

APEC 2006: Priorities and Expected Outcomes
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It is a privilege for me to address such distinguished audience from governments, private sector, academics, unions and NGOs at this meeting of APEC Woman Leaders' Network.

With the theme "Towards a Dynamic Community for Sustainable Development and Prosperity", the Viet Nam Year has continued and built on the achievements of APEC cooperation process leading towards a region of shared prosperity for the benefit of APEC community. 2006 is the first year of implementing the Busan Roadmap to realize the Bogor Goals for free trade and investment.

In this context, specific priorities were placed for 2006 as followed: (i) Promote APEC Cooperation to Enhance Trade and Investment; (ii) Enhance Competitiveness of Small and Medium Enterprises; (iii) Promote Integration Capacity through Human Resources Development, IT cooperation, and Partnership for Development; (iv) Enhance Human Security: Counter Terrorism, Health Security, Disaster Preparedness and Energy Security; (v) Promote Anti-corruption and Transparency; (vi) Connect APEC Economies through Tourism and Cultural exchange and (vii) Reform APEC towards a more Dynamic and Effective Community.

Under such themes and priorities, APEC Trade Ministers (MRT) and Senior Officials (SOM) have been working to promote trade liberalization under three channels: multilateral system (WTO), regional integration (RTAs/FTAs) and APEC Individual and Collective Action Plans on trade and investment liberalization and facilitation. For WTO, Trade Ministers reaffirmed the importance of supporting an open, rule-based, multilateral trading system under the WTO for global economic growth and development and noted the urgency of advancing the DDA negotiations. As a practical contribution of APEC to the WTO/DDA, they issued a stand-alone Statement on the DDA, presenting a strong political message, instilling a high degree of urgency into the process of reaching agreement on agriculture and NAMA modalities while ensuring that the flexibilities provided for in this two areas do not undermine improved market access.

Besides supporting multilateral trading system, APEC also supports further trade and investment liberalization through regional integration. In such spirit, Trade Ministers and Senior Officials reaffirmed that high-quality, transparency and broad consistency in regional trade agreements (RTAs/FTAs) are important avenues to achieving the Bogor goals. In response to Leaders' call for the development of model measures for as many commonly accepted FTA chapters as possible by 2008, this year SOM continues ongoing work, taking account of the recommendations of the SOM Policy dialogues on RTAs/FTAs, to develop meaningful and useful model measures for commonly accepted chapters for endorsement by Ministers and Leaders in November 2006.

One of the main outcomes of APEC 2006 is the launch of Hanoi Action Plan to implement the Busan Roadmap. SOM is intensifying their efforts in consultation with ABAC and the business community to develop a strong, balanced and concrete action plan for endorsement at the next AMM. The Action Plan will lay out specific actions in the area of business facilitation, trade and investment liberalization, supporting WTO and RTA/FTA, capacity building, especially for SMEs and women entrepreneurs.

In this APEC Year 2006, Vietnam has placed priorities on strengthening Public – Private Partnership in a wide range of cooperation programs in order to make APEC more relevant and responsive to business community. Areas where Public – Private Partnership have been built up this year include transparency, trade facilitation and investment. A Public – Private Partnership Dialogue on TFAP, Transnational Corporation Seminar on investment, Public – Private Partnership on Customs procedures, Public – Private Partnership on E-commerce and business transactions and Public and Private Dialogue on Anti-corruption and Ensuring Transparency in Business were held on the margins of SOM II and SOM III in Viet Nam.

Apart from intensifying work on trade and investment issues, APEC also placed priority on human security and economic-technical cooperation (ECOTECH) to promote safe and secured business environment. ECOTECH priorities aimed at empowering member economies to cope with globalization

effects. Issues such as counter terrorism, avian influenza, energy security, human resources development, tourism cooperation, etc. have been in high agenda. A large number of capacity building initiatives have been tabled.

Last but not least, SOM agreed on the importance of promoting private sector development, with the emphasis laid on the vital role of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) for economic growth and trade expansion in the APEC region. Senior Officials will work with the World Bank and ABAC in order to bring forward a proposal to the 2006 AMM and AELM that identifies priority areas in which APEC can set targets and build capacity.

Three Senior Official and nearly 100 sideline meetings of APEC have passed with fruitful outcomes, we are now heading towards the Summit week. These all-year-round events have brought about vast opportunities not only for Viet Nam to enhance her image and capacity but also for the whole community as they will further assure sustainable development and security in the region.

As an APEC event, the meeting of Woman Leaders' Network today plays a crucial role in gathering outstanding "half of the world" from public and private sectors who have been struggling for a better and fairer community. We believe that this meeting offers a propitious opportunity for our collective partnership as well as for further exchange of experiences and best practices in business expansion and economic empowerment in order to deal with challenges of globalization and trade liberalization.