

Joint Ministerial Statement
36th APEC Ministerial Meeting 2025
Gyeongju, Republic of Korea

1. We, the APEC Ministers, met in Gyeongju, Republic of Korea on October 30, 2025, chaired by Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Cho Hyun and Minister for Trade Yeo Han-Koo. We welcome the participation of the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC), as well as the Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and Secretary-General of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). We thank the city of Gyeongju for its warm hospitality.
2. We reaffirm our commitment to the APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040 of an open, dynamic, resilient and peaceful Asia-Pacific community by 2040, for the prosperity of all our people and future generations, including through the implementation of the Aotearoa Plan of Action (APA). Under the theme of “Building a Sustainable Tomorrow”, we have advanced the APEC agenda this year through three policy priorities: Connect, Innovate, Prosper, while building upon existing APEC achievements.

Connect

3. We underscore the importance of strengthening regional connectivity through promoting trade and investment, supply chain resilience, structural reform and people-to-people links to support economic growth and prosperity for all in the Asia-Pacific region. We remain committed to APEC as the premier forum for regional economic cooperation and emphasize the importance of its role in bringing us together to address economic challenges to create a more resilient and prosperous region.
4. We recognize the importance of the WTO to advance trade issues. We acknowledge the agreed upon rules in the WTO are key to facilitating global trade. We recognize the WTO has challenges and needs meaningful, necessary and comprehensive reform to improve all its functions to be more relevant and responsive in light of today’s realities. We welcome efforts to deepen discussions in the WTO on contemporary trade issues. We intend to work collaboratively through APEC’s role as an incubator of ideas and support Members working together to deliver a successful Fourteenth WTO Ministerial Conference (MC14) in 2026.
5. We welcome the entry into force of the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies and call on remaining economies to deposit their instruments of acceptance as soon as possible, and encourage WTO Members to conclude negotiations on

further disciplines to achieve a comprehensive agreement as soon as possible. We recognize the need for constructive engagement on agriculture at the WTO. We also acknowledge the positive role of the WTO Moratorium on Customs Duties on Electronic Transmissions in expanding the digital economy.

6. We recognize the positive role of plurilateral negotiations at the WTO, including the Joint Statement Initiatives (JSIs), for advancing issues of interest to Members and to making the WTO more relevant. We note the efforts of participating Members of the WTO JSIs to incorporate the Investment Facilitation for Development (IFD) Agreement and Agreement on Electronic Commerce into the WTO legal framework. We welcome the Statement of the APEC Committee on Trade and Investment, together with the APEC Investment Experts' Group supporting the IFD Agreement.
7. We are committed to strengthening regional trade and investment facilitation, and reinforcement of supply chains. We remain committed to the full and effective implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, recognizing its relevance in an evolving trade environment. We note the progress made to develop a work program for the implementation of the APEC Investment Facilitation Action Plan (IFAP).
8. Recognizing its importance to APEC, we reaffirm our shared commitment to advancing economic integration in the Asia-Pacific region in a manner that is market-driven. We support advancing the areas of work identified in the Ichma Statement on A New Look at the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP) agenda in a comprehensive and systematic manner. We instruct officials to begin work on these areas of work in 2026. We welcome continued efforts in implementing and further updating the Capacity Building Needs Initiative (CBNI), aimed at strengthening member economies' readiness to participate in high-standard and comprehensive undertakings. We welcome the Best Practice Guidelines to Apply the Cross-Cutting Principles on Non-Tariff Measures (NTMs), as a practical and enduring resource for APEC economies, which supports economies in developing and implementing NTMs in ways that facilitate trade, advance legitimate policy objectives and drive innovation.
9. We acknowledge that global supply chains, as an integral part of global value chains, are facing multiple challenges and we support efforts to ensure that supply chain issues continue to be discussed within APEC to enhance the resilience of supply chains for sustainable economic growth across the APEC region. We encourage greater engagement of the private sector in APEC's supply chain discussions, including through public-private dialogues. We recognize existing platforms in APEC that promote supply chain connectivity, trade facilitation and digitalization of trade procedures. We underscore the importance of implementing

the Supply Chain Connectivity Framework Action Plan, now in its third phase (SCFAP III, 2022-2026), to address supply chain chokepoints in the region.

