

Overview of ASEAN-China Dialogue Relations

Introduction

ASEAN-China Dialogue Relations commenced when H.E. Qian Qichen, the then Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China, attended the opening session of the 24th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in July 1991 in Kuala Lumpur as a guest of the Malaysian Government in which he expressed China's keen interest to cooperate with ASEAN for mutual benefit. Subsequently, China was accorded full Dialogue Partner status at the 29th AMM in July 1996 in Jakarta, Indonesia.

2. The relationship between ASEAN and China was elevated to a higher plane with the signing of the Joint Declaration of the Heads of State/Government on Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity at the 7th ASEAN-China Summit in October 2003 in Bali, Indonesia. The first and second Plans of Action to implement the Joint Declaration (POA) were concluded in 2010 and 2015 respectively. The third POA with a timeframe of 2016-2020 was adopted ad-referendum in November 2015 by the Foreign Ministers of ASEAN and China.

3. China appointed its first resident Ambassador to ASEAN and established its Mission to ASEAN in Jakarta in September 2012.

4. The ASEAN-China Centre in Beijing was launched at the 14th ASEAN-China Summit in November 2011 in Bali. The Centre is a one-stop information centre to promote ASEAN-China cooperation in trade, investment, tourism, education, and culture. The virtual centre can be accessed at <http://www.asean-china-center.org/>. Nine meetings of the Joint Council of the ASEAN-China Centre (ACC) have been held since 2011.

5. 2016 marked the 25th Anniversary of ASEAN-China dialogue relations. ASEAN Member States and China held a series of activities to commemorate this milestone. A Commemorative Summit was held back-to-back with the ASEAN Summit in September 2016 in Vientiane.

6. 2018 marked the 15th Anniversary of ASEAN-China Strategic Partnership and to commemorate the anniversary, a strategic partnership vision 2030 was issued at the 21st ASEAN-China Summit to Commemorate the 15th Anniversary of ASEAN-China Strategic Partnership.

Political and Security Cooperation

7. ASEAN and China continue to enhance political-security dialogue and cooperation through various ASEAN Plus One mechanisms including summit, ministerial and senior officials' meetings, as well as in broader ASEAN-led frameworks such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ASEAN Plus Three (APT), the East Asia Summit (EAS) and ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM Plus).

8. China was the first Dialogue Partner of ASEAN to accede to the TAC in October 2003. China's accession to the TAC has contributed to the stature of the TAC as the code of conduct for inter-state relations in the region. China was also

the first Nuclear Weapon State (NWS) which expressed its intention to accede to the Protocol to the SEANWFZ.

9. ASEAN and China signed the Declaration on the Conducts of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) in November 2002 in Phnom Penh. ASEAN and China adopted the Guidelines to implement the DOC on 21 July 2011 in Bali, Indonesia. Further, the PMC Plus One Session with China held on 25 July 2016 in Vientiane endorsed the Joint Statement by Foreign Ministers of ASEAN Member States and China on the Full and Effective Implementation of the DOC which reflected its commitment to ensure the full and effective implementation of the DOC in its entirety.

10. The 19th ASEAN-China Summit to Commemorate the 25th Anniversary of ASEAN-China Dialogue Relations the Leaders held on 7 September 2016 in Vientiane adopted the Joint Statement on the Application of the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES) in the South China Sea, and the Guidelines for Hotline Communications among Senior Officials of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of ASEAN Member States and China in Response to Maritime Emergencies in the Implementation of the DOC. At their meeting on 6 August 2017 in Manila, the Foreign Ministers of ASEAN Member States and China adopted the framework of the Code of Conduct. At the 20th ASEAN-China Summit in November 2017, ASEAN Member States and China officially announced the launch of the COC negotiations. China has proposed to complete the COC negotiations in three years by 2021.

11. ASEAN and China have been cooperating under the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) since it was established in 2010. The ASEAN-China Defence Ministers' Informal Meeting have been held nine times. The 9th ASEAN-China Informal Defence Ministers' Meeting was held on 19 October 2018 in Singapore, at the sidelines of the 12th ADMM.

