

Joint Statement 12th Brunei Darussalam–Indonesia–Malaysia–Philippines East Asean Growth Area Summit (12th BIMP-EAGA Summit)



29 APRIL 2017

MANILA, PHILIPPINES

1. We, the Leaders of Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines gather in Manila, Philippines on 29 April 2017 for the 12th BIMP-EAGA Summit. We discuss the important role of BIMP-EAGA in advancing our shared vision of sustainable and inclusive growth, as well as nurturing people-to-people prosperity. We reaffirm BIMP-EAGA's importance as a building block towards the realization of ASEAN Vision 2025.
2. We are encouraged by BIMP-EAGA's sustained economic performance from 2010 to 2015 amidst the increasingly challenging global and regional conditions. The combined GDP of BIMP-EAGA grew at annual average of 6.4% reaching PPP US\$679 billion in 2015. Merchandise trade grew at an average annual rate of 1.2% reaching US\$130 billion in 2015. Total tourist arrivals have been growing at 9.5% reaching 80 million in 2015, including 9.4 million foreign tourists. Growth in total investments averaged 31.4% annually with foreign direct investments making up 74% of total investments. We reaffirm our commitment to implement measures to accelerate the growth of trade, investment and tourism in BIMP-EAGA.
3. We are pleased with the achievements under the BIMP-EAGA Implementation Blueprint (IB) 2012-2016 driven by the five strategic pillars of connectivity, food basket, tourism, environment, and socio-cultural and education. We note the steady progress in the implementation of IB projects and at the same time

recognize the need to provide more focus on infrastructure support in addressing the development challenges of the sub-region.

4. We adopt the BIMP-EAGA Vision 2025 (BEV 2025), the successor document to the IB 2012-2016, that aspires to create a resilient, inclusive, sustainable, and economically competitive BIMP-EAGA (R.I.S.E. BIMP-EAGA) to narrow development gap. The BEV 2025 outlines strategic priorities to deliver the competitiveness and sustainability of green manufacturing, climate resilient agro-industry and fisheries, as well as tourism destinations.
5. In realizing the BEV 2025, we emphasize the urgency to strengthen implementation processes, institutional mechanisms and capacity of BIMP-EAGA to ensure it remains responsive to the requirements of the sub-region. We urge our respective concerned agencies at the national and local levels to provide policy, technical, funding and administrative support to ensure the effective, efficient and timely delivery of the BEV 2025.
6. We continue to regard connectivity as vital for the seamless movement of goods, services and people for its integration to ASEAN and the rest of the world. In this regard, we welcome the identification of the second generation of Priority Infrastructure Projects with an estimated cost of US\$21 billion that includes development of roads, bridges and railways; expansion of sea ports and airports; improvements in cross-border facilities and inland transport services; information and communication technology; power interconnection; and urban development.
7. We welcome the signing of the Protocol to Amend the Memorandum of Understanding between the Governments of Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines on Expansion of Air Linkages. The Protocol provides more flexible approaches to facilitate the sustainability of air services on existing routes and the entry of new routes. To this end, we task our Transport Ministers to expedite its implementation.
8. We commend the scheduled launching of the Davao/General Santos-Bitung RoRo Sea Linkage Route on 30 April 2017, which will further improve trade, enhance people-to-people connection as well as give greater impetus to the multi-modal transport connectivity of the sub-region and ASEAN. We also look forward to the establishment of other maritime services such as the Kudat-Palawan shipping link and the bilateral arrangement on the safe operations of non-convention sized ships across BIMP-EAGA waters.
9. We are satisfied with the progress made in the BIMP-EAGA Submarine and Terrestrial (BEST) Cable System project and we look forward to its completion as this will narrow the digital divide and improve the basic and sustainable communication infrastructure and facilities of the community.
10. We welcome the completion of the Trans Borneo Power Grid Sarawak-West Kalimantan Interconnection Project, which was commissioned and energized on 21 January 2016. We also note the completion of the technical assessment on the three priority BIMP-EAGA power enclaves and task our concerned agencies to review the study and recommend the next steps in the development of power enclaves in the sub-region.
11. We acknowledge the completion of the Investment Profiling in BIMP-EAGA's Priority Economic Corridors that identified investment opportunities. The economic corridors are expected to enhance competitiveness by linking supply and value chains. In this regard, we welcome the proposed expansion of the economic corridors to enhance connectivity and cross-border trade, investment and tourism. We are pleased with the continued efforts in enhancing trade facilitation initiatives and the strengthening of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) participation in the development of supply and value chains.
12. We commend the success of the 3rd BIMP-EAGA and IMT-GT Trade Expo, Conference and Business Matching on 14-16 October 2016 in Makassar, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. We are pleased to note that majority of the participants were MSMEs which generated over US\$28 million of business transactions. We note the positive outcome of the events in building trade and investment partnerships.
13. We note the encouraging progress achieved in the hybrid rice seeds development project. We also acknowledge the collaboration between Bali Palm Oil Corporation of the Philippines and FELDA Global Ventures of Malaysia on training, research, and the provision of planting materials on oil palm plantation development. We urge our agriculture and fisheries agencies to increase productivity especially among smallholder farms towards achieving sustainable, competitive and climate resilient agro-industry and fisheries.

