



**JOINT STATEMENT
TWENTY SEVENTH BIMP-EAGA MINISTERIAL MEETING**

**16th OCTOBER 2024
KOTA KINABALU, MALAYSIA**

1. We, the Ministers of Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines gather in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia on 16th October 2024 for the 27th Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA) Ministerial Meeting chaired by His Excellency Rafizi Ramli, Minister of Economy, Malaysia.
2. We are immensely grateful for the significant milestone BIMP-EAGA has achieved since its establishment in 1994. BIMP-EAGA's 30th anniversary this year is celebrated with gratitude and a fervent hope for continued and lasting cooperation and friendship in our subregion.
3. We are encouraged by BIMP-EAGA's steadfast economic growth amid challenging global conditions. In 2023, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at current prices in EAGA was USD401.6 billion, accounting for 18.2 percent of BIMP's GDP. Tourism continues to improve with arrivals increasing from 114.8 million in 2022, to 126.4 million in 2023. The increase significantly contributes to the growth of EAGA's economy. Domestically, investments grew to USD12.4 billion in 2023, from USD9.5 billion in 2022. BIMP-EAGA recorded its trade balance at USD60.2 billion in 2023; whilst the Foreign Direct Investment recorded at USD19.5 billion in 2023. We continue to reaffirm our commitment to implement effective measures to accelerate the growth of trade, investment, and tourism in our subregion.
4. We also urge our officials to expedite the preparatory work for the successor document of the BIMP-EAGA Vision (BEV) 2025.
5. We continue to task our Senior Officials and the Clusters and Working Groups (CWGs) to expedite the work on the remaining projects according to the BEV 2025 timeline, including their integration into national policies, budget, and programs. We encourage the CWGs to transition from an information sharing, project identification and status reporting body to a more proactive platform for project pipeline development and consistent project implementation, monitoring and evaluation, as well as to enhance technical roles.
6. We emphasize the vital role of regional connectivity as a catalyst of economic growth and social inclusion within the subregion. We are pleased to note that there are 210 Priority Infrastructure Projects (PIPs). Equally commendable is the impressive pace of project implementation, with 52 projects successfully completed and an additional 158 projects currently in various stages of implementation. The PIPs include roads, railways and bridges, inland transport services, airports, seaports, power and energy infrastructure, ICT, trade facilitation (including CIQS, economic zones, and industrial parks), and urban and border towns development.

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7. We are pleased with the representation of our BIMP-EAGA states, provinces and local governments during the 6th BIMP-EAGA Chief Ministers, Governors, and Local Governments Forum and urge for continued support and initiatives to promote trade, tourism, investment, and other cross-border activities in our subregion.
8. We welcome the new transport links within BIMP-EAGA, including the Kota Kinabalu-Manado and Kuching-Jakarta air routes. We look forward to the upcoming Kuching-Balikpapan and Kota Kinabalu-Bandar Seri Begawan routes by AirAsia and support the revival of the Davao-Manado air route as well as Kuching-Singkawang and Kuching/Lubok Antu-Putussibau bus routes. We appreciate efforts to improve transport connectivity within EAGA and encourage officials to review existing transport MOUs to broaden its scope and benefit more players in EAGA routes. Key stakeholders are urged to collaborate with the private sector to ensure the sustainability of these critical air, land, and sea routes.
9. We acknowledge and support several ongoing and pipeline projects to address digital disparities and expand the subregion's digital infrastructure. We call on our ICT Ministries and our Development Partners to further increase their support and assistance in growing and nurturing a BIMP-EAGA Innovation and Startups Ecosystem Development. We commend the BIMP-EAGA ICT CEOs forum for their various projects in bringing more private sector participation and investments. We need to build capacities and improve our digital skills in Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, Robotics, Data Analytic, Electronics, Cybersecurity, Virtual and Augmented Realities Technology, Web3.0 and other technologies.
10. We take note of the draft Terms of Reference of the Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines Power Integration Project Task Force as a first step to assess and evaluate cross border electricity trading by 2025. We acknowledge the final progress of the Renewable Energy Certificate Framework for BIMP Countries Project and its imminent completion in December 2024.
11. We support the efforts of BIMP countries in conducting the Time Release Study according to each country's scope. We recognize the successful completion of the train-the-trainer Investigative Interviewing Program for Philippine Immigration Officials and anticipate its replication in other member countries. We take note of the progress towards operational readiness of Ba'Kelalan Immigration Border Post in Malaysia. We look forward to the outcome of the One Borneo Quarantine Initiative (OBQI) implementation of which the OBQI Conference was conducted successfully on 13th October 2024 in Kota Kinabalu to ease the movement of goods and people in BIMP-EAGA subregion.
12. We recognize the initiative to enhance the visibility and use of BIMP-EAGA statistics through the BIMP-EAGA Statistical Information webpage. We look forward to the development of the Core Indicators System to provide relevant and comparable statistics to monitor the status of BEV 2025. We recognize the role of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in driving economic growth, trade, investment, export growth, and job creation. We stress the importance of developing growth pathways to enhance MSME competitiveness, specialization, and innovation through capacity building, market access, and digital tools.
13. We support efforts to boost BIMP-EAGA priority commodities and commend the coconut project for helping farmers and improving trade. We hope for similar progress in other commodities and appreciate Farm Konekt's assistance with production challenges and market connections. We advocate for a united BIMP-EAGA to strengthen our agricultural and fisheries sectors. We welcome the new Salt Industry

initiative as part of the Blue Economy Strategy and encourage integrating Renewable Energy technology to boost the agriculture sector. We call for regional integration of agricultural and fisheries produce, covering the entire value chain, and urge the private sector to adopt this holistic approach to support our agro-fisheries industries.