12. Annual consultations are held between ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) and China and between the ASEAN Ministers Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC) and China to promote their cooperation in combating transnational crimes and other non-traditional security issues. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between ASEAN and China on cooperation in the field of non-traditional security issues was signed in 2004 and renewed in 2009. The succeeding MOU was signed at the 5th AMMTC + China Consultation in Manila on 21 September 2017. The 17th SOMTC+China Consultation held in Nay Pyi Taw in July 2019 endorsed the ASEAN-China Work Plan on Cooperation in the Field of Non-Traditional Security Issues (2019-2023). The Work Plan was welcomed by the 7th AMMTC+China Consultation in Bangkok in November 2019.

13. In combatting illicit drug trafficking, ASEAN and China cooperate under the ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters (ASOD)+China Consultation since 2012. The 4th ASEAN-China Coordination Meeting held in Ha Noi in 2018 adopted the Terms of Reference of ASEAN and China Cooperative Operations in Response to Dangerous Drugs (ACCORD). The 6th ASOD+China Consultation held on 30 August 2019 in Siem Reap, Cambodia deliberated on the draft Technical Guidelines on the Utilisation of China's Contribution to ACCORD Fund.

Economic Cooperation

14. ASEAN-China economic relations continue to thrive. ASEAN-China economic relations have continued to thrive. According to preliminary ASEAN statistics, the total merchandise trade between ASEAN and China reached USD 479.4 billion in 2018, accounting for 17.1 per cent of ASEAN's total merchandise trade. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows from China to ASEAN amounted to USD 10.2 billion in 2018, accounting for 6.6 per cent of ASEAN's total FDI. China maintained its position as ASEAN's largest trading partner since 2009, and in 2018, China was ASEAN's third external source of FDI among ASEAN's Dialogue Partners, compared to its previous position in 2017 where it was the fourth largest.

15. The Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation was signed in November 2002 to establish the ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreement (ACFTA). The ACFTA was realised on 1 January 2010 and took full effect on 1 January 2015. In line with the mandate given by the Leaders to upgrade the ACFTA, the "Protocol to Amend the Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Co-operation and Certain Agreements thereunder between ASEAN and the People's Republic of China" (ACFTA Upgrading Protocol) was signed on 21 November 2015 in Kuala Lumpur, at the sidelines of the 27th ASEAN Summit and Related Summits. Progress has been made in the ACFTA implementation including the entry into force of the ACFTA Upgrading Protocol for all Parties and the ongoing discussions on the remaining elements of the Future Work Programme under the Protocol to improve ASEAN-China trade.

16. The ASEAN-China EXPO (CAEXPO), an event which showcases products from ASEAN and China, has been organised and hosted by China on an annual basis in Nanning, China since 2004. At the margin of the CAEXPO, an ASEAN-China Business and Investment Summit (CABIS) is also held to bring government and the private sector together to exchange views on matters affecting the economy and businesses of ASEAN Member States and China. The 16th China-ASEAN EXPO (CAEXPO) and the China-ASEAN Business and Investment Summit (ABIS) were held in Nanning, China on 21-24 September 2019 with the theme "Building the Belt & Road, Realizing Our Vision for a Community of Shared Future". A series of ad-hoc activities were held to bring together ASEAN's and China's government officials and the private sector to exchange views on the economy and businesses. Indonesia was the Country-of-Honour for the CAEXPO this year.

17. ASEAN and China also agreed to expand cooperation to the area of production capacity cooperation to provide opportunities to further strengthen economic and trade relations and serve to boost confidence and increase engagement among businesses from ASEAN and China. ASEAN and China adopted a *Joint Statement between ASEAN and China on Production Capacity Cooperation* at the 19th ASEAN-China Summit to Commemorate the 25th Anniversary of ASEAN-China Dialogue Relations in September 2016.