10. We welcome ongoing efforts to strengthen cooperation on standards and streamline conformity assessment procedures across APEC economies. We welcome the “APEC Non-Binding Guidelines for Customs and Cross-Border E-Commerce” and affirm our commitment to balancing the facilitation of legitimate e-commerce trade with robust security measures for high-risk cross-border e-commerce shipments, while advancing customs digitalization to support efficient cross-border e-commerce management.
11. We recognize the contribution of connectivity in promoting the prosperity of our region, and note work done in this regard. This includes the APEC Connectivity Blueprint (2015-2025), which was aimed at strengthening, physical, institutional and people-to-people connectivity and will undergo its final review in 2026. We recognize APEC’s efforts in facilitating business mobility and strengthening regional connectivity, including through the APEC Business Travel Card (ABTC). We encourage continuous efforts made to expand fully participating members’ uptake and acceptance of the virtual ABTC, which helps provide an efficient digital tool for supporting business engagement across borders. We also reaffirm the importance of quality infrastructure development and investment. We underscore the role that transportation and tourism play in improving connectivity in the region.
12. We recognize the role of the APEC Services Competitiveness Roadmap (ASCR) in supporting effective reform and growth of the services sector in the APEC region. We reiterate the importance of meaningful reforms and cooperative initiatives to achieve an open and predictable environment for an innovative, competitive and resilient services sector. In this regard, we encourage officials to develop an ambitious framework for a post-2025 services roadmap no later than the Ministers Responsible for Trade (MRT) Meeting in 2026. We further encourage cross-fora cooperation between the Economic Committee (EC) and Group on Services (GOS) on structural reform in the services sector. We welcome the completed review of the Reference List on Environmental and Environmentally Related Services and look forward to the next review of the List in 2027.
13. We acknowledge that structural reform is essential to boosting efficiency and supporting interconnected growth. In this regard, we welcome the endorsement of the Strengthened and Enhanced APEC Agenda for Structural Reform (SEAASR) at the 4th Structural Reform Ministerial Meeting (SRMM) to guide APEC’s structural reform efforts through to 2030. We also welcome and endorse the Fourth Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) Action Plan and encourage member economies to make concerted efforts to improve the business environment across the APEC region, aiming to achieve the target of a 20 percent improvement in APEC’s EoDB

by 2035. We also reaffirm the value of implementing good regulatory practices (GRPs) to foster transparency, predictability and efficiency in the regulatory environment in the APEC region, including by drawing on the GRP Blueprint as a useful guide. We further look forward to the publication of the 2025 APEC Economic Policy Report (AEPR) on Structural Reform to Increase Participation in the Formal Economy and welcome the topic of the 2026 AEPR on Structural Reform and AI-Driven Digital Transformation.

14. We recognize the importance of the discussions held at the High-Level Dialogue on Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs). We affirm the significance of CCIs as a powerful and emerging driver of growth, and affirm the importance of robust intellectual property protections. We also acknowledge that the process of creation, production, distribution and consumption of CCIs is rapidly evolving due to technological advances. We note the value of CCIs as it contributes to fostering economic growth in the APEC region, as well as preserving cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible. Further, we note its value in encouraging tourism as well as economic, cultural and people-to-people ties, and better understanding and mutual respect among member economies within the APEC region.

Innovate

15. We reaffirm our commitment to working to ensure that the benefits of digital transformation are accessible to all including by bridging digital divides, improving digital connectivity and supporting the digital ecosystem with the aim of strengthening the economic competitiveness of the Asia-Pacific region.
16. We recognize the important role of the digitalization of the economy as a driver for innovation, productivity and economic growth across the region. We look forward to the continued implementation of the APEC Internet and Digital Economy Roadmap (AIDER)'s objective beyond 2025 in a way that addresses emerging opportunities and challenges in the rapidly evolving digital landscape. We recognize the importance of exploring the way forward on a progress review on AIDER. We encourage economies to strengthen affordable and resilient digital infrastructure, and capacity building, accelerate interoperability and enhance digital literacy and skills to facilitate digital transformation. We recognize the increasing importance of data for the digital economy. We will continue our cooperation on facilitating the flow of data and strengthening business and consumer trust in digital transactions. We also note with concern the rise of online scams across the Asia-Pacific, which may harm our digital economy.
17. We note the benefit of digitalization to enhance and facilitate trade. We remain committed to promoting the cross-border recognition of electronic trade-related

