



**Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation**

2026/SMEMM/STMT

Chair's Statement - 32nd Small and Medium Enterprises Ministerial Meeting 2026



**32nd Small and Medium Enterprises
Ministerial Meeting
Guangzhou, China
4 September 2026**

Chair's Statement of the 32nd APEC Small and Medium Enterprises Ministerial Meeting

Guangzhou, People's Republic of China | 4 September 2026

1. The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Ministers responsible for the affairs of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), met in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, the People's Republic of China on September 4, 2026, chaired by Li Lecheng, Minister of Industry and Information Technology. We welcomed the participation of the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC) and other stakeholders.[1]

2. We reaffirm our strong commitment to the achievement of the *APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040*, including through the implementation of the *Aotearoa Plan of Action*, to realize an open, dynamic, resilient and peaceful Asia-Pacific community for the prosperity of all our people and future generations. We recognize that Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) are an important foundation of the Asia-Pacific economy and a key force in promoting employment, stimulating innovation, contributing to trade, and driving economic growth. We note the continued efforts of economies in advancing the implementation of the relevant existing mandates from our leaders including the *APEC Artificial Intelligence (AI) Initiative (2026-2030)*, the *Lima Roadmap*, the *Bangkok Goals*, and the *La Serena Roadmap for Women and Inclusive Growth*, and encourage all economies to continue providing support for MSME capacity building.

3. In line with the APEC 2026 theme-“Building an Asia-Pacific Community to Prosper Together”, this Ministerial Meeting was convened under the theme of “Innovation Drives Progress, Partnership Delivers Prosperity”. We will continue to deepen cooperation across the Asia-Pacific to support MSME’s innovation and resilient growth .

4. We recognize innovation as a key contributor to economic growth. Beyond boosting total factor productivity, it reshapes growth dynamics and unlocks new economic frontiers by spawning emerging industries and new business models. MSMEs are an integral part of our Asia-Pacific community and an important component of economic resilience and prosperity in the region. We seek to work together to empower Asia-Pacific MSMEs to elevate their innovation, capabilities, and expertise to achieve greater resilience. We note the efforts of economies to foster MSMEs’ development and strengthen their participation in global value chains, including through leveraging industry clusters and special economic zones.

5. Emerging technologies are reshaping the global industrial landscape at an accelerated pace, creating new opportunities for MSME growth. We reaffirm that the digital transformation of MSMEs, including AI adoption, can contribute to strengthening Asia-Pacific economic resilience. We encourage the development of easy-to-use and efficient digital solutions to support MSMEs across the Asia-Pacific to boost efficiency, expand market participation, and enhance resilience. We recognize the importance of digital

literacy and skills enhancement for all. We will also continue our cooperation on facilitating the flow of data and strengthening business and consumer trust in digital transactions.

6. We encourage economies to share policy experience, best practices, and innovative approaches to support MSME development and scaling-up, through the relevant APEC fora primarily SMEWG, including on eliminating burdensome and unnecessary regulations, where applicable, so MSMEs can grow and hire faster, and enhancing MSMEs' international competitiveness and facilitating their participation in global markets. We recognize the importance of constructive engagement to promote innovation, improve productivity, and MSMEs' development and engagement among enterprises of all sizes, particularly start-ups, venture capitalists, and business incubators. We endeavor to foster an enabling environment in our economies to support innovative technologies including AI. We encourage economies to, where appropriate, launch and advance initiatives to enable MSMEs, to access and leverage essential tools through enhanced digital literacy and capacity-building. We recognize the importance of adequate financing support, as well as efficient and accessible financing services for MSMEs.

7. We reaffirm that bolstering MSME supply chain resilience is vital to Asia-Pacific economic growth. We encourage the use of digital solutions in our economies for MSMEs, leveraging AI to enhance service delivery with greater efficiency, and supporting MSMEs in their transition from the informal to the formal and global economies.

8. We encourage more skills training and programs for MSMEs, and accelerating their resilient growth through the adoption of advanced technologies, equipment, and business models. We further encourage member economies to advance MSMEs cooperation in this regard, using existing APEC workstreams.

9. We recognize the pivotal role of regional collaboration in advancing MSME growth, as well as the important opportunities presented by technological innovation. We support strengthening MSME cooperation, harnessing digital tools to facilitate their participation in global markets, and facilitating networking among MSMEs. We encourage collaboration among governments, enterprises, financial institutions, research institutions, and other stakeholders, bridging channels for policy exchange, market participation, financing, innovation, and talent development within an economy to advance MSME growth across the Asia-Pacific. In this regard, we welcome the Chair's Proposal on MSMEs' Innovation and Resilient Growth (Guangzhou Proposal) (Annex)

10. We express our gratitude to China for hosting the 32nd APEC Small and Medium Enterprises Ministerial Meeting, and we look forward to our next Ministerial Meeting in Viet Nam.

Annex: Chair's Proposal on MSMEs' Innovation and Resilient Growth (Guangzhou Proposal)

[1] Members discussed on MSMEs cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region while varying views were also expressed during the meeting.