

ASEM 5

Chairman's Statement, Hanoi, October 2004



The fifth Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM 5) was held in Hanoi on 8-9 October 2004. The Summit was attended by the Heads of State and Government of thirteen Asian and twenty-five European nations, with the Prime Minister of Luxembourg acting also as the President of the European Council, and the President of the European Commission. The Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, H.E. Phan Van Khai chaired this momentous Meeting.

The Leaders, recalling the previous Summits in Bangkok (1996), London (1998), Seoul (2000) and Copenhagen (2002), held comprehensive, in-depth and fruitful discussions on a variety of issues of common interest and concern, under the overarching theme: "Further Revitalising and Substantiating the Asia-Europe Partnership".

The Leaders noted with satisfaction the progress made in the ASEM process on the basis of the principles agreed upon at previous Summits and set out in the Asia-Europe Cooperation Framework (AECF 2000). They noted with appreciation the positive outcomes of Foreign, Economic and Financial Ministers' Meetings, as well as the Meetings of Environment Ministers, Culture Ministers and ASEM High-Level Conference on Agricultural Cooperation since ASEM 4, and endorsed their recommendations.

1. Deepening Political Dialogue

1.1. The Leaders, reviewing the complex and profound changes in the current international situation since ASEM 4, underlined that these changes are of global and multi-dimensional nature, which present both opportunities and challenges for global peace and security, and for sustainable economic development. They agreed, however, that the prevailing trend continues to be of peace, cooperation and development.

1.2. The Leaders reaffirmed their determination to address new global challenges and threats such as instability, terrorism, separatism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, transnational crimes, negative aspects of globalization, the widening gap between the rich and the poor, infectious diseases, environmental degradation and climate change. To this end, they agreed to strengthen coordination and cooperation in the context of ASEM dialogue and cooperation and the Asia-Europe partnership.

1.3. The Leaders, acknowledging that these serious challenges of global and multi-faceted nature should be addressed through a multilateral approach and collective actions through intensive dialogue and close cooperation on the basis of mutual understanding, equality and mutual benefit, reaffirmed their strong commitment to multilateralism and to a fair, just and rule-based international order, with the United Nations playing the central role.

1.4. The Leaders reiterated their support to the ongoing process of the reform of the United Nations and its principal organs, including the General Assembly and the Security Council, with a view to strengthening and enhancing the representativeness, transparency and effectiveness of the UN system. They underlined that ASEM countries are committed to making utmost efforts to ensure the success of the UNGA High-Level Plenary Meeting in 2005, addressing the implementation of all the commitments of the Millennium Declaration, including the Millennium

Development Goals and the follow-up to the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. They also touched upon the International Criminal Court and agreed to continue dialogue on this issue.

1.5. The Leaders agreed on the need to reinforce multilateral dialogue and cooperation in ASEM as well as within regional and inter-regional frameworks, to help strengthen the global multilateral system. They underlined the need to ensure enhanced coordination on multilateral issues among ASEM partners, and endorsed recommendations by the Foreign Ministers to review existing ASEM procedure with a view to making proposals to strengthen ASEM coordination where appropriate in the multilateral framework, especially at the United Nations. They also welcomed the "ASEM Declaration on Multilateralism" by the ASEM Foreign Ministers in Kildare, Ireland in April 2004.

1.6. The Leaders condemned the series of terrorist attacks and expressed their deepest sympathy and condolences to the families of those killed in the terrorist attacks, particularly in Indonesia, Russia and Spain. They reaffirmed their strong commitment to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, which remains a serious threat to international peace and security, sustainable development and political stability. They stressed that the fight against terrorism requires a comprehensive approach, collective efforts, and international cooperation where the United Nations plays the leading role, duly taking into account the root causes of terrorism. They also underlined that the fight against terrorism must be conducted in accordance with the principles enshrined in the UN Charter and basic norms of international law, including those of non-interference, respect for territorial integrity and national sovereignty, respect for human rights and the rule of law. They stressed the importance for the international community to ensure conclusion and implementation of all relevant counter-terrorism conventions and protocols, and the full implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions on counter-terrorism including Resolution 1373.

1.7. The Leaders, recalling their determination as expressed at ASEM 4, agreed on the need to further strengthen ASEM consultation, cooperation and coordination in the fight against terrorism through specific initiatives and practical measures and extension of capacity building assistance where needed. They noted with appreciation the results of the ASEM Seminar on anti-terrorism held in Beijing in September 2003, and looked forward to the next seminar to be held in Germany in October 2004. They also welcomed other initiatives on counter-terrorism undertaken recently by ASEM and among ASEM partners, as well as in the regional frameworks of the European Union, the ASEAN Regional Forum, the ASEAN Plus 3 and APEC.