documents, including electronic bills of lading and electronic invoices, and enhancing the facilitation of paperless trade in our region, including through capacity building initiatives. We recognize the benefits of public-private collaboration in catalyzing the paperless trade transformation. In this regard, we welcome the establishment of the APEC Centre of Excellence for Paperless Trade (ACCEPT), which aims to strengthen collaboration between the public and private sectors, including ABAC and other interested stakeholders, to advance paperless trade in the region

18. We are committed to strengthening the protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights, including through continued efforts to address challenges posed by online piracy, counterfeit goods and misappropriation of trade secrets.
19. Recognizing the importance of innovative technologies, we acknowledge that advancements in science and technology can contribute to addressing challenges and emphasize the importance of strengthening Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) capacity in the APEC region. We reaffirm that such capacities can be enhanced through collaboration and partnerships in a mutually beneficial way, including through the appropriate and voluntary exchange of scientific talent such as the Scientist Invitation Program. We recognize that expanding research and development collaboration and supporting innovative ecosystems and start-ups have the potential to play a vital role in advancing shared goals and enhancing the value of innovation and technologies. We welcome the Republic of Korea's efforts to host Digital Week and the inaugural APEC Digital and AI Ministerial Meeting.
20. Recognizing that artificial intelligence (AI) is having a profound impact on economies worldwide, we reiterate that AI has become an important tool for driving innovation, competitiveness, productivity and economic growth and transforming various aspects of daily life across the Asia-Pacific region. In this regard, we commend the APEC work this year to support economies to maximize opportunities brought about by AI by advancing successful AI transformation, building AI capacities at all levels and cultivating an investment ecosystem for resilient AI infrastructure.
21. We also recognize the potential of AI to reshape international trade. We acknowledge the importance of adopting AI-enabled procedures that contribute to trade facilitation, particularly in enhancing customs procedures. We encourage economies to share domestic approaches to relevant AI-related policies with the private sector and discuss opportunities for voluntary exchanges on trade-related AI standards and technologies. In this regard, we will continue discussions on the use of AI in cross-border trade within APEC with a focus on practical cooperation and capacity building.

22. We note the importance of flexible and vibrant labor markets and responding to future jobs through dynamic and active labor market policies that provide robust protections for all workers and promote access to high-quality, well-paying and full employment opportunities for all. We recognize that it is critical that labor market systems respond to changes resulting from the rapid emergence of new technologies, such as AI. We reaffirm our commitment to modernizing human resources development, promoting lifelong learning programs and working towards and strengthening high-quality and sustainable social safety nets that encourage workforce participation and support workforce training, reskilling and upskilling.
23. We recognize APEC's efforts to integrate digital technologies, including AI, into education to foster innovative learning environments. To this end, we affirm the need to strengthen education cooperation and networks, including through public-private partnerships, expand access to and use of digital learning resources and ensure accessible and affordable educational opportunities for all.
24. We appreciate the discussions on promoting innovation to enhance productivity, advancing digital finance in response to rapid digital and AI development and discussing fiscal policies. In particular, we welcome the endorsement of the Incheon Plan under the APEC Finance Ministers' Process at the 32nd APEC Finance Ministers' Meeting, which is structured around the pillars of innovation, finance, fiscal policy and access and opportunity for all.

