

PREAMBLE

The Governments of the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, namely Brunei Darussalam, the Kingdom of Cambodia (“Cambodia”), the Republic of Indonesia (“Indonesia”), the Lao People’s Democratic Republic (“Lao PDR”), Malaysia, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar (“Myanmar”), the Republic of the Philippines (“Philippines”), the Republic of Singapore (“Singapore”), the Kingdom of Thailand (“Thailand”), and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam (“Viet Nam”) (hereinafter referred to collectively as the “ASEAN Member States” and individually as an “ASEAN Member State”), and the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China (“Hong Kong, China”);

INSPIRED by their friendship and co-operation and growing economic, trade and investment relationship;

DESIRING to minimise barriers to trade in goods and services and investment flows, deepen and widen economic linkages among the Parties, lower business costs, increase trade, enhance economic efficiency, and create a larger market with more opportunities and greater economies of scale for business;

CONFIDENT that this Agreement establishing an ASEAN – Hong Kong, China Free Trade Area will strengthen economic partnerships, serve as an important building block towards regional economic integration, and support sustainable economic development;

RECOGNISING the important role and contribution of business in enhancing trade and investment among the Parties and the need to further promote and

facilitate co-operation and utilisation of the greater business opportunities provided by this Agreement;

RECOGNISING the different levels of economic development among ASEAN Member States and between ASEAN Member States and Hong Kong, China and the need for flexibility, including special and differential treatment, especially for the newer ASEAN Member States; as well as the need to facilitate the increasing participation of newer ASEAN Member States in this Agreement and the expansion of their exports, including, *inter alia*, through strengthening of their domestic capacity, efficiency, and competitiveness;

REAFFIRMING the respective rights, obligations, and undertakings of the Parties under the WTO Agreement and other existing international agreements and arrangements; and

RECOGNISING the positive momentum that regional trade agreements and arrangements can have in accelerating regional and global trade liberalisation, and their role as building blocks for the multilateral trading system;

HAVE AGREED AS FOLLOWS: