

**ASIA-PACIFIC ECONOMIC COOPERATION  
MINISTERIAL MEETING  
Canberra, 6-7 November 1989**

**JOINT STATEMENT**

Ministers from Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, The Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and the United States gathered in Canberra, Australia on 6-7 November 1989 to discuss how to advance the process of Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation. A full list of Ministers and Observers attending the Meeting is attached.

Discussions covered a variety of topics under four agenda items:

- World and Regional Economic Developments
- Global Trade Liberalisation - The Role of the Asia Pacific Region
- Opportunity for Regional Cooperation in Specific Areas, and
- Future Steps for Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation

At the conclusion of this first meeting, Ministers expressed satisfaction with the discussions, which demonstrated the value of closer regional consultation and economic cooperation on matters of mutual interest.

Ministers also expressed their recognition of the important contribution ASEAN and its dialogue relationships have played in the development to date of APEC, and noted the significant role ASEAN institutional mechanisms can continue to play in supporting the present effort to broaden and strengthen regional economic cooperation.

**Multilateral Trade Negotiations**

The discussions on world and regional developments, and on global trade liberalisation, focused particularly on the need to advance the present round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations. Every economy represented in Canberra relies heavily on a strong and open multilateral trading system, and none believes that Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation should be directed to the formation of a trading bloc.

Ministers agreed that the further opening of the multilateral trading system was of substantial and common interest for all countries in the region, and that the Uruguay Round represents the most immediate and practical opportunity to pursue this objective on a broad basis. In particular, Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to open markets and to expand trade through the successful conclusion of the Round by December 1990.

Ministers agreed that continued close consultation within the region should be used wherever possible to promote a positive conclusion to the Round. In this respect, it was agreed that Ministers concerned with trade policy should meet in early September 1990 to discuss the emerging results and consider how to unblock any obstacles to a comprehensive and ambitious MTN result. Ministers would then meet again in Brussels in early December on the eve of the concluding session. In the meantime, senior officials should consult regularly in Geneva to exchange views on MTN progress.

Ministers expressed strong support for the timely and successful completion of the Uruguay Round. They noted that much remained to be done if the December 1990 conclusion was to be achieved. They called on all Contracting Parties to work with them more vigorously to that end.

**Future Steps**

Ministers agreed that it was premature at this stage to decide upon any particular structure either for a Ministerial-level forum or its necessary support mechanism, but that – while ideas were evolving – it was appropriate for further consultative meetings to take place and for work to be undertaken on matters of common interest and concern.

Accordingly, Ministers welcomed the invitation of Singapore to host a second Ministerial-level Consultative meeting in mid 1990, and they also welcomed the Republic of Korea's offer to host a third such meeting in Seoul during 1991.

Ministers asked their respective senior officials, together with representation from the ASEAN Secretariat, to meet early in 1990 to begin preparations for the next Ministerial-level consultative meeting.

They asked senior officials to undertake or set in train further work on a number of possible topics for regional economic cooperation, on the possible participation of other economies in future meetings, and on other issues related to the future of such cooperation, for consideration by Ministers at their next meeting.

### **Summary Statement**

Attached to this joint statement is Chairman Evans's concluding summary statement which records the substance of discussions during this meeting.

Visiting participating Ministers and their Delegations expressed their deep appreciation to the Government and people of Australia for organising the meeting and for the excellent arrangements made for it, as well as for the warm hospitality extended to them.