Prosper

25. Amid increasing global challenges, the impact of extreme weather events, wildfires, outbreaks, disruption in food supply chains and demographic changes on the region, we recognize that collective responses are needed to effectively address these shared issues. We also recognize progress in bolstering disaster risk reduction and response capabilities, but emphasize the importance of scaling up APEC-wide action to address an evolving risk landscape.
26. We intend to develop the APEC Ocean Resilience Enhancement Roadmap, as discussed at the APEC Ocean-Related Ministerial Meeting, to strengthen the resilience and disaster response capacity of marine and coastal communities. We emphasize the importance of efforts to ensure the conservation and management of oceans resources, address marine debris and its impacts, strengthen capacity building and ocean literacy, combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and maintain strong APEC ocean and fisheries-related cooperation. We acknowledge the critical importance of the Port State Measures Agreement to the sustainability of fisheries resources and the livelihoods of those that depend on those resources. We recognize the essential role of fisheries and aquaculture in contributing to global food security.

27. We reiterate the importance of strengthening food security in the region by fostering productive, resilient and innovative agri-food systems through the efficient use of agricultural resources, recognizing there is no one-size-fits-all approach. We recognize the critical role that trade can play in achieving food security, minimizing agri-food supply chain disruption and promoting open, fair, transparent, productive, resilient and innovative agri-food systems that benefit all. We support efforts to reduce food loss and waste, promote innovations in agricultural biotechnology and note the importance of strengthening everyone's capacity to participate meaningfully in food systems, across all levels to achieve safe, nutritious and sufficient food for all to ensure food security in the region. We acknowledge the importance of fostering science-based cooperation to address current and emerging risks to food systems. In this regard, we remain steadfast in our efforts to take concrete actions to strengthen food security, and recall the APEC Food Security Roadmap Towards 2030.
28. Witnessing a profound shift in demographic compositions across the Asia-Pacific region, particularly declining birth rates, population aging and accelerated urbanization, we underscore the importance of addressing the long-term economic challenges and optimizing opportunities from these demographic changes. In this regard, we welcome APEC's work this year on exploring collaborative responses to demographic changes. We further acknowledge the impact of demographic changes on younger generations and emphasize the importance of empowering and equipping them with the necessary tools to build a resilient and prosperous future. In this regard, we welcome the APEC Sub-Fund (ASF) on Prosperity of Future Generations.
29. We recognize the importance of ensuring that the benefits and opportunities of economic growth are enjoyed by all in the Asia-Pacific region. In this regard, we take due note of APEC's past and ongoing work to foster an environment for resilient economic growth, promote economic empowerment of all and strengthen peoples' participation in regional and global markets, including through capacity building activities and dialogues.
30. We recognize that addressing APEC economies' energy challenges, including energy security and accessibility, will require the use of available energy sources and technologies, together with advanced energy storage, power grid and energy efficiency solutions, in line with domestic circumstances and priorities. We note the rising demand for electricity across the APEC region, and recognize the need to ensure a stable power supply, in accordance with each economy's domestic circumstances and priorities, noting the role of market-based instruments, such as power market design and energy attribute certificates. We acknowledge the important role that natural gas and LNG can play in providing sustainable, secure,

affordable and reliable energy as well as flexibilities in our respective energy systems. We encourage member economies to create favorable conditions for energy-related trade and investment. We also recognize that enhancing grid energy infrastructure, including energy storage systems, microgrids, smart distribution networks and subsea power cables and deepening regional interconnectivity can foster more efficient and reliable grids to strengthen energy security and energy accessibility across APEC economies. We note discussions on renewable energy and energy intensity. We emphasize the innovative potential of AI and encourage its adoption across the energy sector, noting the need to meet demand for data in an energy and resource efficient manner that benefits all. Through these efforts, we aim to support the sustainable development of balanced, affordable, reliable, secure and innovative energy systems and deliver benefits, including job creation and regional economic development while respecting each economy's domestic circumstances and priorities.

