

## **OVERVIEW OF ASEAN-UNITED STATES DIALOGUE RELATIONS**

1. The ASEAN-U.S. Dialogue Relations have been progressing since its establishment in 1977. In addition to exchange of views on political and security matters in the early stages of the dialogue relations, both sides also gave priority to practical cooperation in commodities, market and capital access, transfer of technology, development of energy resources, shipping, and food security. In the early 1990s, the development cooperation between ASEAN and the U.S. was reoriented to focus on trade and investment, technology transfer and human resources development.
2. Following the meeting between the ASEAN Foreign Ministers and the U.S. Secretary of State in September 2005 in New York, the Joint Vision Statement on the ASEAN-U.S. Enhanced Partnership was adopted on 17 November 2005. Two implementing documents of this Joint Vision Statement were later adopted, namely the 2006 Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN-U.S. Enhanced Partnership and the 2009 Revised Priorities for Cooperation under the ASEAN-U.S. Enhanced Partnership. These documents served as the foundation for both sides to expand their partnership to cover a wide range of areas, including political-security, economic, socio-cultural, and development cooperation.
3. The First ASEAN-U.S. Leaders' Meeting in November 2009 issued a Joint Statement on the ASEAN-U.S. Enhanced Partnership for Enduring Peace and Prosperity, which reflected their commitment to enhance cooperation to further promote peace, stability, and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region. Subsequently, the Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN-U.S. Enhanced Partnership for Enduring Peace and Prosperity (2011-2015) was adopted at the Third ASEAN-U.S. Leaders' Meeting in November 2011 in Bali, Indonesia. This Plan of Action, which mapped out key priorities and measures to strengthen the ASEAN-U.S. partnership under political-security, economic, socio-cultural, and development cooperation, was successfully implemented.
4. With the adoption of the Joint Statement on the ASEAN-U.S. Strategic Partnership at the Third ASEAN-U.S. Summit, held on 21 November 2015 in Kuala Lumpur, the Leaders announced the elevation of the ASEAN-U.S. Dialogue Relations to a strategic level. The goals and vision of this Strategic Partnership will be realised through the implementation of the Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN-U.S. Strategic Partnership (2016-2020), which is closely aligned to the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 to further support the ASEAN Community building and integration process, especially under the five priority areas of cooperation, namely, economic integration, maritime cooperation, transnational challenges including climate change, emerging leaders, and women's opportunities to further strengthen the strategic partnership.

## **40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ASEAN-U.S. Dialogue Relations**

5. This year marks the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the ASEAN-U.S. Dialogue Relations. Some activities have been held or planned to commemorate this auspicious occasion including the visit of the U.S. Vice President Mike Pence to the ASEAN Secretariat on 20 April 2017, during which he reaffirmed the U.S.' commitment to the region and strengthen its strategic partnership with ASEAN.

### **A. POLITICAL-SECURITY COOPERATION**

#### **ASEAN-U.S. Mechanisms**

6. ASEAN and the U.S. have sustained their regular engagements at all levels, including the ASEAN-U.S. Summit, the Post Ministerial Conferences (PMCs), the ASEAN-U.S. Dialogue, and the Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) Meeting.
7. From 2009 onwards, the Leaders of ASEAN and the U.S. met annually on the sidelines of the ASEAN Summit. Following the adoption of the recommendation of the ASEAN-U.S. Eminent Persons Group (EPG) in 2012, the ASEAN-U.S. Summit was institutionalised in 2013 and the ASEAN-U.S. Dialogue Relations was elevated to a strategic level in November 2015. In recognition of the elevation, the U.S. hosted the ASEAN-U.S. Special Leaders' Summit in Sunnylands, California, U.S.A., on 15-16 February 2016.
8. The PMC mechanism offers an opportunity for the U.S. Secretary of State and the ASEAN Foreign Ministers to review existing cooperation and exchange views on regional and global issues. The ASEAN Ministers and the U.S. Secretary of State also meet annually at the Informal ASEAN-U.S. Ministerial Meeting on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York.
9. A Special ASEAN-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting was held on 4 May 2017 in Washington, D.C. The special meeting with the U.S. was called to discuss the future of ASEAN-U.S. relations, especially the U.S. policy direction toward ASEAN under the new Administration. At the meeting, both sides reaffirmed the importance of the ASEAN-U.S. strategic partnership. Taking the opportunity of ASEAN Foreign Ministers' presence in Washington D.C., the U.S. National Security Advisor invited the Foreign Ministers to meet and discuss current issues of common concerns.
10. Periodic Dialogues are held at the senior officials' level to provide a more in-depth review of cooperation across the pillars and discuss the future direction of the partnership. In addition, the Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN (CPR) and the U.S. Ambassador to ASEAN meet annually at the ASEAN-U.S. JCC Meeting to review status of implementation of the ASEAN-U.S. Plan of Action, with a focus on projects and programmes.

