

**Co-Chairs' Press Statement of the ASEAN-Canada Commemorative Summit on
the Occasion of the 40th Anniversary of the Establishment of
ASEAN-Canada Dialogue Relations**

Manila, 14 November 2017

We, the Heads of State/Government of the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Canada, gathered in Manila on 14 November 2017 for the Commemorative Summit to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of ASEAN-Canada Dialogue Relations which coincides with the 50th Anniversary of ASEAN and Canada's 150th Anniversary of Confederation.

We reaffirmed the important role played by ASEAN and Canada in building up the political-security, economic, socio-cultural, and people-to-people agenda of the Asia-Pacific region and agreed to continue strengthening our enhanced partnership for mutual benefit and in support of global peace, security, prosperity and sustainable development.

We looked forward to renewed impetus in ASEAN-Canada relations, following the meeting between ASEAN and Canada at the Leaders' level and the invitation to Canada as East Asia Summit (EAS) Guest of the Chair during the 40th Anniversary of ASEAN-Canada Dialogue Relations.

We reiterated the importance of ASEAN Centrality in the evolving regional architecture and ASEAN-led mechanisms in addressing global challenges, as well as in maintaining peace, security, stability and a rules-based order in the Asia-Pacific. Canada reiterated its interest in joining the East Asia Summit and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus in the future. We welcomed Canada's renewed focus on multilateralism, including its new feminist approach to international development assistance. ASEAN looked forward to cooperating with Canada to enhance its level of engagement in the region.

We renewed our commitment to addressing common traditional and non-traditional security challenges and maintaining peace and security in the region by way of, inter alia, peacekeeping, non-proliferation, countering terrorism and violent extremism; strengthening border security management; combatting piracy and armed robbery against ships at sea; and protecting maritime safety and security in line with the relevant standards and recommendations of the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

We underscored our shared interest in freedom of navigation, over-flight and other high sea uses; unimpeded lawful commerce; exercise of self-restraint; and the resolution of disputes by peaceful means, without resorting to the threat or use of force in accordance with universally recognised principles of international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS.

We noted that the challenges of Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing remain and have become even more complex in the region. We are therefore committed to expanding regional cooperation to address this issue, including through supporting the effective implementation of the relevant international law and instruments. We noted with satisfaction that there are initiatives taken by ASEAN-led mechanisms to discuss and address the challenges of IUU fishing.

We encouraged the strengthening of ASEAN-Canada cooperation on these issues including in the ASEAN Regional Forum.

We reaffirmed our commitment to free, open, and progressive trade as a cornerstone of the ASEAN-Canada partnership. We commended the significant progress made to date in the implementation of the ASEAN-Canada Joint Declaration on Trade and Investment that serves as the blueprint for closer economic cooperation, including the holding of First ASEAN-Canada Trade Policy Dialogue in 2017 which focused on the development and internationalization of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). We welcomed the preliminary report of the Joint Feasibility Study for an ASEAN-Canada Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and directed economic officials to embark on exploratory discussions on a potential ASEAN-Canada FTA along with producing a comprehensive ASEAN-Canada FTA feasibility study. We expressed optimism that the strong economic links between ASEAN and Canada will continue to expand for the benefit of both sides.

We committed to work together to address poverty and inequality in order to bridge the development gap in the ASEAN region. In particular, we agreed to advance gender equality, including by empowering women and promoting inclusive green growth, specifically initiatives that support MSMEs in all aspects of our cooperation and under the Plan of Action to Implement the Joint Declaration on ASEAN-Canada Enhanced Partnership (2016-2020) as well as the Initiatives for ASEAN Integration (IAI) Work Plan III. We agreed to work together to implement priority issues to promote the wellbeing of our peoples.

We thanked Canada for its sustained support for the region's on-going efforts towards instituting policies that support the development of areas of common interests such as MSMEs, infrastructure, ICT, sustainable technology, and e-commerce, among other areas.

We took note of the substantive investments that Canada has made to support public-private partnerships (PPP) initiatives by providing expertise and technical assistance in designing and structuring feasible PPPs. We looked forward to further ASEAN-Canada engagements with due consideration to all ASEAN Member States. We underscored the importance of deepening ASEAN and Canada cooperation in the implementation of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025.

We emphasised the value of increasing people-to-people exchanges and institutional linkages as well as public awareness of the ASEAN-Canada partnership. We noted with satisfaction that the new Canada-ASEAN Scholarships and Educational Exchanges for Development (SEED) will be an integral part of ASEAN and Canada's strengthening of people-to-people links as well as developing the youth in the region as future leaders. We noted that over one million people from Southeast Asia call Canada their home and agreed that both sides could explore further measures to broaden and facilitate opportunities for two-way student exchanges and business engagements.

We reiterated our support for the Paris Agreement and agreed to seek opportunities to combat climate change and mitigate its effects.

We appreciated Canada's continued support through the Integrated Disaster Risk Management Fund (IDRM) towards the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) Work Programme (2016-2020) by facilitating collaborative initiatives among ASEAN Governments, the private sector and civil society organisations to reduce the effects of natural disasters and establish early recovery arrangements across the region, as well as enhancing the capacity of disaster management professionals in ASEAN through senior executive programmes.

We also appreciated Canada's assistance in the establishment of a pool of urban planners as practitioners and professionals on urban resilience, and the promotion of resilience champions at the community level. We welcomed Canada's continued support to ASEAN in addressing the needs of women and girls through gender-sensitive program design and the prioritisation of services to vulnerable groups.

We agreed to work together to promote democracy, inclusion, good governance and the rule of law, and to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms, with mutual respect for the independence, sovereignty and equality of all States.

We directed our relevant officials to hasten the implementation of the programs and goals identified in the Plan of Action to Implement the Joint Declaration on ASEAN-Canada Enhanced Partnership (2016-2020) and other existing ASEAN-Canada mechanisms for cooperation.

We expressed our confidence in the enduring benefits of ASEAN-Canada dialogue relations in shaping a better, safer, and more prosperous world for the benefit of our peoples.