31. We reaffirm that MSMEs are engines of economic growth and recognize that a favorable business environment, including through MSMEs' effective utilization of AI and digital technologies, helps drive MSMEs' innovation, growth and competitiveness. We reiterate the need for enhanced connectivity and collaboration, including public-private collaboration and other stakeholders, as appropriate, to foster an enabling environment and innovative ecosystem for MSMEs. We welcome approaches to fostering MSMEs' and startups development, including through enhancing supply chain networks, promoting access to financing, promoting collaborative innovation, removing regulatory barriers and establishing connections with large companies to support MSMEs' growth and integration into global markets. In this sense, we note APEC's efforts to foster MSME advancement, such as through the Lima Roadmap to Promote the Transition to the Formal and Global Economies (2025-2040). We also welcome the Jeju Initiative on APEC Start-up Alliance, as endorsed at the 31st APEC Small and Medium Enterprises Ministerial Meeting. We welcome the commitment to further promote programs that reduce barriers and improve the capacity of MSMEs to participate in global markets by sharing best practices, and developing capacity-building programs.
32. We reiterate our commitment to building resilient, accessible and age-responsive high-quality health systems and improving health for all. We recognize the importance of integrated, community-based primary health and care systems. We acknowledge the transformative potential of digital health and AI to improve patient-centered health, service delivery, early detection, diagnosis, treatment and health outcomes. We support joint efforts across sectors to build and improve coordinated multisectoral surveillance systems and early warning systems for health emergencies to address the interdependence between human, animal, plant health and the wider environment. We support collaborative efforts to

enhance comprehensive cancer control throughout the life course and engagement of member economies in voluntary knowledge exchange and best-practice sharing, as discussed at the High-Level Meeting on Health and the Economy.

33. We welcome discussions on mutual legal assistance, ways to strengthen information sharing among competent authorities, and utilizing digital technology to combat cross-border corruption crimes and will further facilitate the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). We take note of the role of multi-stakeholder engagement in preventing and combating corruption, such as domestic and foreign bribery, including through the APEC Network of Anti-Corruption Authorities and Law Enforcement Agencies (ACT-NET), as well as strengthening corporate integrity and whistleblower protection. We underscore the importance of anti-corruption training education and technical assistance across both the public and private sectors. We recognize the role corruption plays in facilitating other crimes, including organized crimes. We also reaffirm our commitment to denying safe haven to corruption offenders and illicit assets. In this regard, we acknowledge the importance of the Beijing Declaration on Fighting Corruption and Santiago Commitment to Fight Corruption and Ensure Transparency.

Strengthening APEC as an institution

34. We reaffirm our commitment to strengthening APEC as the premier forum for regional economic cooperation and remain committed to APEC's mission and its voluntary, non-binding and consensus-building principles. We emphasize the importance of APEC's role in bringing economies together to address the economic challenges facing our region and create a more resilient and prosperous Asia-Pacific region. We also recognize the importance of cross-fora collaboration within APEC, and encourage outreach and engagement with the business community and relevant stakeholders.
35. We express our appreciation to all APEC Committees, Working Groups and sub-fora, as well as the APEC Secretariat and the Policy Support Unit (PSU) for all their work and contributions in 2025. We approve the 2026 APEC Secretariat Account Budget and corresponding level of Members' Contributions for 2026. We welcome the Budget and Management Committee's ongoing consideration of APEC financial management and sustainability issues. We also thank members for their contributions including support for Secretariat operations, as well as provision to general and specialized project funding. We will continue efforts to promote efficiency as well as ensure sustainable staffing and resourcing of the APEC Secretariat, in line with provisions taken by the Budget and Management Committee and the PSU board, respectively. We thank ABAC for its collaboration

and recommendations and welcome the various activities held in 2025 to strengthen engagement with business stakeholders.

36. We welcome and note the 2025 APEC Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) Chair's Report, and acknowledge the work undertaken by the Steering Committee on Economic and Technical Cooperation. We endorse the Committee on Trade and Investment Annual Report to Ministers. We also note the ABAC Chair's report. We acknowledge the contribution of PECC and the APEC Study Centers Consortium (ASCC).
37. We are grateful to the Republic of Korea for its strong commitment to APEC and thank the Republic of Korea for hosting APEC 2025. We welcome preparations for APEC 2026, hosted by the People's Republic of China and reiterate our welcome to Viet Nam, as host of APEC 2027.
38. We attach great importance to APEC's continued cooperation in the spirit of multilateralism, on the basis of consensus with all members participating on an equal footing in all its events, including Leaders' Week, in accordance with the Guidelines for Hosting APEC Meetings and Relevant APEC Conventions.