## **The U.S.' Accession to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC)**

11. The U.S. acceded to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) at the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference Plus One (PMC + 1) Session with the U.S. in Phuket, Thailand on 22 July 2009. This accession symbolises the U.S.' pivot to Asia and its renewed commitment to engage ASEAN as a key partner in promoting regional peace and cooperation.

## **U.S. Mission to ASEAN**

12. The U.S. was the first Dialogue Partner to establish a mission to ASEAN in Jakarta. Since its establishment in early 2010, the U.S. Mission to ASEAN has worked closely with the CPR and the ASEAN Secretariat in coordinating and monitoring the implementation of joint activities under the ASEAN-U.S. Dialogue Relations.

13. The U.S. nominated H.E. David Lee Carden as the first U.S. resident Ambassador to ASEAN in September 2010. H.E. Nina Hachigian succeeded him in this position upon her presentation of credentials to H.E. Le Luong Minh, Secretary-General of ASEAN, on 3 November 2014. She completed her tenure in January 2017.

## **Security Cooperation**

14. The principal focus of ASEAN-U.S. security dialogues has been the role of the U.S. in maintaining peace, security, and stability in the region through its participation in ASEAN-led mechanisms such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus), and the East Asia Summit (EAS). Areas of mutual interest include maritime security, nuclear non-proliferation, cyber security, and combatting transnational crime, including terrorism and trafficking in persons (TIP), among others.

15. The U.S. has been a part of the ARF since its inception in 1994 and has been an active participant and host of the Forum's discussions and activities. For the inter-sessional year 2016-2017, the U.S. is co-chairing and co-hosting a number of ARF meetings and activities, including the Inter-Sessional Meeting (ISM) on Maritime Security with the Philippines and Japan.

16. Being part of the ADMM-Plus, the U.S. has attended the First to the Third ADMM-Plus, which took place in Ha Noi, Bandar Seri Begawan, and Kuala Lumpur in 2010, 2013, and 2015 respectively. The U.S. hosted the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Informal Dialogue with the U.S. Secretary of Defence in Hawaii on 20 September to 1 October 2016. The U.S. has also actively participated in the six ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group (EWG) on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR), maritime security, military

medicine, counter terrorism, peacekeeping operations, and humanitarian mine action, as well as contributed assets to various ADMM-Plus exercises.

17. ASEAN-U.S. cooperation to promote maritime security has intensified, particularly through the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF) framework, focusing on seafarer training, education and sharing of experiences. At the initiative of the Philippines and the U.S., two annual Expanded ASEAN Seafarer Training-Counter Piracy (EAST-CP) Workshops and Seminars were successfully held in September 2013 and September 2014, respectively.
18. Cooperation in combatting transnational crime and other non-traditional security issues has been strengthened through the U.S.' engagement with the ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC). So far ten Consultations between the ASEAN SOMTC and their U.S. counterparts have been held. ASEAN and the U.S. signed the ASEAN-U.S. Joint Declaration on Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism on 1 August 2002 in Bandar Seri Begawan. The ASEAN-U.S. Counter Terrorism Work Plan was endorsed by the 1<sup>st</sup> ASEAN Plus the U.S. Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC + U.S.) Consultation in 2003 in Ha Noi, Viet Nam. At the Sunnylands Summit, President Obama announced a new \$1.97 million Aviation and Border Security Program. This initiative will increase the ability of countries to utilize law enforcement information sharing tools and authorities already available to them as members of INTERPOL.
19. On TIP, the U.S. proposed an EAS Declaration on Strengthening Responses to Migrants in Crisis and Trafficking in Person, which was adopted at the 11<sup>th</sup> EAS on 8 September 2016 in Vientiane.

## **B. ECONOMIC COOPERATION**

20. ASEAN and the U.S. through the ASEAN Economic Ministers - U.S. Trade Representative (AEM-USTR) Consultations and the Senior Economic Officials-Assistant USTR (SEOM-AUSTR) Consultations continues to promote trade and investment flows between ASEAN and the U.S., as well as to exchange views on a range of economic issues.

### **ASEAN-U.S. Trade and Investment Framework Arrangement (TIFA) and Expanded Economic Engagement (E3) Initiative**

21. ASEAN and the U.S. concluded the Trade and Investment Framework Arrangement (TIFA) in August 2006, which has served as a key mechanism to strengthen ASEAN-U.S. economic ties. A Joint Council has been established to provide direction on the implementation of the ASEAN-U.S. TIFA as well as to monitor and evaluate the progress of ASEAN-U.S. economic cooperation.
22. The ASEAN-U.S. Expanded Economic Engagement (E3) initiative was launched at the Fourth ASEAN-U.S. Leaders' Meeting on 19 November 2012 as a new

framework for economic cooperation designed to expand the ASEAN-U.S. trade and investment ties and create new business opportunities and jobs in all eleven countries.

