

Advancing Together: ASEAN and ECO Commit to Enhanced Regional Collaboration

New York – September 27, 2024

On the sidelines of the Seventy-Ninth Session of the United Nations General Assembly, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) convened their Sixteenth Ministerial Meeting. Co-chaired by Malaysia and the Islamic Republic of Iran, the event highlighted the enduring spirit of friendship and robust cooperation between two geopolitically significant and dynamic regions.

The meeting brought together Foreign Ministers and high-level representatives from ASEAN and ECO Member States, as well as the Secretary-General of ECO and Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN. The meeting served as an opportunity to review the cooperation framework established by the 2006 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the ASEAN and ECO Secretariats, with a view to strengthening engagement and expanding collaboration between the two regional organisations.

In response to the challenges confronting the global community, the meeting underscored the importance of multilateralism and international law in promoting dialogue and cooperation for global peace, stability and sustainable development, as well as the need to strengthen ASEAN-ECO partnership across global and regional fora, including, among others, the UN, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), and the Global South for the benefit of our peoples. In this respect, the meeting emphasised the need to enhance the ASEAN-ECO cooperation across a wide range of sectors, including finance, trade and investment, new and emerging technologies, connectivity, sustainable development, sustainable energy security and transition, agriculture, tourism and people-to-people exchanges.

A key milestone achieved during the meeting was the enhancement of the Framework of Cooperation (FOC) (2024-2028) between ASEAN and ECO to include the agriculture sector. The enhanced FOC will serve to foster future cooperation, particularly in areas such as halal food and food security as well as strengthen the capacity of both regions to address emerging challenges and seize new opportunities.

The meeting concluded with a call to action for both Secretariats to continue coordination towards effectively implementing the FOC. This collaboration is crucial to ensure the partnership not only thrives but also delivers tangible benefits to the peoples of both regions.