1.8. The Leaders, noting the scourge of transnational crimes and their possible linkage with terrorism, agreed to work closely together and in accordance with the principles of the UN Charter and international law to effectively combat trans-national crimes and other non-traditional threats to international peace and security, such as money laundering, arms trafficking, trafficking in human beings, the production of and trafficking in illicit drugs, and computer crimes.

1.9. The Leaders reaffirmed their commitment to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery and their determination to deepen ASEM cooperation in this field. They underlined the need to strengthen multilateral approach and cooperation as well as respective multilateral instruments on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, other WMD and their means of delivery, especially an enhanced role of the United Nations. They agreed that efforts aimed at non-proliferation should be in parallel with efforts towards disarmament, and the enhancement of international cooperation in research and use of technologies for peaceful purposes. They also expressed concern over the illicit trade related to WMD and their means of delivery, and demonstrated their strong resolve not to allow WMD and their means of delivery to fall into terrorist hands.

1.10. The Leaders took note of the results of the UN Bangkok Conference on AIDS and expressed their concern that the global HIV/AIDS epidemic, through its scale and impact, constitutes a global emergency. It provides a formidable challenge to human life and dignity, undermining social and economic development throughout the world and affecting all levels of society. They reaffirmed their commitment to the implementation of the Declaration of Commitment issued at the UN General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS and agreed that the fight against HIV/AIDS should feature in the framework of ASEM cooperation.

1.11. The Leaders praised the role of the ASEM Environment Ministers in coordinating positions on global environment issues, particularly climate change. They underlined the need to pursue and intensify the coordination on environment issues and look forward to the next Environment Ministerial Meeting. They confirmed their belief that climate change remains one of the most serious environmental challenges facing the planet. They confirmed their support to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and emphasised the important role of its Kyoto Protocol as the only existing global instrument to pursue the ultimate objective of the UN Framework Convention. They welcomed the decision of the Government of the Russian Federation to submit the proposal to ratify the Kyoto Protocol to the State Duma, and urged countries that have not yet ratified the Kyoto Protocol to do so soon. They will work together for the post 2012 framework to develop global action on the basis of an international partnership which enables the participation of all countries based on their common but differentiated responsibilities in order to meet the objectives of the UNFCCC and increase the effectiveness of action in addressing climate change.

1.12. The Leaders underlined the need to reinforce ASEM cooperation in the field of international migration through the concrete actions identified by ASEM senior officials in charge of migration, and expressed support for UN efforts to tackle migration issues.

2. Closer Economic Partnership

2.1. The Leaders welcomed Asia's growing importance in the global economy and the overall economic growth rates of the EU. They encouraged the ASEM partners to continue domestic economic reform in accordance with their respective needs and priorities with a view to ensuring sustained development.

2.2. The Leaders reaffirmed their determination to bring forward the Asia-Europe economic partnership to a new stage of comprehensive and forward-looking cooperation, and to this end, adopted the "Hanoi Declaration on Closer ASEM Economic Partnership", which sets out directions and measures for strengthening ASEM economic cooperation. They tasked Ministers to undertake the accelerated implementation of this important Declaration.

2.3. The Leaders agreed on the need to intensify and focus ASEM economic activities on enhancing Asia-Europe trade and investment facilitation and promotion; strengthening coordination and cooperation on financial issues, including possible greater cooperation among regional bond markets; expanding cooperation in areas of common interest such as information & communication technology and knowledge-based economy, energy, transport, tourism, intellectual property rights, small and medium enterprises; promoting sustainable economic growth, dialogue on employment, and the reduction of development gap among ASEM partners; enhancing the role and deeper involvement of the business community.

2.4. The Leaders expressed the concern over high oil prices that could slow down regions' economic growth. They thus agreed on the need to call on oil producers to provide adequate supplies to ensure moderate prices, and stressed the importance of energy conservation and the increase in energy efficiency in consumer nations.

2.5. The Leaders highly appreciated the thoughtful and important recommendations submitted by the ASEM Task Force for an Asia-Europe closer economic partnership, and tasked Economic and Financial Ministers and their Senior Officials to review and follow up with its positive recommendations, including the development of an Asian bond market and the ASEM Virtual Promotion Center for Trade, Investment and Tourism, where practical and feasible, in their future work with a view to achieving concrete outcomes.

