

Overview of ASEAN-Australia Dialogue Relations

1. Since Australia became ASEAN's very first Dialogue Partner, the ASEAN-Australia dialogue relations has evolved to a wide range of cooperation across the three Community pillars. At the ASEAN-Australia Commemorative Summit to mark the 40th Anniversary of the partnership between ASEAN and Australia in in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, the Leaders announced the elevation of the ASEAN-Australia dialogue relations to a strategic level through the "Joint ASEAN-Australia Leaders' Statement on the 40th Anniversary of ASEAN-Australia Dialogue Relations towards a Strategic Partnership for Mutual Benefit". In recognition of the Strategic partnership, the First ASEAN-Australia Biennial Summit was held on 7 September 2016 in Vientiane, Lao PDR, and the Leaders agreed to further strengthen the ASEAN-Australia Strategic Partnership, including through the convening of an ASEAN-Australia Special Summit in Australia in 2018.

2. The ASEAN-Australia Special Summit with the theme "Enhancing Regional Security and Prosperity", including two side events, namely the Business Summit and ASEAN-Australia Counter-Terrorism Conference, was convened on 17-18 March 2018 in Sydney, Australia. At the Special Summit, the Leaders adopted the Joint Statement of the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit: The Sydney Declaration and announced a package of initiatives across the three pillars aimed to strengthen cooperation between the two sides. The ASEAN-Australia Informal Breakfast Summit was also held on 14 November 2018 in Singapore, in which Australia announced three new initiatives namely the Southeast Asia Economic Governance and Infrastructure Initiative, Greater Mekong Water Resource Programme and increased cooperation in maritime issues.

3. The cooperation between ASEAN and Australia are guided by the ASEAN-Australia Plan of Action and the ASEAN-Australia Plan of Action (2020-2024) was adopted in 2019 at the Post Ministerial Conferences (PMC+1) session with Australia on 1 August 2019 in Bangkok, Thailand. The Meeting noted that the Plan of Action will help further enhance the ASEAN-Australia cooperation in all dimensions, and looked forward to the full implementation of the Plan of Action in the next five years.

Political-Security Cooperation

4. Australia continues to engage with ASEAN in the political-security pillar through their active participation in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus), the East Asia Summit (EAS), the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF), and the Post Ministerial Conferences (PMC). Australia also participates in the Senior Officials' Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) Plus Australia Consultation. So far, fourteen SOMTC + Australia Consultations have been held.

5. Combatting trafficking in persons is a key area of collaboration between ASEAN and Australia with the on-going implementation of the five-year Australia-Asia Programme to Combat Trafficking in Persons (AAPTIP) from 2013 to 2018, which was followed by a new AUD 80 million ASEAN-Australia Counter-Trafficking program beginning in 2019. On counter-terrorism, the ASEAN-Australia Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism was signed in July 2006 in Kuala Lumpur and the renewed Declaration was adopted by the Leaders at the First ASEAN-Australia Biennial Summit held on 7 September 2016 in Vientiane, Lao PDR. An ASEAN-Australia MoU on Counter Terrorism was also signed during the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit in March 2018.

6. In December 2005, Australia acceded to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC), which underscored the importance of the Treaty as a code of conduct governing inter-state relations in the region, as well as Australia's strong commitment to promoting regional peace and security.

Economic Cooperation

7. Australia remains an important trading partner of ASEAN. Preliminary data shows that the ASEAN-Australia total two-way trade in 2018 reached US\$ 65.5 billion, making it the seventh largest trading partner of ASEAN among Dialogue Partners.¹ Australia is ASEAN's seventh largest source of foreign direct investment (FDI) among Dialogue Partners in 2018 with a total inflow amounting to US\$ 1.2 billion (preliminary data).² According to Australia's data, ASEAN was one of Australia's top three trading partners, with the two-way trade amounting to AU\$ 93.2 billion in 2016, representing around 15 per cent of Australia's total trade.

8. The Agreement Establishing the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA) was signed by the Economic Ministers of ASEAN, Australia, and New Zealand on 27 February 2009. At the 24th AEM-CER Consultations on 9 September 2019, ASEAN Economic Ministers as well as Economic Ministers from Australia and New Zealand welcomed the 10th anniversary of AANZFTA and the full implementation of the First Protocol to Amend the AANZFTA Agreement. During the Meeting, the Ministers also welcomed the FTA Joint Committee Work Plan for the AANZFTA Upgrade Negotiations, with a view to concluding the Second Protocol to Amend the AANZFTA.

9. The AANZFTA Economic Cooperation Support Programme (AECSP) was established in 2010 and has contributed to enhancing the capacity of ASEAN Member States' institutions in implementing the AANZFTA. At the 24th AEM-CER Consultations, the Ministers recognised the role of AECSP in supporting Parties in implementing their AANZFTA commitments and reaffirmed their commitment to ongoing economic cooperation in support of AANZFTA.

¹ ASEAN Trade Database as of 13 May 2019

² ASEAN FDI Database as of 21 May 2019

10. Australia is one of the six Dialogue Partners of ASEAN that joined the negotiations on a Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). The 7th RCEP Ministerial Meeting was held on 8 September 2019 in Bangkok, Thailand, where the Ministers reaffirmed their collective resolve to bring negotiations to a conclusion.

Socio-Cultural Cooperation

11. Education, youth and people-to-people exchange is a flagship area of ASEAN-Australian cooperation. Australia has supported ASEAN through 1,715 Australia Awards and Endeavour Scholarships offered to citizens of ASEAN Member States, the New Colombo Plan scholarship as well as its Mobility Programme. At the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit, Australia announced new education initiatives, including the Australia Awards ASEAN scholarships and a New Colombo Plan ASEAN Fellowship.

12. Australia is supporting regional cooperation on migration governance which supports activities under the ACMW Work Plan 2016-2020 through the Tripartite Action to Enhance the Contribution of Labour Migration to Growth and Development in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (TRIANGLE in ASEAN) from 2016-2025. On disaster management, Australia has been a key partner in providing technical assistance to ASEAN on disaster management. Indonesia and Australia co-hosted the 2018 EAS International Disaster Assistance Workshop on 8-10 May 2018 in Australia. In collaboration with the AHA Centre, the Workshop will also explore how the One ASEAN One Response approach applies to an event beyond the ASEAN region.

Development Cooperation

13. The ASEAN-Australia Development Cooperation focuses on the economic areas and social development, was established in 1974 through the ASEAN-Australia Economic Cooperation Programme (AAECP) to be followed by the AADCP (2002-2008). The AADCP II was then extended to 2015 and further extended to December 2021. The AADCP II continues to support the implementation of the ASEAN Economic Community blueprint, the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025 and the IAI Workplan III in promoting and implementing people-oriented and people-centered projects. It also supports the ASEAN Secretariat to better perform its mandate in facilitating integration across the three Community pillars.