18. ASEAN-China cooperation in agriculture focuses on enhancing cooperation in human resource development through a series of training courses on agricultural technologies to help train agricultural technicians and officials of ASEAN Member States. The MOU between the ASEAN Secretariat and the Ministry of Agriculture of

the People's Republic of China on Agricultural Cooperation (2007-2011) was renewed on 27 September 2013 for a period of five years.

19. ASEAN and China continued to strengthen their cooperation in Information and Communication Technology. ASEAN and China in November 2013 signed an MOU on cooperation in ICT, which covers the areas such as promoting industry, human resources and infrastructure development, as well as cooperation in new technologies and information exchange. The 13th ASEAN Telecommunications and Information Technology Ministers Meeting with China (TELMIN+China) held on 6 December 2018 in Bali, Indonesia extended the MOU and looked forward to further strengthening the cooperation within the framework of the MOU.

20. ASEAN and China signed an MOU on Transport Cooperation in November 2004 in Vientiane. The MOU aims to promote medium and long-term cooperation. ASEAN and China signed two agreements on transport, namely i) ASEAN-China Maritime Transport Agreement (AC-MTA) signed on 2 November 2007 and ii) ASEAN-China Air Transport Agreement (AC-ATA) signed on 12 November 2010. ASEAN and China are working towards the full liberalisation of the ASEAN-China Air Transport Agreement (AC-ATA), including a new Protocol 3 to expand Fifth Freedom Traffic Rights between ASEAN and China under the intra-package of Protocol 2, which will facilitate greater people-to-people and economic linkages and further enhance regional connectivity.

21. The 17th ATM+China held on 8 November 2018 in Bangkok adopted in principle the 2018-2020 Action Programme of the Revised Action Plan for ASEAN-China Transport Cooperation which aligns with ASEAN's goals and actions in the Kuala Lumpur Transport Strategic Plan 2016-2025 and China's vision of "Belt and Road Initiative".

22. ASEAN and China continued to forge cooperation in developing smart cities. China also participated in the ASEAN Smart Cities Network Conference and Exhibition held on 22-24 August 2019 in Bangkok. The ASEAN-China Leaders' Statement on Smart City Cooperation Initiative was adopted at the 22nd ASEAN-China Summit.

23. On tourism, China has become a major source of tourists for ASEAN. In 2018, the total number of tourist arrivals from China to ASEAN was 58.2 million, an increase of 15% compared to 2017. 2017 was designated as ASEAN-China Year of Tourism Cooperation. The Joint Statement between ASEAN and China on Tourism Cooperation was adopted by the Leaders at the 20th ASEAN-China Summit in November 2017, in which the Leaders agreed, among others, to establish a high-level cooperation mechanism between relevant tourism authorities, to be convened on a regular basis.

24. On cooperation in quality inspection, two MOUs on Strengthening Sanitary and Phytosanitary Cooperation (SPS) and Strengthening Cooperation in the Field of Standards, Technical Regulations and Conformity Assessment (TBT) between ASEAN and China were signed on 20 November 2007 and 24 October 2009, respectively. To implement the MOUs, ASEAN-China Ministerial Meeting on Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine on SPS and TBT was established and held alternately every year. The 6th ASEAN-China Ministerial Meeting on Quality

Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine was held on 12 October 2018 in Ha Noi. The Ministers adopted the Plan of Action for 2019 - 2020, covering the area of food safety, plant and animal inspection and quarantine.

25. The year 2012 was designated as the ASEAN-China Year of Cooperation in Science and Technology. A series of activities were implemented to mark the year, including among others the ASEAN-China Ministerial Meeting on Science and Technology Cooperation and launching of the ASEAN-China Science and Technology Partnership (STEP) Programme. Notable progress has been made in implementing STEP including building ASEAN-China joint laboratories, ASEAN-China Remote Sensing Satellite Data Sharing and Service Platform, ASEAN-China technology Transfer Centre, and Talented Young Scientists Visiting China. The China-ASEAN Technology Transfer Center has contributed to facilitating information sharing, resource matchmaking and other related services to encourage collaboration between Chinese and ASEAN enterprises and science parks.

