



Joint Media Statement of the 2nd RCEP Ministers' Meeting 21 August 2023, Semarang, Indonesia

1. ASEAN alongside Australia, China, Japan, Korea, and New Zealand gathered in Semarang on 21 August 2023 for the Second RCEP Ministers' Meeting. The Meeting was co-chaired by H.E. Zulkifli Hasan, Minister of Trade of Indonesia and the Hon Tim Watts MP, Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs, Australia.
2. The Meeting welcomed the entry into force of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement for Indonesia and the Philippines, on 2 January 2023 and 2 June 2023, respectively. The Meeting expressed its optimism that with the implementation of the RCEP Agreement, in a transparent manner, businesses in the region will avail of the opportunities made available to them and utilize the RCEP Agreement to deepen regional economic integration.
3. The Meeting endorsed the Terms of Reference of the RCEP Support Unit and the Funding Arrangement of the RCEP Support Unit. The Meeting, in this regard, tasked officials to ensure that the RCEP Support Unit will start its operation in 2024.
4. The Meeting noted the progress of the work of the RCEP Joint Committee and its subsidiary bodies in the implementation of the RCEP Agreement and encouraged the officials to continue their work to ensure the transparent, smooth and effective implementation of the Agreement. The Meeting commended the Committee on Sustainable Growth and the Committee on Goods for convening their first meeting respectively. The Meeting requested other subsidiary bodies to convene their meetings as soon as possible, to review the implementation of the RCEP Agreement and advance relevant cooperation. The Meeting reaffirmed the importance of the economic and technical cooperation under the RCEP Agreement to assist Parties in implementing their commitments for better utilisation of the RCEP Agreement.
5. The Meeting also noted that progress has been made in the discussions pertaining to the procedures for accession to the RCEP Agreement. Reaffirming that RCEP is an open and inclusive regional engagement, the Meeting encouraged the RCEP Joint Committee to continue its discussion, with a view to achieving accession procedures in a timely manner.