2.6. The Leaders agreed to promote and strengthen interaction between Government and the business community for closer Asia-Europe economic partnership. They welcomed positive recommendations made by the 9th Asia-Europe Business Forum in this regard, and tasked Economic and Financial Ministers and their Senior Officials to study the applicability of these recommendations and report to ASEM 6.

2.7. The Leaders reaffirmed their commitment to an open and fair multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization (WTO), and agreed to further strengthen ASEM collaboration and coordination on WTO-related issues for a successful conclusion of the Doha negotiations. They thus expressed their strong support for early accession of the Lao PDR and Vietnam to the WTO.

2.8. The Leaders congratulated WTO members on reaching an agreement on the Framework for the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) negotiations in Geneva, and urged WTO members to undertake the remaining work aimed at achieving balanced and sustained progress in the future negotiations.

2.9. The Leaders, welcoming initiatives for economic integration based on non-discriminatory regionalism, underlined the need to ensure that all regional and bilateral agreements of economic integration should be consistent with WTO rules.

3. Expanding and Strengthening Cooperation in Other Fields.

3.1. The Leaders acknowledged that dialogue and cooperation among cultures and civilizations is one of effective measures to enhance understanding and tolerance among people. They underlined the importance of dialogue on cultures and civilizations in preserving world peace, security and cooperation for development, particularly in context of globalization.

3.2. The Leaders adopted the "ASEM Declaration on Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations", expressing their shared conviction on this important topic and reaffirming their strong commitment to further promote this dialogue at all levels within ASEM framework on the basis of mutual respect and equality.

3.3. The Leaders, noting with satisfaction all ASEM activities in promoting dialogue among cultures and civilizations, supported recommendations adopted by Ministers at the First ASEM Conference on Cultures and Civilizations held in Beijing in December 2003, and requested the Second Conference to be held in France in 2005 to develop a long-term plan for ASEM dialogue and cooperation in this important field. They encouraged the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) to make further contribution to this dialogue through undertaking concrete activities and programs. They also welcomed the planned inter-faith dialogue to be held in Indonesia in 2005.

3.4. The Leaders underlined their conviction that the cultural diversity is the common heritage of humanity, and agreed on the need to promote unity in diversity and respect for the equal dignity of all cultures and civilizations. They emphasized in particular the need to preserve the national cultural identity, in face of the ongoing rapid advances of information & communication technology and globalization, and rejected the imposition and discrimination of culture values under any form or manifestation. In this respect, they underlined their commitment to pursue

dialogue within the UNESCO in the course of ongoing negotiations on a draft convention on cultural diversity.

3.5. The Leaders acknowledged the importance and potentials for Asia-Europe cooperation at all levels in various fields such as social development, labor and employment, education and training, public health and environment. They agreed to further expand and strengthen ASEM cooperation in these fields, and tasked Ministers to work out action- and result-oriented programs to this end.

3.6. The Leaders appreciated the important work carried out by the ASEF to foster people-to-people, cultural and intellectual exchanges between Asia and Europe. They adopted the recommendations for Organizational and Management Strategies and Long-Term Financial Sustainability of ASEF as annexed to further encourage the Foundation's activities so as to align more closely with the ASEM process. They welcomed the launching of the ASEM Infoboard as a pilot project by ASEF. They encouraged new partners to participate in ASEF, and the ASEF Executive Office to make necessary arrangements so that the Board of Governors' meeting in November 2004 in Hanoi would include representatives from new ASEM members.

4. Recent Regional Developments

4.1. The Leaders welcomed the integration process of the European Union, including its latest membership enlargement, which would help promote peace, stability and development in Europe. They also welcomed efforts towards closer cooperation in Asia, especially the ASEAN's determination to build an ASEAN Community by 2020 as specifically reflected in the Bali Concord II, as well as enhanced cooperation under the framework of the ASEAN Plus 3, ACD and trilateral cooperation among China, Japan and the ROK.

4.2. The Leaders noted that these latest developments in Asia and Europe would present both opportunities and challenges for ASEM in the process of enhancing dialogue and cooperation. They urged ASEM partners to make every effort to fully exploit all potentials to develop Asia-Europe synergy and effectively deal with the challenges, including possible implications on the promotion of Asia-Europe partnership.