26. The 10th Meeting of ASEAN-China Joint Science and Technology Committee (ACJSTC-10) was held in Nanning, China on 21 September 2019. Under STEP, the 7th Forum on China-ASEAN Technology Transfer and Collaborative Innovation was held in Nanning, China on 20-24 September 2019, which included the conduct of (i) 2019 China-ASEAN International Forum on Innovation and Cooperation for Sustainable Development; (ii) China Inno-Tour for ASEAN Young Scientists; (iii) Exhibition on Advanced Technologies of 16th China-ASEAN Expo, and (iv) Matchmaking Session of Exhibition on Advanced Technologies.

27. 2018 was designated as the ASEAN-China Year of Innovation (YOI). A Joint Statement on ASEAN-China Science, Technology and Innovation Cooperation was issued at the 21st ASEAN-China Summit to commemorate the Year. A series of activities were organized throughout the year to mark the YOI, including, among others, forums and symposium on technology transfer innovation, e-commerce, Smart Cities, youth entrepreneurship, and new renewable energy.

28. On connectivity, ASEAN and China have agreed to synergise common priorities in the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025 and China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), as part of efforts to synergise the various connectivity strategies in the region in a manner that would be mutually beneficial. At the 20th ASEAN-China Summit held on 13 November 2017 in Manila, the Leaders adopted a Joint Statement between ASEAN and China on Further Deepening the Cooperation on Infrastructure Connectivity. Further, the 22nd ASEAN-China Summit held on 3 November 2019 adopted the ASEAN-China Joint Statement on Synergising the MPAC 2025 and the BRI.

Socio-Cultural Cooperation

29. A number of activities have been carried out in the areas of public health, education, culture, labour and social security, local government and people-to-people exchanges, environment, media, youth, social development, and poverty reduction.

30. The Ministers on Health of ASEAN and China signed an MOU on Health Cooperation at the Fourth ASEAN-China Health Ministers Meeting (AC-HMM) on 6

July 2012 in Phuket, Thailand. To operationalise the MOU, yearly priorities of collaboration are agreed by ASEAN and China through the ASEAN China Senior Officials Meeting on Health Development (AC-SOMHD) and the ASEAN China Health Ministers Meeting. The 9th AC-SOMHD held on 4 April 2019 in Siem Reap, Cambodia agreed on the focus areas of collaboration for 2019-2020, which includes non-communicable diseases, active ageing, communicable diseases including dengue, malaria, schistosomiasis and HIV and AIDS, and traditional medicines. Further, the ASEAN-China Health Ministers at their Seventh Meeting on 30 August 2019 in Siem Reap, Cambodia, expressed their support for the inclusion of Innovations for enhancing quality of health services as a new priority area under the ASEAN-China health cooperation for 2020-2021, adding on the existing priority areas of collaboration for 2019-2020.

31. In response to the Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), the Foreign Ministers of ASEAN Member States and China at a special meeting on 20 February 2020 in Vientiane issued a statement on COVID-19 in which they agreed to step up cooperation in the region against COVID-19 by sharing information and best practices in a timely manner, including exchanging available epidemiological information, technical guidelines and solutions for epidemic prevention and control, diagnosis, treatment and surveillance, with a view to enhancing capacity in emergency preparedness and response.

32. ASEAN-China cooperation on education continues to make good progress. The China-ASEAN Education Cooperation Week (CAECW) has been held annually since 2008 in Guiyang, China. The 12th CAECW was held on 22-26 July 2019 in Guiyang, China with the theme “Enhancing Pragmatic Cooperation and Sharing Development Achievements”. The ASEAN China-Young Leaders Scholarship (ACYLS) programme, which was proposed by China in November 2018, was launched at the sidelines of the PMC 10+1 Session with China on 30 August 2019 in Bangkok. With funding from the ASEAN-China Cooperation Fund (ACCF), two projects under ACYLS are now on-going: (i) ASEAN-China Young Leaders’ Scholarship for Postgraduates and (ii) the ASEAN-China Young Leaders’ Scholarship for Capacity Building.

