



October 4, 2019

**Auramon Supthaweethum**

Chairperson

ASEAN Trade Facilitation Joint Coordinating Committee

**Re: Request for Follow Thru on Submitted NTB Study on Agri-Food, Healthcare and Automotive**

Dear Chair Auramon,

This has reference to the attached NTB Study entitled **Non-Tariff Barriers in ASEAN and their Elimination: A Business Perspective** which was commissioned by the ASEAN Business Advisory Council and the EU-ASEAN Business Council and funded by the European Union's Enhanced Regional ASEAN-EU Dialogue Instrument (EREADI). The report was prepared by independent consultants, Asian Trade Centre.

As we had earlier discussed at ATFJCC and copies of the report duly transmitted to your good office and to your members last June 2019, the report looks at the trade distorting effects of non-tariff measures and non-tariff barriers in ASEAN across three sectors: automotive; agri-food; and healthcare. As I am sure you are aware, tackling the issue of non-tariff barriers in ASEAN has been a key objective of the ASEAN Economic Community, however progress on the elimination of NTBs has been very slow. The enclosed report examines the extent of the problem in the three key sectors and then makes a series of recommendations for how ASEAN could better approach the issue and accelerate the removal of NTBs.

In this regard, the JBC respectfully propose for ATFJCC to bring this report to the attention of the respective AMS Trade Facilitation Focal Points, and together with the established National Trade Facilitation Coordinating Committees under the NTM Guidelines, to begin the process of reviewing the findings of the report in close collaboration with the private business sector which ASEAN BAC and its partners can help put together. It is our belief, that driving the NTB elimination agenda down to the national consultative platforms where both public and private sector champions can drill down the issues and come up with realistic and doable solutions is a positive way forward on this urgent and critical issue of addressing NTBs.

Through the good office of the ASEAN Secretariat, whose kind assistance we have sought for the transmission and endorsement of this request, we look forward to ATFJCC's favourable consideration of this request.

Kind regards,

Gil L. Gonzales

Executive Director, ASEAN BAC

cc:

- Mr. Ho Quang Trung, Director, Market Integration Directorate, ASEAN Secretariat