers exchanged views on the participation in ASEM, noted the views of Asian partners, and agreed to return to the issue at the next Foreign Ministers' Meeting.
20. The Ministers agreed to hold the fourth ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Spain in June 2002.