

**JOINT PRESS STATEMENT OF
THE EIGHTH ASEAN CHINA MINISTERIAL MEETING ON
SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY (SPS) COOPERATION**

6 October 2023, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

1. The Eighth ASEAN - China Ministerial Meeting on SPS Cooperation was held on 6 October 2023. The Meeting was attended by the ASEAN Member States and China as well as the Secretary-General of ASEAN. The Meeting was co-chaired by His Excellency Datuk Seri Haji Mohamad bin Sabu, Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Malaysia, and His Excellency Zhao Zenglian, CPC Committee Member of the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China, Head of the National Office of Port Administration.
2. The Meeting fully supported the practical implementation of the ASEAN-China Joint Statement on Strengthening Common and Sustainable Development and the ASEAN-China Joint Statement on Food Security Cooperation that were adopted at the 25th ASEAN-China Summit in Phnom Penh, Kingdom of Cambodia, on 11 November 2022. During the summit, the Leaders of ASEAN and China jointly designated 2023 as the China-ASEAN Year of Agricultural Development and Food Security Cooperation, and agreed to further deepen cooperation in the areas of SPS to ensure food security and food safety, animal health and plant health in the region.
3. The meeting welcomed the signing of the new ASEAN-China MOU on Strengthening SPS Cooperation on 21 October 2022. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening SPS cooperation to ensure that the trade of food and agricultural products between ASEAN and China complies with the requirements and in line with the principles of the WTO SPS Agreement, in order to protect human, animal, and plant life or health while promoting the expansion of intra-regional trade by minimizing the negative effects on trade.
4. The Meeting further welcomed the progress of the ASEAN China Free Trade Area (ACFTA) 3.0 Upgrade Negotiations on Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measure, specifically on the outcomes of the 2nd ACFTA Upgrade Working Group on SPS (WG-SPS) Meeting that was held on 25-26 June 2023 in Kunming, China.

5. The Meeting looked forward to exploring cooperation on the application of digital technology to support the implementation of sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) operations through the development of the data format and structure for the electronic-SPS (e-SPS) Certificate that will facilitate data exchanges between ASEAN and China through the ASEAN Single Window (ASW).
6. The Meeting encouraged the ASEAN-China SPS Cooperation Contact Points to cooperate with other relevant sectoral bodies, such as the ASEAN Single Window Technical Working Group (ASW-TWG) and ASEAN Sanitary and Phytosanitary Contact Points (ASCP) to work on this initiative.
7. The Meeting noted with satisfaction the progress made in the implementation of the Plan of Action of the ASEAN China Cooperation on SPS for 2022-2023 while acknowledging various challenges encountered by both ASEAN and China due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In this connection, we are committed to continuing and strengthening cooperation on SPS between ASEAN and China to facilitate cross-border trade of food and agricultural products.
8. The Meeting adopted the Plan of Action of the ASEAN China Cooperation on SPS for 2024 - 2025, comprising activities in the area of food safety, plant and animal inspection and quarantine and focusing on the i) establishment of information notification and communication system; ii) exchange of visits of relevant personnel of the Parties; iii) organise training, seminars, conference and similar activities for narrowing the development gap within ASEAN and China; iv) collaborative research; and v) establishment of mechanism for consultation.
9. The Meeting agreed that the 9th ASEAN China Ministerial Meeting on SPS Cooperation will be held in 2025 and hosted by China.
10. The Meeting expressed our appreciation for the efforts of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, Malaysia for the excellent arrangements of the Meeting.