

PREAMBLE

The Governments of Brunei Darussalam, the Kingdom of Cambodia (Cambodia), the Republic of Indonesia (Indonesia), the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), Malaysia, 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), collectively, the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and Australia and New Zealand;

REINFORCING the longstanding ties of friendship and co-operation among them;

RECALLING the *Framework for the AFTA-CER Closer Economic Partnership* endorsed by Ministers in Ha Noi, Viet Nam on 16 September 2001;

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

CONFIDENT that this Agreement establishing an ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand 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;

CONSIDERING the different levels of development among ASEAN Member States and between ASEAN Member States, Australia and New Zealand 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 and obligations and undertakings of the Parties under the World Trade Organization Agreement and other existing international agreements and arrangements;

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: