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ASEAN Economic Ministers Pledge to Boost Supply Chain Connectivity

News



ASEAN headquarter in Indonesia. Photo: [Gunawan Kartapranata](#) [3]

The [ASEAN Economic Ministers Meeting on 4 June](#) [4] adopted the Hanoi Plan of Action on Strengthening ASEAN Economic Cooperation and Supply Chain Connectivity in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Through the action plan, economic ministers hope to counter the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak by promoting ASEAN markets for essential goods and strengthening economic cooperation among ASEAN countries.

The ASEAN economic ministers emphasized the importance of maintaining and working toward restoring the region's supply chains. They committed to making this the top priority in economic cooperation in the months ahead. Additionally, they pledged to assist the production of and improve access to COVID-19 medicines and vaccines through supply chain connectivity.

The economic ministers also stressed cooperation in enabling the trade of important goods, and agreed against implementing new technical barriers in support of the region's economic recovery.

Regional Business Council Drafts Six Short-term Priorities for Recovery

The economic ministers also [welcomed the Outline for ASEAN Action](#) [5] of the ASEAN Business Advisory Council, which proposes six short-term priorities: (i) increase the region's COVID-19 mass testing; (ii) eliminate non-tariff barriers and minimize non-tariff measures; (iii) automate and streamline customs; (iv) conclude the signing of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP); (v) ease the flow of essential goods and services intra-ASEAN; and (vi) include the private sector, such as the ASEAN Business Advisory Council and its partners, in government discussions within the region. These aim to "send the signal that ASEAN is cohesive and responsive at this most trying of times, including full involvement of the private sector in protecting lives and restarting the economy," according to the ASEAN Business Advisory Council.

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