

MEDIA STATEMENT
BY THE ASEAN FOREIGN MINISTERS
AFTER THE SPECIAL ASEAN-CHINA FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING
IN KUNMING, YUNNAN PROVINCE, CHINA
14 JUNE 2016

We the Foreign Ministers of the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) gathered in Kunming, Yunnan Province, China on 14 June 2016 for a Special ASEAN-China Foreign Ministers' Meeting. The meeting was held in a frank and friendly atmosphere.

We noted that 2016 is a milestone for ASEAN-China relations as it marks the 25th Anniversary of ASEAN-China dialogue relations. We look forward to working together with China to bring ASEAN-China cooperation to the next level. But we also cannot ignore what is happening in the South China Sea as it is an important issue in the relations and cooperation between ASEAN and China. This is the context in which this Special ASEAN-China Foreign Ministers' Meeting was held today.

We discussed preparations for the ASEAN-China Commemorative Summit that will be held on 7 September 2016 in Vientiane, Lao PDR.

We affirmed that the ASEAN-China relations will continue to be guided by the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter, the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, the Ten Principles of Bandung Asian-African Conference, Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, and other relevant international laws, treaties and conventions. The ASEAN-China cooperation shall also be within the framework of the ASEAN-China Plan of Action 2016-2020 and the ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together.

We agreed to enhance ASEAN-China cooperation on the basis of the principles of equality, mutual benefit and shared responsibility in the interest of achieving national and regional prosperity in the 21st Century. We underlined the firm adherence to the rules-based regional and international order that upholds and protects the rights and privileges of all states

We noted the ongoing and planned commemorative activities by ASEAN Member States and China to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of ASEAN-China dialogue relations. We welcomed the progress in the preparations on the following:

- i. Exchange of congratulatory messages between equivalent leaders of China and Lao PDR, as ASEAN Chair for 2016, and between China's Minister of Foreign Affairs and the ASEAN Secretary-General;
- ii. Hold receptions in Beijing and Jakarta;
- iii. Hold an ASEAN-China Joint Cultural Performance;

- iv. Organise the Second ASEAN-China Youth Exchange Visit;
- v. Organise an ASEAN-China Young Entrepreneur Forum;
- vi. Issue a Joint Statement between ASEAN and China on Production Capacity Cooperation; and
- vii. Undertake activities under the ASEAN-China Year of Educational Exchanges.

On the South China Sea, we had a candid exchange with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in view of the recent developments on the ground.

We expressed our serious concerns over recent and ongoing developments, which have eroded trust and confidence, increased tensions and which may have the potential to undermine peace, security and stability in the South China Sea. We stressed the importance of maintaining peace, security, stability, safety and freedom of navigation in and overflight above the South China Sea, in accordance with universally recognised principles of international law including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

We emphasised the need to enhance mutual trust and confidence, exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities that would further complicate the situation or escalate tensions, and pursue peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with international law.

We articulated ASEAN's commitment to maintaining and promoting peace, security and stability in the region, as well as to the peaceful resolution of disputes, including full respect for legal and diplomatic processes, without resorting to the threat or use of force, in accordance with universally recognised principles of international law, including the UNCLOS and the UN Charter.

We emphasised the importance of non-militarisation and self-restraint in the conduct of all activities, including land reclamation, which may raise tensions in the South China Sea.

We underscored the importance of the full and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea in its entirety, and while noting the momentum and new phase of consultations, urged the early adoption of an effective Code of Conduct, including through increasing the frequency of ASEAN-China Senior Officials' Meeting and Joint Working Group Meetings on the Implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea.

We highlighted the need to intensify efforts to achieve further progress in the implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea in its entirety and the early adoption of an effective Code of Conduct.

In this context, in the interest of maintaining peace, security and stability, as we continue to fully and effectively implement the Declaration on the Conduct of

Parties in the South China Sea in its entirety and work towards the early adoption of an effective Code of Conduct, we reiterated the importance of establishing the MFA-to-MFA hotline to manage maritime emergencies in the South China Sea. We likewise considered the proposal for a Code of Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES) for naval vessels in the South China Sea. Both are seen as deliverables for the ASEAN-China Commemorative Summit. In our view, these are practical measures that could reduce tensions, and the risks of accidents, misunderstandings and miscalculation.

Pursuant to the full and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea in its entirety, and pending the early adoption of an effective Code of Conduct, we stressed the importance of undertaking confidence building and preventive measures that would enhance, among others, trust and confidence amongst parties.

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