4.3. The Leaders expressed their strong support for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula through a peaceful solution and the Six-Party Talks process, and urged the earliest resumption of the Six-Party Talks. They encouraged the parties to continue to take coordinated steps to address the nuclear issue and address all the related concerns. They also supported the continued dialogue and cooperation between the ROK and the DPRK, which would in turn help promote peace and mutual prosperity on the Korean Peninsula.

4.4. The Leaders discussed the situation in the Middle East and urged both parties to implement their respective obligations under the Road Map with a view to paving the way for the two-state solution.

4.5. The Leaders confirmed their support to the Interim Iraqi Government in its effort to ensure security and stability in the country, and their willingness to engage together with the UN and the international community to achieve these goals and to contribute to the reconstruction of Iraq. They also look forward to the holding of elections as scheduled for January 2005, and immediately thereafter, the formation of a constitutionally-elected government of Iraq.

4.6. The Leaders expressed their support for the reconstruction and stabilization of Afghanistan and for the Afghan Transitional Administration. In this regard, they noted with concern the continuing threats posed by terrorist activities and by opium production and trafficking, and recalled the need for comprehensive disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of all armed

factions. They welcomed the Presidential election taking place on 9 October 2004 and expressed their hope that it would bring about peace and security for the country and stabilize the democratization process.

4.7. The Leaders took note of the briefing on the recent political developments in Myanmar given by the Head of the Myanmar delegation. In this connection, they encouraged all stakeholders in the country to work together to ensure a successful outcome of the ongoing national reconciliation process. The National Convention should be an important element in the national reconciliation and democratization process and a forum for a genuine open debate with the participation of all political groups in the country. They looked forward to the early lifting of restrictions placed on political parties in accordance with the assurances given by Myanmar. They also reaffirmed their support for the efforts of the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General.

5. Taking the ASEM Process Forward

5.1. The Leaders, noting with satisfaction the dynamic development and significant achievements of the ASEM process since its inception, underlined the need for ASEM to provide a foundation and framework for fostering the Asia-Europe comprehensive partnership in the 21st century. To this end, they agreed to further revitalise and substantiate the ASEM process, moving towards enhanced cooperation with specific goals and results-oriented programs/projects. They tasked the SOM to elaborate on areas of substantive cooperation for consideration at the next Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Kyoto, 2005.

5.2. The Leaders agreed that the development of ASEM which remains an open, evolutionary and informal process should continue to be based on the objectives and key principles as set out in the Asia-Europe Cooperation Framework (AECF 2000) adopted by ASEM 3. They reiterated the importance of full participation at the highest level by all Leaders and the need to carry forward in a balanced manner the three key pillars by strengthening political dialogue, reinforcing economic cooperation and promoting cooperation in other areas.

5.3. The Leaders also agreed on the need to continue the improvement of the ASEM coordination and management mechanism as commensurate with the nature and development level of ASEM. To this end, they endorsed the Foreign Ministers' "Recommendations on ASEM Working Methods" as annexed, which shall constitute an integral part of the AECF 2000.

6. ASEM Enlargement

6.1. The Leaders warmly welcomed the admission into ASEM of 13 countries, namely the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Republic of Cyprus, the Czech Republic, the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Hungary, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Republic of Latvia, the Republic of Lithuania, the Republic of Malta, the Union of Myanmar, the Republic of Poland, the Slovak Republic and the Republic of Slovenia.

6.2. The Leaders, commending the enlargement as an important milestone in the evolution of the ASEM process, underlined that the participation of the 13 new members would provide greater dynamism to the ASEM process, help enhance and expand Asia-Europe dialogue and cooperation. They stressed the need to assist and facilitate the active engagement of the new members into the ASEM process, with a view to strengthening the unity in diversity within ASEM.

6.3. The Leaders, emphasizing the need to consolidate the ASEM process after the enlargement, agreed to consider future enlargement, taking into account the continued EU enlargement and important role of other candidates. They tasked Foreign Ministers and Senior Officials to study and submit their recommendations on the continued improvement of ASEM institutional mechanism, including the possibility of moving towards an ASEM Secretariat at an appropriate

time, and the issue of future membership enlargement, based on their ideas expressed at ASEM 5.

7. The Leaders adopted a list of new initiatives to promote cooperation on various fields as annexed. They also adopted the ASEM Work Programme for 2004-2006 as annexed.

8. The Leaders accepted with gratitude Finland's offer to host ASEM 6 and looked forward to meeting again on 14-15 September 2006.

Hanoi, Vietnam

9 October 2004