

PREAMBLE

The Parties to this Agreement, resolving to:

ESTABLISH a comprehensive regional agreement that promotes economic integration to liberalise trade and investment, bring economic growth and social benefits, create new opportunities for workers and businesses, contribute to raising living standards, benefit consumers, reduce poverty and promote sustainable growth;

STRENGTHEN the bonds of friendship and cooperation between them and their peoples;

BUILD on their respective rights and obligations under the *Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization*;

RECOGNISE the differences in their levels of development and diversity of economies;

STRENGTHEN the competitiveness of their businesses in global markets and enhance the competitiveness of their economies by promoting opportunities for businesses, including promoting the development and strengthening of regional supply chains;

SUPPORT the growth and development of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises by enhancing their ability to participate in and benefit from the opportunities created by this Agreement;

ESTABLISH a predictable legal and commercial framework for trade and investment through mutually advantageous rules;

FACILITATE regional trade by promoting efficient and transparent customs procedures that reduce costs and ensure predictability for their importers and exporters;

RECOGNISE their inherent right to regulate and resolve to preserve the flexibility of the Parties to set legislative and regulatory priorities, safeguard public welfare, and protect legitimate public welfare objectives, such as public health, safety, the environment, the conservation of living or non-living exhaustible natural resources, the integrity and stability of the financial system and public morals;

RECOGNISE further their inherent right to adopt, maintain or modify health care systems;

AFFIRM that state-owned enterprises can play a legitimate role in the diverse economies of the Parties, while recognising that the provision of unfair advantages to state-owned enterprises undermines fair and open trade and investment, and resolve to establish rules for state-owned enterprises that promote a level playing field with privately owned businesses, transparency and sound business practices;

PROMOTE high levels of environmental protection, including through effective enforcement of environmental laws, and further the aims of sustainable development, including through mutually supportive trade and environmental policies and practices;

PROTECT and enforce labour rights, improve working conditions and living standards, strengthen cooperation and the Parties' capacity on labour issues;

PROMOTE transparency, good governance and the rule of law, and eliminate bribery and corruption in trade and investment;

RECOGNISE the important work that their relevant authorities are doing to strengthen macroeconomic cooperation, including on exchange rate issues, in appropriate fora;

RECOGNISE the importance of cultural identity and diversity among and within the Parties, and that trade and investment can expand opportunities to enrich cultural identity and diversity at home and abroad;

CONTRIBUTE to the harmonious development and expansion of world trade and provide a catalyst to broader regional and international cooperation;

ESTABLISH an Agreement to address future trade and investment challenges and opportunities, and contribute to advancing their respective priorities over time; and

EXPAND their partnership by encouraging the accession of other States or separate customs territories in order to further enhance regional economic integration and create the foundation of a Free Trade Area of the Asia Pacific,

HAVE AGREED as follows: