

**JOINT STATEMENT BY THE ASEAN EXPERTS GROUP ON COMPETITION
(AEGC) IN RESPONSE TO THE CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19)
PANDEMIC**

(9 June 2020)

1. The AEGC notes the significant negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on ASEAN and the global economy. The AEGC notes that most, if not all sectors of the economy have been adversely affected by the pandemic which brought about business closures, loss of shareholder value and productivity, supply chain disruptions, reduced consumer confidence, unemployment and financial pressure on businesses, among others.
2. The AEGC recalls the *Chairman's Statement on ASEAN Collective Response to the Outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019* of 14 February 2020, and the *Declaration of the Special ASEAN Summit on COVID-19* of 14 April 2020, and reaffirms our solidarity, determination and commitment, in the spirit of a Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN, to remain united, and to act jointly and decisively to mitigate and eliminate its adverse impact on our people's livelihood and economies.
3. Notwithstanding the challenges arising from the pandemic, competition law continues to play a fundamental role in the economy. Fair competition, in an economy will enhance economic efficiency, stimulate innovation and economic growth and increase consumer welfare. This will greatly contribute to the region's efforts in overcoming the pandemic's adverse impact.
4. National competition authorities in ASEAN have developed various measures in response to the pandemic and have also helped governments implement national interventions to keep a level playing field and avoid market distortions.
5. The AEGC calls on all business sectors to continue to comply with competition law despite the current economic downturn.
6. To reduce business uncertainty, the AEGC encourages businesses operating in the region to contact their respective national competition authorities for inquiries or to file Notifications for Guidance or Decision to the national competition authority to gain more understanding, in the efforts to ensure their activities do not contravene any local competition laws.
7. The AEGC through the national competition authority in each ASEAN Member State will not hesitate to take action against any business taking advantage of the current pandemic crisis by engaging in exploitative conduct that amounts to an abuse of their dominant position.
8. The AEGC continues to strengthen cooperation among ASEAN competition authorities, ensure timely exchange of information, and facilitate sharing of best practices among by Member States to address anti-competitive activity amidst the pandemic.

9. The AEGC is committed to collaborate internationally with competition authorities beyond the region, as well as international organizations and development partners to maintain a competitive region during and after the pandemic.
