

OVERVIEW

ASEAN-SWITZERLAND SECTORAL DIALOGUE RELATIONS

1. Switzerland was conferred the status of Sectoral Dialogue Partner of ASEAN at the 49th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM) on 24 July 2016 in Vientiane, Lao PDR. Prior to the conferment of this formal partnership, ASEAN and Switzerland had long forged relationship through a number of cooperative activities.

2. The ASEAN-Switzerland Sectoral Dialogue Relations was institutionalised through the convening of the First ASEAN-Switzerland Joint Sectoral Cooperation (AS-JSCC) Meeting on 28 November 2016 at the ASEAN Secretariat, Jakarta. The Meeting exchanged views on the priority areas of ASEAN-Switzerland cooperation, including projects/activities to support the realisation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 goals, capacity-building programmes and human resource development, particularly vocational training and collaboration to promote sustainable development in the region.

A. Political-Security Cooperation

3. Switzerland appointed its first Ambassador to ASEAN in September 2009. H.E. Mrs. Yvonne Baumann, current Ambassador of Switzerland to ASEAN, presented her credentials to H.E. Le Luong Minh, Secretary-General of ASEAN, on 1 December 2014 at the ASEAN Secretariat, Jakarta.

4. Switzerland, together with Norway, supported the convening of the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (AIPR) Symposium on the Plight of Women and Children in Conflict Situations held on 8-9 December 2015 in Tagaytay, Philippines. Switzerland also supported the convening of the AIPR Symposium on Principles, Mechanisms and Practices of Peace and Reconciliation Process on 4-5 November 2016 in Yangon, Myanmar.

B. Economic Cooperation

5. ASEAN and Switzerland enjoyed good trade and investment relations. In 2016, the total two-way trade between ASEAN and Switzerland increased by 33% from US\$18.2 billion in 2015 to US\$24.2 billion. ASEAN's exports to Switzerland increased significantly by 90% from US\$6.8 billion in 2015 to US\$13.1 billion in 2016, and imports from Switzerland decreased slightly by 3% from US\$11.4 billion in 2015 to US\$11.1 billion in 2016. Meanwhile,

foreign direct investment (FDI) flows from Switzerland to ASEAN grew by 47% from US\$365 million in 2014 to US\$536 million in 2015.¹

C. Socio-Cultural Cooperation

6. Since 2011, Switzerland has partnered ASEAN in strengthening the ASEAN Social Forestry Network (ASFN) to address interlinked issues of food security, poverty and climate change through the ASEAN-Swiss Partnership on Social Forestry and Climate Change (ASFCC). This programme, supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), is aimed at assisting ASEAN in adapting to and mitigating climate change through socially and environmentally responsible forest management and protection. In collaboration with ASEAN Member States, the ASEAN Secretariat and supporting partner organisations, the ASFCC successfully completed its Phase I (2011-2013) and Phase II (2014-2016) activities.

7. In partnership with the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Switzerland has provided funding support for the activities of the ASEAN Regional Disaster Emergency Response Simulation Exercise (ARDEX) from August to December 2016.

8. Significant contribution to humanitarian assistance to ASEAN was made by Switzerland in the aftermath of Tsunami and Typhoon Haiyan in 2004 and 2013, respectively.



¹ Source: ASEAN Statistics Database.