14. We are encouraged by the increase of direct flights and new air routes that have led to significant growth in tourist arrivals, rising cruise ship visits and enhanced regional connectivity and tourism exchanges. We acknowledge efforts to resume some routes that had been closed during the Covid-19 pandemic. We take note of the successful implementation of workshops and training programs that have enhanced the skills of tourism service providers, especially in rural areas. We support the initial works for the potential expansion of the Sister Tourism Village into the Tourism Villages Network, and the establishment of the Experience BIMP-EAGA Tourism Website.
15. We reiterate the importance of environmental sustainability and strongly support the implementation of the BIMP-EAGA Guidelines on Green Meetings in all the BIMP-EAGA related meetings and activities. We commend the official launching of the Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Report for Kota Kinabalu Climate Change Action 2024 – 2030, which supports the Kota Kinabalu Green City Action Plan (GCAP). We also take note of the publication of the national greenhouse gas emissions inventory and Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) report for Indonesia, and the implementation of Bank Sampah by Malaysia. We look forward to the compilation of existing green and environmentally friendly practices amongst SMEs in BIMP-EAGA.
16. We commend the signing of a Joint Declaration of Intent between Konsortium Universiti Universitas Borneo (KUUB) and Philippines EAGA Higher Education Institutions Consortium (PEHEIC) in August 2024 in Miri, Sarawak, Malaysia. It is an important milestone for the collaboration and cooperation among universities in BIMP-EAGA. We look forward to expanding the collaboration with Brunei Darussalam and Indonesia universities. We look forward to the 11th BIMP-EAGA Friendship Games 2024 in December 2024 in Puerto Princesa, Philippines. We also acknowledge initiatives pertaining to sociocultural and education namely Cultural Advancement Residency, Bayu Seni Exhibition Borneo Arts Festival, the 4th BIMP-EAGA Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Conference as well as the BIMP Youth Summit 2024.
17. We acknowledge the initiatives and efforts of the BIMP-EAGA Business Council (BEBC) for continuously and actively promoting trade, investment, and tourism in the subregion. We also express appreciation to the private sector through the BEBC for their concerted actions and dedication in promoting cross-border economic activities within BIMP-EAGA and also internationally. In addition, we also commend the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry for organizing the 1st BIMP-EAGA Trade, Investment and Halal Conference. This initiative will enhance the collaboration among BIMP business sectors, linking capital cities with the BIMP-EAGA focused areas.
18. For 30 years, we have cultivated goodwill and trust. The meeting discussed on the issue of legalizing and institutionalizing of BIMP-EAGA Facilitation Center (BIMP-FC). While we aspire to work towards legalizing and establishing a fully functioning secretariat, the need for strengthening the existing center is essential.

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19. We acknowledge ADB, our Regional Development Advisor, for its valuable partnership in two decades. We thank ADB support in transport and energy projects, studies on corridors and SEZs, green and smart cities, tourism capacity building, blue economy strategy development, customs cooperation, training BIMP-EAGA officials in regional cooperation, and ASEAN and inter-subregional collaboration. We commend ADB for excellent work in preparing the Strategic, Spatial and Socially Inclusive: Integrated Approach to BIMP-EAGA Economic Corridors Development report which identified four reconfigured, expanded and new economic corridors and investment projects. We urge our senior officials to deliberate on the proposal as part of the post-BEV 2025 agenda. We request ADB's continued support in implementing Accelerating Cooperation Together (ACT) BIMP-EAGA Vision 2025, and the follow-on post-BEV 2025 strategy.
20. We support the promotion of greater cooperation with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), recognizing BIMP-EAGA's strategic role as a building block to ASEAN integration and community building. We take note of the findings of the feasibility study conducted by the ASEAN Japan Centre on the opportunities for BIMP-EAGA to capitalize on the circular economy, focusing on MSMEs in Brunei Darussalam which was completed in 2024.
21. We reiterate our intention to upgrade our level of engagement with Australia as BIMP-EAGA Development Partner. We anticipate the finalization of the Frameworks of Economic Cooperation of BIMP-EAGA and Australia and with Japan. We are pleased with the successful conduct of the 15th BIMP-EAGA and China Senior Officials Meeting on 16th October 2024. We appreciate the support from the Republic of Korea (ROK) for the positive outcomes of the 6th BIMP-EAGA ROK Senior Officials Meeting held virtually on 11th July 2024. We thank ROK for the funding support to thirty (30) projects in connectivity, environment, tourism, and agriculture and fisheries, under the BIMP-EAGA Korea Cooperation Fund (BKCF) amounting to USD 10 million approved from the first to the fourth BKCF calls (2021-2024).
22. We express our gratitude to the Government of Malaysia for the warm hospitality and the excellent meeting arrangements.

List of Signing Ministers

His Excellency Rafizi Ramli
Minister of Economy
MALAYSIA

His Excellency Mr. Hairol Hamid
Acting Director General
Department of Economic Planning and Statistics
Ministry of Finance and Economy
BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

His Excellency Dr. Rizal Edwin
Senior Advisor to the Minister for Digital Transformation, Creativity, and Human Resources
Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs
REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA

His Excellency Mr. Romeo Castañaga
Regional Director

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Department of Trade and Industry
PHILIPPINES