23. Within these frameworks, ASEAN and the U.S. have strengthened cooperation in trade facilitation, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) development, and harmonisation of standards and conformance, among others.

### **Technical and Economic Cooperation**

24. ASEAN and the U.S. have forged cooperation on trade facilitation, standards and conformance, intellectual property rights (IPR), and public-private sector engagement (PPE). The U.S. has been ASEAN's primary partner in moving forward the ASEAN Single Window (ASW) initiative and has provided technical assistance on standards and conformance for priority sectors, including electrical and electronic equipment, medical devices, and automotive.

25. Upon the successful convening of the First ASEAN-U.S. Business Summit in August 2012 in Cambodia, the Second ASEAN-U.S. Business Summit was held on the side-lines of the 46<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Economic Ministers' Meeting (AEM) and Related Meetings in August 2014. With the theme of "SMEs and the Global Supply Chain," the Business Summit focused on enhancing the capacity of SMEs to participate in the global supply chain and to reap the benefits of deeper economic cooperation between ASEAN and the U.S.

26. The ASEAN Economic Ministers (AEM) Roadshow to the U.S., which was started in 2013, has played an important role in raising the awareness of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) and creating partnership opportunities for ASEAN and U.S. business. The Third Roadshow was successfully held in February 2016 in conjunction with the ASEAN-U.S. Special Leaders' Summit.

27. The ASEAN Finance and Central Bank Deputies every year meet with the U.S. Treasury Deputy to exchange views on global and regional macroeconomic policies and outlooks. This consultation mechanism aims at improving mutual understanding and ensuring policy complementarities to maintain resilience and growth for both sides.

28. ASEAN and the U.S. are working to solidify institutional links between ASEAN sectoral bodies under the AEC pillar and the U.S. counterparts through new Dialogues on Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and Aviation. The U.S. has also committed to support ASEAN Member States in improving the skills of their workforce and enhancing their economic competitiveness through initiatives in education and training, SME development, youth entrepreneurship, and women empowerment.

29. At the ASEAN-U.S. Special Leaders' Summit in Sunnylands in February 2016, President Obama announced two new initiatives, namely the U.S.-ASEAN Connect and the U.S. ASEAN Trade Workshop. The U.S.-ASEAN Connect

works through its U.S.-ASEAN Connect Center in Jakarta, and the strategic Connect locations in Singapore and Bangkok to better coordinate U.S. economic engagement in the region and connect entrepreneurs, investors, and businesses.

30. The AEM-USTR Consultations which was held on 4 August 2016 endorsed the texts of the ASEAN-U.S. Cooperation in Fostering Transparency and Good Regulatory Practices and the ASEAN-U.S. Cooperation in Fostering International Investment.

### **ASEAN-U.S. Trade, Investment, and Tourism**

31. The U.S. remains an important trading partner of ASEAN. Despite the challenges brought about by uncertainties in the global economy, ASEAN-U.S. total two-way trade grew by 1.3 per cent, from US\$212.34 billion in 2015 to US\$215.2 billion in 2016, making it the fourth largest trading partner of ASEAN in the same year<sup>1</sup>.
32. Preliminary data shows that the U.S. is ASEAN's third largest source of foreign direct investment (FDI), with a total inflow amounting to US\$11.65 billion in 2016<sup>2</sup>.

## **C. SOCIO-CULTURAL COOPERATION**

### **Environment, Climate Change and Disaster Management**

33. ASEAN and the U.S. collaborated to tackle the impacts of climate change and worked towards an agreed outcome of the 21<sup>st</sup> Session of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Paris in December 2015. This joint endeavour was reflected in the ASEAN-U.S. Joint Statement on Climate Change that was adopted by the Leaders at the Second ASEAN-U.S. Summit on 13 November 2014.
34. The U.S. is exploring cooperation with ASEAN in marine environmental protection and conservation within the framework of the new Plan of Action for 2016-2020. The U.S. has also proposed with Singapore an ARF Statement on Strengthening Cooperation on Marine Environmental Protection and Conservation. The Statement was adopted at the 22<sup>nd</sup> ARF on 6 August 2015 in Kuala Lumpur.
35. The U.S. through ASEAN-U.S. PROGRESS is currently supporting several initiatives under the newly adopted AADMER Work Programme (AWP) 2016-2020. Those initiatives being supported by ASEAN-U.S. PROGRESS include: (i) ASEAN Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (RVA) Guideline; (ii) ASEAN Joint Disaster Response Plan (AJDRP); (iii) Damage Loss and Needs Assessment

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<sup>1</sup> ASEAN Trade Database as of July 2017

<sup>2</sup> ASEAN FDI Database as of July 2017

(DALA) Training; and (iv) Information, Communication, and Technology (ICT) for Preparedness and Response