14. We appreciate the efforts of the tourism sector in the promotion and marketing of Community-based Ecotourism (CBET), UNESCO World Heritage sites, and National Parks to enhance the livelihood and incomes of local communities. We are pleased with the continued cooperation among the tourism and transport stakeholders in addressing the sustainability of intra-EAGA air services, and in the development of cruise tourism.
15. We welcome the BIMP-EAGA Green Cities Initiative (BGCI) that aims at developing vibrant, livable cities that are environmentally appealing, economically competitive and socially inclusive. We also note the conclusion of the Green City Action Plan for Kendari, Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia as the pilot BGCI city. We direct our relevant agencies at the national and local levels to provide support in the implementation of this initiative.
16. We recognize the importance of human resource and socio-cultural development in the pursuit of a cohesive, socially-responsible, people-centered and people-oriented BIMP-EAGA community. We encourage the member countries' participation to the 1st Budayaw Festival: Celebration of Culture and the Arts to be held on 20-24 September 2017 in General Santos City, Philippines and support its institutionalization as a biennial event in promoting the diversity of BIMP-EAGA culture and heritage.
17. We recognize the ever-increasing initiatives that are currently being pursued under the BIMP-EAGA cooperation and the need to effectively coordinate and monitor them through a fully-functioning central secretariat. We remain committed to strengthening the institutional capacity of the BIMP-EAGA Facilitation Centre.
18. We recognize the vital role of the private sector in BIMP-EAGA and commend the BIMP-EAGA Business Council and industry players under the respective Clusters in supporting various initiatives, including identification of cross-border projects and business opportunities.
19. We express appreciation to our Regional Development Advisor, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), for its continuing support in the areas of transport, power, environment management, database development, economic corridor development, urban development and in capacity building and institutional strengthening. We also thank ADB for facilitating the preparation of the BEV 2025. We urge ADB to continue and expand its technical assistance and projects in key sectors.
20. We value our cooperation with our development partners through a wide range of initiatives that expand opportunities for socio-economic integration. We look forward to the continued support of the People's Republic of China and the Northern Territory of Australia, including among others providing capacity building and collaborative activities in agriculture, ICT, trade, investment promotion, tourism and infrastructure development.
21. We encourage stronger collaboration among the sub-regional groupings as well as with ASEAN sectorial bodies in creating greater synergy and convergence in our areas of cooperation. We strongly urge the ASEAN Secretariat to assist in mobilizing resources to support the implementation of the BEV 2025.
22. We express our gratitude to the Government of the Republic of the Philippines for the warm hospitality and the excellent meeting arrangements.

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