33. Cooperation in culture is pursued through the implementation of Plans of Action on ASEAN-China Cultural Cooperation. The year 2014 was designated as the ASEAN-China Cultural Exchange Year with various activities undertaken in ASEAN Member States and China. At the 4th AMCA+China in Yogyakarta, Indonesia in October 2018 the Ministers adopted the ASEAN-China Work Plan on Cooperation in Culture and Arts 2019-2021.

34. Cooperation in environment is guided by the ASEAN-China Environmental Protection Cooperation Strategy papers. Implementation of activities under the action plans of the Cooperation Strategy is coordinated with the China-ASEAN Environmental Cooperation Centre (CAEC), which was established in Beijing on 17 March 2010 and officially inaugurated on 24 May 2011. The first Cooperation Strategy paper covered the period 2009-2015 and after its conclusion, the succeeding Cooperation Strategy for 2016-2020 was endorsed by ASEAN Senior Officials on Environment (ASOEN) and China.

35. The ASEAN-China Environmental Cooperation Week (ACECW) was held since 2011. The 2019 ACECW was held on 25-28 March 2019 in Beijing. This event consisted of five parts, including ASEAN-China National Focal Point Meeting on Environmental Cooperation, Seminar on ASEAN-China Cooperation for Eco-Friendly Cities, Task Force Meeting and Workshop on Operation and Technical Issues of China-ASEAN Environmental Information Sharing Platform (EISP), and China-ASEAN Seminar on Climate Change Policies and Actions

36. On disaster management, an MOU between the Government of the People's Republic of China and ASEAN on Disaster Management Cooperation was signed on 6 October 2014. China proposed a Project Arrangement between ASEAN and the People's Republic of China to support ASEAN in improving capabilities in disaster management and emergencies. The Project Arrangement has been agreed in principle by the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management. Besides, China-ASEAN High-level Forum on Disaster Reduction and Emergency Management was held by China in Nanning on 25 October 2019.

37. Funded by the ACCF, a High-Level Symposium on Disaster Management was organised by the ASEAN Secretariat on 26-27 February 2020 at the ASEAN Secretariat. The Symposium provided a multi-sectoral platform for dialogue on disaster management, and brought together relevant ASEAN Sectoral bodies involve in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief, academia, practitioners and experts from various background as well as the ASEAN dialogue partners.

38. ASEAN and China have continued to organise exchange visits for media personnel. Cooperation in media and information is highlighted with the designation of 2019 as the ASEAN-China Year of Media Exchanges (YOME). YOME was kicked off on 14 January 2019 in Jakarta, Indonesia with the Launch of "Dan's Way – Indonesia", an episode in a series of documentaries that feature all 10 AMS's culture for the appreciation of Chinese audiences. The opening ceremony of YOME was held in Beijing, China on 20 February 2019. Subsequently, a number of activities was implemented by relevant ministries and institutions in ASEAN and China to commemorate YOME. A Joint Statement on Strengthening Media Exchanges and Cooperation between ASEAN and China will be adopted at the 22nd ASEAN-China Summit. The closing ceremony of YOME was held in Bangkok, attended by about 300 representatives from governmental departments, media agencies as well as international organizations from ASEAN and China.

39. Cooperation on rural development and poverty eradication was further enhanced. Three major activities were carried out in 2019, namely the 13th ASEAN-China Forum on Social Development and Poverty Reduction in Guangxi, China on 26-28 June 2019, the ASEAN-China-UNDP Symposium: Innovation in Achieving the SDGs and Eradicating Poverty in Ha Noi on 4-5 September 2019 and the Program of Capacity Building for Lancang-Mekong countries in Beijing and Guizhou, China on 9-27 September 2019. Another project in the area of development is the ASEAN Development Outlook: Inclusive and Sustainable Development which is currently ongoing. The Outlook aims to assess the current state, challenges, opportunities, lessons learned, best practices and outlook of inclusive and sustainable development in ASEAN.