## **Education and Youth**

36. ASEAN has benefited from various U.S. initiatives that contributed to its aspiration for a people-oriented, people-centred Community, particularly programmes covering youth and education. On education, ASEAN and the U.S. announced the Partnership on English Language Education for ASEAN at the Third ASEAN-U.S. Leaders' Meeting on 18 November 2011 in Bali, Indonesia. This Partnership is a long-term commitment to improve English language capacity in the region and further support the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI). This five-year US\$25 million programme is being implemented by the East West Centre in Hawaii and the University of Brunei Darussalam in Brunei.
37. The Fulbright U.S.-ASEAN Visiting Scholars Initiative was launched in September 2012 during the 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the ASEAN-U.S. partnership. This initiative enables scholars from ASEAN Member States to travel to the U.S. to focus on ASEAN-related projects, and American Fulbright Specialists and Scholars in the region to provide capacity-building expertise and scholarly collaboration at ASEAN institutions and/or universities in ASEAN Member States. To date 40 scholars from all ten ASEAN Member States have been awarded scholarships to pursue research/lecturing focused on wide range of subjects including climate change, public health, teaching English as a second language, maritime security, political security, and wildlife trafficking. In commemorating the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the ASEAN-U.S. Dialogue Relations, the U.S. is expanding its Fulbright Programme to include U.S. scholars who were interested to conduct collaborative research on issues of priority to ASEAN.
38. In 2014, the USAID established Connecting the Mekong through Education and Training (COMET), a five-year workforce development programme focusing on Lower Mekong countries of Cambodia, Myanmar, Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam. This programme is envisioned to better prepares youth for employment by bridging the gap between education institutions and employers. It supports universities and vocational schools to adapt their curriculum and teaching approach to better meet private-sector demands, and engages enterprises to strengthen work-based (hands-on) learning opportunities, such as internships.
39. On youth, in December 2013, President Obama announced the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI), which aims to enhance leadership development and networking in ASEAN, deepen engagement among young leaders in the region, and empower the next generation of leaders. An inaugural training programme titled the "YSEALI Generation-Ideas into Action" Workshop was held in Kuala Lumpur on 25-28 April 2014, with the participation of 100 young leaders between the ages of 18-35 from ten ASEAN Member States. As of 2017, YSEALI has almost 100,000 members and it is expanding its digital engagement with the members.

40. The U.S. has also been active in raising youth's awareness of the ASEAN Community through its support for the video contest on "What does the ASEAN Community Mean to Youth?", which was announced by the ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting on Youth (SOMY) in April 2015. Following the success of the first video contest, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Youth Video Contest was held in 2016.

### **Science and Technology**

41. The ASEAN Committee on Science and Technology (COST) has held annual consultations with the U.S. since 2011. The Sixth ASEAN-U.S. Consultation on Science and Technology was held in October 2016 in Siem Reap, Cambodia.

42. The U.S. launched in 2013 an ASEAN-U.S. Science Prize for Women sponsored by Underwriter Laboratory, USA. The first ASEAN-U.S. Science Prize for Women was awarded in 2014. This initiative will be carried forward within the framework of the Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN-U.S. Strategic Partnership (2016-2020). Another new initiative by the U.S., the ASEAN-U.S. Youth Innovation Challenge, was endorsed by the 70<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the COST for implementation in the period 2016-2020.

### **Promotion of the Rights of Women and Children**

43. On the promotion of the rights of women and children, the U.S. through its development cooperation programme (PROGRESS) is supporting the work of the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC).

## **D. DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION**

44. During the course of 2008-2013, the U.S.' development assistance to ASEAN was channeled mainly through the ASEAN Development Vision to Advance National Cooperation and Economic Integration (ADVANCE).

45. Two five-year U.S. support programmes were launched in December 2013 to replace the completed components of ADVANCE. These programmes include the ASEAN Connectivity through Trade and Investment (ACTI) and the ASEAN-U.S. Partnership for Good Governance, Equitable and Sustainable Development and Security (ASEAN-U.S. PROGRESS). Both sides are working on specific projects and activities for implementation under these two programmes.

46. The PROGRESS, funded by US\$14 million, aims at assisting ASEAN in achieving the targets outlined in the APSC and ASCC Blueprints, under three components: i) Good Governance and Political-Security Cooperation; ii) Human Development and Socio-Cultural Cooperation; and iii) ASEAN Secretariat and Institutional/Cross-Sectoral Capacity Building.

47. The ACTI, with the total budget of US\$16.2 million, focuses on assisting ASEAN's regional and national economic-related agencies to implement their commitment under the AEC, particularly in the following areas: i) ASEAN Single Window; ii) Trade and Investment Facilitation; iii) SMEs Development; iv) ASEAN Modernised Power; and v) ICT For Development Enhancement.

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