

# Ministers' Declaration on India's Participation in the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)

The RCEP Ministers of the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) — Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam — Australia, China, Japan, Korea and New Zealand (the RCEP Signatory States), recognizing that India is not in a position to sign the RCEP Agreement in 2020 together with the RCEP Signatory States, and acknowledging the strategic importance of India eventually becoming a party to the RCEP Agreement to create a region of even deeper and expanded value chains for the benefit of all people in the region and contribute further to the development of the global economy, have confirmed the following:

1. The RCEP Agreement is open for accession by India from the date of entry into force of the Agreement as provided in Article 20.9 (Accession) of the RCEP Agreement;
2. The RCEP Signatory States will commence negotiations with India at any time after the signing of the RCEP Agreement once India submits a request in writing of its intention to accede to the RCEP Agreement to the Depositary of the RCEP Agreement, taking into consideration the latest status of India's participation in the RCEP negotiations and any new development thereafter; and
3. Any time prior to its accession to the Agreement, India may participate in RCEP meetings as an observer and in economic cooperation activities undertaken by the RCEP Signatory States under the RCEP Agreement, on terms and conditions to be jointly decided upon by the RCEP Signatory States.

Expressing their strong will to re-engage India in the RCEP Agreement, the RCEP Ministers affirmed that the abovementioned arrangements will commence on the date of the signing of the RCEP Agreement, and will continue until India accedes to the RCEP Agreement.