



## **JOINT STATEMENT ON THE SUBSTANTIAL CONCLUSION OF THE ASEAN-CHINA FREE TRADE AREA (ACFTA) 3.0 UPGRADE NEGOTIATIONS**

**10 October 2024, Vientiane, Lao PDR**

1. Leaders from ASEAN and China gathered at the sidelines of the 27<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-China Summit in Vientiane, Lao PDR, on 10 October 2024, to announce the substantial conclusion of ASEAN-China Free Trade Area (ACFTA) 3.0 Upgrade Negotiations.

2. The ACFTA is a pivotal FTA for both ASEAN and China. Signed in 2002, it marks ASEAN's first FTA with an external Dialogue Partner and China's first FTA. ASEAN and China remain committed to ensuring the ACFTA stays relevant, future-ready, and responsive to global challenges. The ACFTA's first upgrade in 2014 was signed in 2015 and entered into force for all ACFTA Parties since 2019, with improvements in the chapters of Rules of Origin, Customs Procedures and Trade Facilitation, Investment, and Economic and Technical Cooperation, as well as Market Access for Services.

3. At the 25<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-China Summit in November 2022, Leaders agreed to launch the ACFTA 3.0 Upgrade Negotiations. The substantial conclusion of the upgrade negotiations today demonstrates Parties' unwavering resolve to maintain a rules-based trading environment and accelerate post-pandemic economic recovery by deepening and broadening economic integration and cooperation amidst a complex global environment. This aims to foster more robust and resilient supply chains, keep markets open for trade and investment and promote longer-term growth by leveraging digital trade and sustainable development and providing continued support for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

4. The ACFTA 3.0 will open up new opportunities as it remains responsive towards emerging challenges and takes into account modern trade practices. The ACFTA 3.0 will deepen commitments in existing areas such as Customs Procedures and Trade Facilitation, Standard, Technical Regulations, and Conformity Assessment Procedures,

Sanitary and Phytosanitary, and Economic and Technical Cooperation. In addition, it will introduce commitments and deepen cooperation in new areas, including the Digital Economy, Green Economy, Supply Chain Connectivity, Competition and Consumer Protection, and MSMEs. These enhancements will foster an inclusive and sustainable regional economy, improve supply chain connectivity and resilience, and support the ASEAN and China digital transformation.

5. Recognising that the real benefits from the ACFTA 3.0 can only be achieved upon the early signing and timely implementation of the Protocol to Further Upgrade the Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Co-Operation and Certain Agreements Thereunder between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the People's Republic of China (ACFTA 3.0 Upgrade Protocol), Leaders tasked Ministers to work towards the signing of ACFTA 3.0 Upgrade Protocol in 2025.

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